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PRODUCING PIONEERS: THE AMERICAN JUNIOR COLLEGE FOR WOMEN AND THE BEIRUT COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, 1924-1973

by
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A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
to the Department of History and Archaeology
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
May 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am profoundly grateful to every person on my dissertation committee. My co-advisors, John Meloy and Ellen Fleischmann, have been wise, thoughtful, and patient mentors. Samir Seikaly, Alexis Wick, and Elizabeth Thompson have helped me succeed throughout the entirety of my Ph.D. program by teaching me and challenging me. I will never forget the immense kindness and support of all of five of my committee members during a recent personal hardship. Thank you all for everything you have done for me these past seven years.

I also wish to thank sincerely Jean Makdisi, Nova Robinson, Christine Lindner, and Rita Stephan for providing feedback on various parts of this project, as well as Nadya Sbaiti, who listened to countless ideas for my dissertation and read many proposal drafts. The librarians and archivists at AUB Jafet Library have been extremely helpful, and CNRS Lebanon generously funded my research from 2015 to 2018.

Finally, my loving family has always been the most important part of my life. I affectionately dedicate this dissertation to my parents, brother, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Catherine Wadad Batruni for Doctor of Philosophy
Major: Modern Arab and Middle Eastern History

Title: Producing Pioneers: The American Junior College for Women and the Beirut College for Women, 1924-1973

A significant number of female pioneers in Lebanon were graduates of the American Junior College for Women, later known as the Beirut College for Women. This dissertation traces the creation and development of the College from its establishment in 1924 until its transition to a coeducational institution in 1973. It explores the reasons for its creation and disappearance, the evolution of its curricula, and the voices of students and alumnae. It highlights its pioneering role in two distinct fields of distaff education: home economics and social service. How did the College impact its students and what did they do with their education? This dissertation argues that the College was simultaneously progressive and traditional. It pushed women into new spheres while limiting them to their traditional roles. Specifically, it advanced them by educating them in highly differentiated fields, including those considered to be "male" domains, and regularly producing influential alumnae who achieved milestones for women. On the other hand, the College placed constraints on women by modernizing them through the frameworks of domesticity and social service. This study contributes to research on Global South feminism, the impact of women's education across the world in the twentieth century, missionary history, cross-cultural encounters, institutional histories, female spaces, American education in the Middle East, and education and identity formation in postcolonial states.

TIMELINE

1920	Inauguration of “Greater Lebanon” under the French Mandate.
1924	The American Junior College for Women (AJC) opens in Beirut. Classes are held on the campus of the American School for Girls (ASG).
1927	AJC classes move from the ASG to a temporary location on Ma‘mari Street.
1933	The AJC moves to its permanent campus on Madame Curie Street.
1940	Inauguration of the Neighborhood House, a center for children from low-income backgrounds. The Neighborhood House functioned as the social service laboratory for the College students.
1943	Lebanon becomes independent from the French Mandate.
1949	The AJC transforms into the Beirut College for Women (BCW).
1953	Inauguration of the Home Management House on the BCW campus, ostensibly the first Home Economics building in the entire Middle East.
1967	Israel captures territory from Syria, Jordan, and Egypt in less than a week from June 5-10. This event becomes known as the Six Day War.
1969	BCW opens a community college and allows men to enroll in it. The four-year College remains for women only.
1970	Home Economics is no longer offered as a major.
1973	The BCW is replaced by Beirut University College (BUC). Men are admitted into the student body.
1975	The Lebanese Civil War begins.

NOTES ON TRANSLITERATIONS AND NAMES

This dissertation uses the transliteration style of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* without diacritical markings. However, familiar names and places such as “Beirut” are written according to their colloquial spellings. Sometimes Arabic names written in English do not correspond to this chart because I follow the spelling that the individuals themselves used to write their own names.

أ	a	ظ	z
ب	b	ع	‘
ت	t	غ	gh
ث	th	ف	f
ج	j	ق	q
ح	h	ك	k
خ	kh	ل	l
د	d	م	m
ذ	dh	ن	n
ر	r	ه	h
ز	z	ء	’
س	s	ة	a or at
ش	sh	و	w or u
ص	s	ي	y or i
ض	d	آ	A
ط	t	ى	a

ABBREVIATIONS

ASG	American School for Girls
AJC	American Junior College for Women
AUB	American University of Beirut
BCW	Beirut College for Women
BUC	Beirut University College
LAU	Lebanese American University
NEST	Near East School of Theology
PHS	Presbyterian Historical Society
RNL	Riyad Nassar Library
USEK	Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik
USJ	Université Saint Joseph

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

"In the last forty years Beirut College for Women has been the main continuous force which has supplied the Arab World with a large number of women pioneers who, through knowledge, have found the key to freedom."[1] So declared Marie Sabri in 1967 while reflecting on the impact of her alma mater, which was the first and only women's college in Lebanon. All universities develop self-narratives, and the Beirut College for Women cultivated one that was quite exceptional. Even the (male) President of this institution declared in 1949 that it had "become a symbol of emancipation and opportunity" for women.[2]

Many alumnae often described their alma mater as a prodigious institution that liberated women by creating a space for them to obtain a higher education. These alumnae also constructed their self-narratives as "pioneers" for having studied at this institution that they believed was truly special. Indeed, it *was* special, not only by virtue of having been the sole women's college in Lebanon, but also through the particular education that it offered in two distinct fields: home economics and social service. These subjects were not offered at any other university in Lebanon. In this sense, the College was not only unique, but also radical for its time.

Adding to its uniqueness, the College was cross-cultural in several ways. For instance, it was an institution founded and operated by American Presbyterian missionaries, and it offered its students an American college education. Furthermore,

[1] Marie Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles: Beirut College for Women* (Beirut: Khayat, 1967), 1.

[2] William A. Stoltzfus, letter, September 10, 1949. PHS Record Group (hereafter, RG) 115-3-4.

it functioned in a double colonial context – it was an American institution in an Arab country that was being ruled by the French. The College opened in Beirut in 1924 under the auspices of American Presbyterian missionaries. It was initially known as the American Junior College for Women (AJC) and offered its students a two-year Associate's degree. From 1924 to 1927, its classes were held on the campus of the American School for Girls, another Presbyterian missionary establishment. The College moved to a temporary location on Ma'mari Street in Beirut in 1927, until it finally relocated to its permanent campus on Madame Curie Street in 1933. In 1949, it became a four-year institution: the Beirut College for Women (BCW).[3] It was operated by missionaries until 1959,[4] and remained a women's college until 1973 when it allowed men into the student body and became Beirut University College (BUC).[5] Today, the College remains in the same location on Madame Curie Street in the Ras Beirut neighborhood and is known as the coeducational Lebanese American University (LAU).

The AJC campus was intentionally built in close proximity to the American University of Beirut (AUB), another brainchild of the American Presbyterian Mission that was founded as a men's university in 1866.[6] The histories of the two universities are inextricable from one another and will be considered in tandem, particularly because the AJC was initially founded as the distaff subsidiary to AUB when the latter refused to admit women on an equal basis with men in the School of Arts and

[3] Marie Sabri, "Beirut College for Women and Ten of its Distinguished Pioneering Alumnae," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1965, 42.

[4] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 27.

[5] William H. Schecter, "Towards an International Culture," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Spring 1973): 5. LAU, RNL.

[6] Stephen Penrose, *That They May Have Life: The Story of the American University of Beirut, 1866-1941* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1970).

Sciences.[7] Women would be allowed to transfer to the sophomore or junior class at AUB for a Bachelor's degree in the School of Arts and Sciences after obtaining an Associate's degree from the Junior College. There was also much crossover in terms of shared facilities and social activities between the two institutions. Both of these American establishments played a fundamental role in creating an English-speaking, educated elite in Lebanese society.

This dissertation is concerned with both the College and the women who studied there. The impetus for this project was a recurring observation that a significant number of individuals who achieved milestones for women in Lebanon and who were active participants in the Lebanese women's movement were graduates of this College. I will trace the trajectory of the development of this institution in 1924 until its eventual disappearance in 1973, the year that it became co-educational. I contribute to the scholarship on Lebanese women in the twentieth century by answering the following questions: what was the role of the American Junior College for Women, later the Beirut College for Women, in the advancement of Lebanese women throughout the period that it existed? How did the women who studied there conceive of their roles in Lebanese society and what did they do with their education? What were the reasons for its creation, expansion, and ultimate disappearance? I will explore the changing curricula, the reasons for the discontinuation of a college that was solely for women, and the voices and actions of the students and alumnae, thereby inserting the College and its graduates into a wider narrative of Lebanese women's history that considers the impact of higher education.

I argue that the College was simultaneously progressive and traditional. It was progressive in the sense that it advanced Lebanese women by providing them with

[7] James Nicol, "An Outline History of the American Junior College for Women and the Beirut College for Women," Unpublished Manuscript, 1956, 4. LAU, RNL. James Nicol was a reverend as well as member of the Mission staff. He was Acting President of the College from 1941-1943.

higher education in a wide range of subjects, including distaff as well as what social attitudes viewed as typically "male" domains. It regularly produced female pioneers who could be found working in a variety of occupations, including those that had previously been off limits to women. It was traditional in that the College modernized its students through the frameworks of domesticity and social service; these frameworks shaped women's values but imposed new constraints on what their roles in society should be. Women's education was a result of modernity, but women were expected to become modern by taking care of their homes and resolving social problems, even if they also pursued careers. In this sense, women's roles in the family and society did not change significantly.

This dissertation offers a new perspective on Lebanese women via the study of the American Junior College for Women and the Beirut College for Women. This defunct college has not been sufficiently studied in works on Lebanese women's history, a subject that requires such a study for two important reasons. Firstly, this institution was the only women's college in Lebanon, and for many women, the only possible option for higher education. Secondly, it consistently produced influential graduates at a time when educational and professional opportunities for women were novel and limited, and many participants in the Lebanese women's movement – such as Jamal Karam Harfouche and Eva Badre Malik – were graduates of this institution and helped shape new discourses on women. The establishment of the AJC in 1924 was a watershed moment for Lebanese women during a seminal period of feminist consciousness both in the Arab world and globally. This dissertation focuses on Lebanese students and the impact that the College had on Lebanon. Most of the students were Lebanese, but a significant number were from other Middle Eastern

nations.[8] In addition to being multi-national, the student body was multi-religious as well.[9]

All throughout its history, the College's curricula and extracurricular activities reflected the changes and challenges that Lebanese women in the wider society were experiencing, and functioned as a microcosm of elite Lebanese women's activities and concerns. Many alumnae developed an affectionate and nostalgic relationship with their alma mater; a large number of graduates even returned to the College to work as teachers or administrators. They formed a vanguard of educated, elite women who were at the forefront of women's advancement in several fields.

No major texts on Lebanese women have addressed the central topic of the AJC and BCW. Neglecting the only women's college in the country when discussing Lebanese women is highly problematic, particularly because higher education was a crucial factor in women's advancement and in their conceptions of their roles in society and the family. As a result, the scholarship on Lebanese women endorses a narrative that neglects the role of higher education. Without an adequate analysis of this institution, the impact of higher education on Lebanese women's advancement is incomplete. My project contributes to closing this gap and allows for a cross-disciplinary conversation – this research contributes to debates on women's education in postcolonial states, American education in the Middle East, the role of education in women's histories, Global South or relational feminism,[10] and issues of women's identities in postcolonial states, specifically the hybrid identities of women who

[8] Donald Roberts, "The Beirut College for Women: A Short History," Unpublished Manuscript, 1958, Appendix 11, 1-2. LAU, RNL. Donald Roberts was an administrator at the College.

[9] Roberts, "The Beirut College for Women," Appendix 11, 1-2.

[10] For more on relational feminism, see Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach," *Signs* 14, no. 1 (Autumn, 1988): 119-57; Elizabeth Fernea,"Family Feminism or Individual Feminism? Different Histories, Different Paths to Gender Equity," *Hawwa* 1, no. 2 (2003): 131-51.

gained a foreign education. My study additionally utilizes the AJC and BCW as an institutional anchor to examine women's issues in society at large, such as marriage, motherhood, and careers, in addition to social, economic, and political rights.

It is my conviction that the current literature on Lebanese women's history requires a study like this one. Women are noticeably absent from most of the standard narratives of Lebanese history. The most comprehensive source on the modern history of Lebanon that includes women as a critical component is *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* by Elizabeth Thompson.[11] Works in Arabic exist as well but they are limited in scope.[12] Thompson's book is not quite a women's history of Syria and Lebanon; instead, the author employs gender as her primary analytical tool to argue that citizenship was defined by the social policies and "gender pacts" of the French Mandate that were mediated by male elites to marginalize women. Another crucial text amongst the limited literature on Lebanese women is Malek Abisaab's book, *Militant Women of a Fragile Nation.*[13] Abisaab explores how women's participation in labor reshapes the story of the nation during the colonial and postcolonial period, and highlights how the feminism and nationalism of workingwomen differed from that of bourgeois women. By focusing on the experiences of workingwomen, Abisaab highlights a new dimension in the narrative of gender and nation. Thompson's text primarily probes the political and social activism of elite upper class women, whose charitable works

[11] Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

[12] See for example: Emily Faris Ibrahim, *Adibat al-Lubnaniyat* (Beirut: Dar al-rihani, 1964); Emily Faris Ibrahim, *al-Haraka al-nisa'iya al-Lubnaniya* (Beirut: Dar al-thaqafa, n.d.); Hanifa al-Khatib, *Tarikh tatawwur al-haraka al-nisa'iyya fi Lubnan, 1800-1975* (Beirut: Dar al-hadatha, n.d.); Nadia al-Jurdi Nuwayhid, *Nisa' min baladi* (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-'arabiya li al-darasat wa al-nashr, 1986).

[13] Malek Abisaab, *Militant Women of a Fragile Nation* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009).

towards the less fortunate were seen as part of their political activism. Abisaab attempts to balance this account in *Militant Women of a Fragile Nation.* As articulated by Abisaab, "upper-class feminism and working class feminism rarely met."[14] The subjects under study in this dissertation are Thompson's women, who performed social service work for Abisaab's women. The College was a training ground for social service for elite Lebanese women to carry out for the benefit of women from other economic and social classes. This project does not bridge the conflict between Thompson and Abisaab; rather, I am positioning myself between the two authors. Since I am focusing on an institutional history, the voices of Abisaab's workingwomen are not featured in my dissertation.

There are three other major texts on Lebanese women. The first is Shereen Khairallah's *The Sisters of Men: Lebanese Women in History*.[15] Khairallah's monograph is a reference book in the form of a biographical dictionary. The second is Mirna Lattouf's *Women, Education, and Socialization in Modern Lebanon: 19th and 20th Centuries Social History*.[16] Lattouf's text includes some information about the AJC and BCW. However, Lattouf does not focus on one educational institution in particular; rather, she questions why advancements in women's education have not corresponded with improvements in their status and well being. The author examines various ways in which formal and informal education impact women's lives; Lattouf defines informal education as socialization and cultural learning. She concludes that informal education, particularly the socialization of women into domestic roles, prevails over the effects of formal education in broadening women's horizons beyond

[14] Abisaab, *Militant Women of a Fragile Nation*, 36.

[15] Shereen Khairallah, *The Sisters of Men: Lebanese Women in History* (Beirut: Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, 1996).

[16] Mirna Lattouf, *Women, Education, and Socialization in Modern Lebanon: 19th and 20th Centuries Social History* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004).

homemaking. The third major text is Akram Khater's *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920*.[17] Khater examines the impact of return emigration on gender roles and the rise of a new middle class in Mount Lebanon during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. His text is relevant to this project in understanding social attitudes towards female education that emerged at the turn of the century.

Other literature that is relevant to this project concerns the American Presbyterian Mission in Lebanon. Scholars such as Ellen Fleischmann[18] and Christine Lindner[19] have demonstrated how cultural institutions such as American missionary schools affected Lebanese women. This dissertation is a contribution to their conversations, and complements their work by featuring students' voices as inscribed in thesis projects, yearbooks, College publications, memoirs, alumnae bulletins, and writings in the women's press. These sources partly recreate the student body, forming a more coherent picture of how the College impacted the students by understanding the women's experiences through their own words. This inquiry is

[17] Akram Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[18] Ellen Fleischmann, "The Impact of American Protestant Missions in Lebanon on the Construction of Female Identity, c. 1860-1950," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13, no. 4 (2002): 411-26; Fleischmann, "Under an American Roof: The Beginnings of the American Junior College for Women in Beirut," *Arab Studies Journal* (Spring 2009): 62-84; Fleischmann, "Lost in Translation: Home Economics and the Sidon Girls' School of Lebanon, c. 1924-1932," *Social Sciences and Missions* 23 (2010): 32-62.

[19] Christine B. Lindner, "Negotiating the Field: American Protestant Missionaries in Ottoman Syria, 1823 to 1860," Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 2009; Lindner, "The Flexibility of Home: Exploring the Spaces and Definitions of the Home and Family Employed by the ABCFM Missionaries in Ottoman Syria from 1823 to 1860," in *American Missionaries and the Middle East: Foundational Encounters*, eds. Mehmet Ali Dogan and Heather J. Sharkey (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011), 33-62; Lindner, "Educational Encounters Between American Protestant Missionaries and the Residents of Late Ottoman Syria: One Path Towards a Modern Education," in *Entangled Education: Foreign and Local Schools in Ottoman Syria and Mandate Lebanon (19-20th Centuries)*, eds. Julia Hauser, Christine B. Linder, and Esther Moller (Beirut: Orient Institute, 2016), 235-54.

located at the intersection of women's history, women's education, feminism, missionary education, institutional histories, and cross-cultural encounters.

A. Which Came First, the Women or the College?

The history leading up to the establishment of the American Junior College for Women in Beirut in 1924 is an overlapping story of the American Presbyterian Mission overseas, the expansion of female education after the civil wars in Mount Lebanon in 1860 and World War I (1914-1918), and the spread of home economics as an appropriate subject for women to study to make them better wives and mothers in order to help their countries deal with modernization, industrialization, and Westernization. The forty-nine year existence of the College was shaped by various social, economic, political, cultural, and technological changes – changes in these sectors directly affected the nature and the purposes of women's education. These issues interconnected to determine what women should be instructed in and what they should use their education for. The confluence of economic uncertainty, political instability, cultural traditions, and social attitudes created a college that was exclusively for women and was also ultimately responsible for ending its existence.

Discussions on educating and remaking women prefigured the birth of the AJC and were a significant factor in its creation. It is highly unlikely that women would have advanced without the creation of the College – many of them would have never received a higher education elsewhere as there were no other women's colleges in Lebanon, and coeducation in other universities was either unavailable or was not a popular idea amongst parents and society at large. The AJC and BCW would educate women and allow them to become modernized through domesticity and social service – this framework for modernization placed women in a bind that was at once

liberating and limiting. Ultimately, Lebanese women would achieve different levels of success in terms of access to education, the labor market, the political sphere, and legal rights.

B. Educating Girls

American Presbyterian missionaries initially arrived in Lebanon in 1819 with the evangelization of Eastern Christians as their primary objective.[20] Much to their dismay, evangelization drew an insignificant number of converts; only eight people converted between 1823 and 1834.[21] Afterwards, education became the locus for the missionaries' civilizing ambitions. Female education became their prime concern through the justification that women occupied an important role in the family and were fundamental in propagating novel concepts related to morality, education, and other pertinent values.[22] Through the creation of schools for girls, "they ultimately ended up trying to evangelize through the back door, so to speak… albeit not necessarily through conversion."[23] It was firmly believed that educating future mothers would result in social improvement through the rearing of proper families. The Mission founded one of the first girls' schools in the country in 1834: the Beirut Female Seminary (BFS).[24] In 1904, the BFS was renamed the American School for Girls (ASG),[25] where the classes of the AJC would be held from 1924 to 1927.

[20] Abdul Latif Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria 1800-1901: A Study of Educational, Literary and Religious Work* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 41.

[21] Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 63.

[22] Hoda Elsadda, "A 'Phantom Freedom in a Phantom Modernity?' Protestant Missionaries, Domestic Ideology and Narratives of Modernity in an Arab Context," *Rethinking History* 15, no.2 (June 2011): 215.

[23] Fleischmann, "The Impact of American Protestant Missions in Lebanon," 412.

[24] Edith Hanania, "Access of Arab Women to Higher Education," in *Arab Women and Education* (Beirut: Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, 1980), 17.

Education for girls and women was understood as a way to advance the nation and bring about social progress, as well as a means of endowing women with marketable skills that would ensure the economic sustainability of their families. The aftermath of wars in modern Lebanese history generally brought about changes for women in educational opportunities and formal participation in the labor force. For instance, following the civil wars in Mount Lebanon between Christians and Druze in 1860, the number of girls' schools proliferated.[26] Most girls who had received any form of education prior to 1860 had been tutored at home via private lessons. Before the civil war there were only four girls' schools in Beirut, compared to nineteen boys' schools. Between 1860 and 1869, the total number of girls' schools increased to twenty-three.[27]

From the 1860s onwards, the students at the BFS were generally daughters of elite Beiruti families. The girls were taught arithmetic, history, and languages in an era when girls from bourgeois families were normally home schooled.[28] More and more elite families were inclined to enroll their children in missionary schools since their curricula matched what they expected their daughters to learn, and because "the American mission spread an ideal of womanhood that was restricted to the roles of educators and homemakers, spouses, and future mothers."[29] The Mission operated

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[25] Minutes of the Syria Mission (annual meetings) December 9, 1904. PHS RG 03-112, Vol. VI, 6. In 1959 the school changed its name to the Beirut Evangelical School for Girls.

[26] Nicol, "An Outline History," 2.

[27] Hania Abou Al-Shamat, "Educational Divide Across Religious Groups in Nineteenth Century Lebanon: Institutional Effects of the Demand for Curricular Modernization," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20, no. 3 (September 2009): 322.

[28] Mariline Karam, "Esther Azhari Muyal (1873-1948): Aspects of a Modern Education in *Bilad al-Sham*," in *Entangled Education: Foreign and Local Schools in Ottoman Syria and Mandate Lebanon (19th-20th Centuries)*, eds. Julia Hauser, Christine B. Lindner, and Esther Moller (Beirut: Orient Institute, 2016), 256-57.

[29] Ibid.

three schools for girls: the American School for Girls in Beirut, the Sidon Girls' School in southern Lebanon, and the Tripoli Girls' School in northern Lebanon. The fact that families sent their daughters to these schools, however, did not result in mass conversion to Protestantism.

Discourses on educating women first appeared in 1849 in a speech by Butrus al-Bustani, who argued that women and men were equal and therefore had the same rights.[30] The press started to insist on girls' education through models based on the domestic role of women beginning in 1870. Ellen Fleischmann explains:

> Beginning in the late nineteenth century and certainly by the 1920s, educators, intellectuals, reformers, pundits, and even government officials called for and supported the idea of educating women to become more efficient, trained managers of the home, and better mothers. This call escalated into a virtual chorus in the first four decades of the twentieth century.[31]

This perception of women was held by the intellectual elite, who believed that mothers must teach their children Arabic, inculcate them with love for the motherland, and educate them in a way that would allow them to aspire to national independence for their country. Mothers could not successfully teach their children unless they themselves were erudite; therefore women's education was understood by both sexes as an investment in the welfare and progress of the homeland and the family. It is striking that women's education was always linked to larger national aims; the merits of women's education were regularly promoted as serving broader social and political purposes, rather than as a beneficial individual pursuit. Women were also responsible for the state of their marriages; not only would an uneducated woman be unfit as a mother, she would be an unsuitable wife as well.

[30] Butrus al-Bustani, "Khitab fi ta'lim al-nisa,'" in *al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li-al-'ulum wa al-funun, 1847-1852,* ed. Butrus al-Bustani (Beirut: Dar al-hamra', 1990), 30.

[31] Fleischmann, "Lost in Translation," 34-35.

Hence late Ottoman Beirut witnessed a proliferation of new schools. In 1880, two charitable associations founded their own schools for girls – the Maqasid Islamic Benevolent Society,[32] a Sunni institution, and Zahrat al-Ihsan, a Greek Orthodox establishment.[33] By 1909, students at these schools were learning household subjects, which I collectively refer to as home economics. Home economics education in Lebanon was a major component of the modernist and nationalist project that necessitated remaking women, and was taught in most schools.[34]

C. Home Economics

Home economics began as part of a wider initiative for progressive reform in the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century. Its founders believed that it would be a source of social change. Historians of home economics designate its official birth in 1841, when Catherine Beecher published her text, *Treatise on Domestic Economy*,[35] which was "the first comprehensive book on managing a home without servants, the first suitable text on the subject for public schools, and a source of energy-saving, scientific information."[36] Beecher's *Treatise* gained so much

[32] Nadya Sbaiti, "Lessons in History: Education and the Formation of National Society in Beirut, Lebanon, 1920s-1960s", Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, 2008, 53.

[33] Magda Nammour, "Perception de l'éducation à Beyrouth d'après la pensée écrite de la fin du XIXe siècle," in *Entangled Education: Foreign and Local Schools in Ottoman Syria and Mandate Lebanon (19-20th Centuries)*, eds. Julia Hauser, Christine B. Linder, and Esther Moller (Beirut: Orient Institute, 2016), 114.

[34] Adnan Tarcici, *L'Education actuelle de la jeune fille musulmane au Liban* (Vitry-sur-Seine: Librairie Mariale, 1941), 38.

[35] Catherine Beecher, *Treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and School* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1841).

[36] Virginia B. Vincenti, "Chronology of Events and Movements Which Have Defined and Shaped Home Economics," in *Rethinking Home Economics: Women and the History of a Profession*, eds. Sarah Stage and Virginia B. Vincenti (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 321.

popularity among American housewives that new copies of the book had to be reprinted annually for several years.[37]

As a discipline, home economics began to develop further in the years after the American Civil War (1861-1865),[38] and would transform homemaking into a demanding occupation and the home into a mother's workshop.[39] The momentum towards the professionalization of home economics in academia commenced in 1899 at a conference in Lake Placid, New York,[40] where the attendees believed that the modernization and industrialization of nations necessitated that young women study home economics.[41] Early advocates of the discipline believed that women's foremost role was "to save the family and, by so doing, civilize men and society."[42]

Both women's roles and the role of the home itself were being redefined. The nature of the home had changed from a locus of production to one of consumption due to the fact that "the industrial revolution had removed industries from the home."[43] The common association of home with family was actually a middle class invention that transpired around the turn of eighteenth century,[44] reframing the home as a private retreat away from a busy world. Only elite classes could afford to recast

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[37] Patricia R. Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), 28.

[38] Emma Seifrit Weigley, "It Might Have Been Euthenics: The Lake Placid Conferences and the Home Economics Movement," *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (March 1974): 79.

[39] Tamara K. Hareven, "The Home and Family in Historical Perspective," *Social Research* (Spring 1991): 261.

[40] Megan J. Elias, "Stir it Up: Home Economics in Higher Education, 1900-1945," Ph.D. diss., The City University of New York, 2003, 3.

[41] Ibid., 14.

[42] Maresi Nerad, *The Academic Kitchen: A Social History of Gender Stratification at the University of California, Berkeley* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 4.

[43] Weigley, 80.

[44] Hareven, "The Home and Family in Historical Perspective," 254.

the home in this light – working class families still utilized the home as an economic resource to generate income. It is ironic that the doctrine of home economics upheld the home as a woman's laboratory, even though the home had changed from a workplace to a private refuge. The management of domestic space and the work that was performed within it became an official discipline aimed to raise the standards of family life. Home economics was glorified as possessing curative powers; it was a healing force for any domestic or national issues.

A major tenet of this discipline was that although women were believed to naturally have domestic and maternal predispositions, they still needed to be trained in how to use these instincts properly.[45] Home economics was an almost exclusively female field, in that it did not have a history of being dominated by men. It brought women together to deal with the social issues of the day: "Home economics was one movement among several in the period between the Civil War and the Great Depression that saw women-identified women working together to reform society in ways that were often directed at protecting other women—workers, mothers, consumers—from the ravages of the industrializing world."[46] Home economics did not assign any roles to men in terms of participating or aiding in the industrial efficiency of the home, nor was there ever an incentive in any country for men to be trained in a similar fashion.[47] This did not preclude a small number of men from studying the subject, however.[48]

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[45] Mary Hancock, "Gendering the Modern: Women and Home Science in British India," in *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities*, ed. Antoinette Burton (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 154.

[46] Megan J. Elias, "'Model Mamas:' The Domestic Partnership of Home Economics Pioneers Flora Rose and Martha Van Rensselaer," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* (January 2006): 70.

[47] Ellen Fleischmann, "At Home in the World: Globalizing Domesticity Through Home Economics in the Interwar Years," in *Transnational and Historical Perspectives on Global Health, Welfare and Humanitarianism*, eds. Ellen Fleischmann, Sonya Grypma, Michael Marten Kristiansand, and Inger Marie Okkenhaug (Kristiansand, Norway: Portal Books, 2013), 182.

The idea that women's education should revolve around their domestic and maternal edification was a phenomenon that transpired worldwide at various points in history. The home economics education at the AJC, later the BCW, was based on the American model, and students studied textbooks by American authors that were used in colleges and universities in the United States.[49] Courses falling under the umbrella of home economics, such as childcare and hygiene, were available at the College as early as 1927.[50] Home economics education at the College was the result of the intersection of domesticity and nationalism. The social and economic class that these students belonged to was defined by domesticity, which had become an alternative language of female empowerment. Home economics and domesticity reflected the ideals of the urban, educated, professional middle class. Class politics expected that women would manage their domestic spaces efficiently, rather than leave most of the work to maids or other household help. A staff member of the American Presbyterian Mission in Lebanon commented that students would "begin to realize that a house run mostly by a maid is not up to the standards of the family for whom that maid

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[48] Male college graduates in the United States made up less than two percent of Home Economics majors. In American colleges throughout 1947 and 1948, a total of ninety-seven men majored in Home Economics at the undergraduate level. By 1967-1968, the total number increased to 202. It does not appear that a significant number continued their home economics education at the graduate level. See Margaret W. Rossiter, "The Men Move In: Home Economics, 1950-1970," in *Rethinking Home Economics: Women and the History of a Profession*, eds. Sarah Stage and Virginia B. Vincenti (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 99.

[49] Some of these books are cited (incompletely) in student theses from the days of the Beirut College for Women. The books that were used included but were not limited to: Margaret Fedde, *The Place of Home Economics in Education* (Unknown Binding, Unknown Year); Irma Highbaugh, *Source Book on Home and Family Life* (Unknown Binding, 1947); Ivol Spafford, *Fundamentals in Teaching Home Economics* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1942). These books are cited in Alia Halawi, "Home Economics in High Schools in Lebanon," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1954.

[50] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 6-7. LAU, RNL.

works."[51] The home economics education offered at the College came to be one of its two defining features, alongside social service.

D. Social Service

Another defining feature of the AJC and BCW was the heavy emphasis placed on social service, and the notion that social service should be performed selflessly and passionately. Ellen Fleischmann explains that this aspect of education at the AJC was a result of transformations in the American Presbyterian Mission's religious approaches and broader changes in the missionary movement abroad, in addition to the economic toll that World War I had taken on Lebanon.[52] In Lebanon, social service was deeply intertwined with helping the poor as a religious ideal, but the *means* of providing social service had changed during the war. Melanie Tanielian and Samih Farsoun underscore that philanthropic giving, a notion classically associated with elite women, has always been a fundamental part of Islamic and Christian traditions in Lebanon.[53] This was a point of intersection between the missionaries' vision for remaking Lebanese women and a concept that the women had already embraced. Tanielian explains that the poor of Mount Lebanon received charity from both individuals and endowments funded by religious institutions; Farsoun explicates that family-endowed and family-managed welfare groups were present as well. The nature of social service would change during the war, however, through the creation of charitable associations. Tanielian elaborates:

[51] Sophie Wakim Karayusuf, "Preparation of High School Girls for Homemaking and Marriage," *The Cedar Bough* 3, no. 17 (Autumn 1948): 11-12. NEST Special Collections.

[52] Fleischmann, "Under an American Roof," 72.

[53] Melanie Tanielian, *The Charity of War: Famine, Humanitarian Aid, and World War I in the Middle East* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 47; Samih Farsoun, "Family Structure and Society in Modern Lebanon," in *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East: An Anthropological Reader*, ed. Louise Sweet (Garden City, New York: Natural History Press, 1970), 260.

> In the Middle East, charitable giving took on 'a new type of organization, the *jam'iyya*' (society or association) in the mid-nineteenth century. The *jam'iyya* is representative of a move from local religious institutions that collected and distributed funds to organized groups, associations, and committees that not only sought to provide immediate relief but also instigated public funding and awareness campaigns to help the destitute. Before the *jam'iyya* individual donations and family endowments were the primary sources of charity.[54]

The way that social work developed in Lebanon was distinctly different from the way social work developed in Europe and the United States. In Europe, social work was entangled with the spread of democracy as a social principle.[55] In the United States, social work was tied to the development of feminism and gender-based justifications for equal rights for women and their inclusion in the civic and social order.[56] Unlike the Lebanese case, neither European nor American frameworks of social service entailed religious doctrine. However, both Lebanese and American development of social service necessarily implicated women.

Social service at the AJC and BCW was offered both as coursework and as an extracurricular activity. The social science courses overlapped with social work education and general education. Some of these courses provided training for future social workers, as the students were taken on trips to factories, camps, and schools in Lebanon and Syria where they could observe the conditions of different social groups. Women who participated in social service projects at the College were not establishing a novel practice. The *means* through which they gave charity was relatively new, such as traveling to remote villages in Lebanon and Syria, but the notion of women being responsible for helping the poor was timeless.

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[54] Tanielian, 47.

[55] Sabine Hering and Berteke Waaldijk, "Towards a 'Women's History' of Social Work in Europe," in *History of Social Work in Europe (1900-1960): Female Pioneers and their Influence on the Development of International Social Organizations*, eds. Sabine Hering and Berteke Waaldijk (Opalden, Denmark: Leske and Budrich, 2003), 12.

[56] Susan P. Kemp and Ruth Brandwein, "Feminisms and Social Work in the United States: An Intertwined History," *Journal of Women and Social Work* 25, no. 4 (2010): 343-44.

E. World War I

World War I catalyzed various movements in the Middle East, such as Arab nationalism and Lebanese nationalism. However, a lesser-recognized movement that resulted from the hardships of the war was the momentum towards women's education. At the outset of the war in 1914, the concept of female education at the elementary and secondary level was largely uncontested by society at large. Melanie Tanielian emphasizes that: "The war's importance in accelerating women's entrance into the public sphere and making important gains in terms of political and social equality, whether permanent or temporary, cannot be neglected."[57]

The First World War served as a point of departure for reflecting upon social issues. In Mount Lebanon, approximately 150,000 to 300,000 people died, while half the population of Beirut perished.[58] Most residents died from hunger and various illnesses, and a significant number of people left the country.[59] The famine, diseases, deaths, and dislocation brought about by the war and the disruption of the family's traditional patriarchal structure resulted in more opportunities for female education and paid employment. The conscription of local men for the Ottoman war effort forced women and girls to generate financial resources to survive the ensuing destruction that the First World War brought to Lebanon. Elizabeth Thompson has described the conditions of the war as a "crisis of paternity" in which social norms and gender norms were "turned upside down" as a result of the drastic changes

[57] Tanielian, 191.

[58] Ibid., 2.

[59] Ibid.

brought by the absence of men.[60] The need for women to work in light of tough economic times during and after the war contributed to new interpretations of men and women's roles. This was a major factor that led families to desire increased education for women, as they saw it as a way to get them into much-needed work to contribute to the family income. Other families were concerned with the "marriageability" of their daughters and their preparedness to become wives to men of good social standing.[61] Higher education would place women on a path of upward social mobility; the importance of improving domestic life through education attracted women who came from financially comfortable backgrounds.

After the conclusion of World War I and the establishment of the new Lebanese state, the demand for office assistants, nurses, teachers, and technicians started to grow.[62] Women themselves began to ask why they were denied higher education while men had been given the opportunity for more than half a century. In 1925, the French Mandate authorities published a report on higher education in Lebanon and Syria that concluded that the demand for women's higher education was growing, and that the primary reason behind this demand was for the moral improvement of women in addition to their proper preparation for housewifery and motherhood. The concept of education was starting to shift from a privilege of the elite to a practical mechanism towards employment and economic opportunities. The final conclusion of the report of 1925 was that parents wanted to have some control

[60] Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 19.

[61] Khater, *Inventing Home*, 140.

[62] Nicol, "An Outline History," 3-4.

over the environment their daughters would be educated in, hence the women-only atmosphere of the College was highly appealing.[63]

Remaking women became an urgent project of modernity throughout the Arab world. Western societies had certain features that could explain their progress and development – one of the most fundamental characteristics was the emancipation of women. The "emancipation of women" referred to their educational status; there was no concern to improve women's conditions by granting them more legal rights, or to increase their access to economic or political resources. One of the primary reasons for the founding of the American Junior College for Women in Beirut in 1924 was the desire for higher education by women themselves, their parents, and society at large. This desire was linked to the ongoing "woman question" debate that had commenced in the nineteenth century and the economic hardships that resulted from World War I. A collective awareness among upper class women began to materialize during the First World War when Ottoman officials recruited elite women for relief efforts. Melanie Tanielian explains: "For Beiruti elite women, in particular, their contributions to the war effort formed the basis to legitimize their political expressions and rights claims in the postwar period."[64] A nascent women's movement began to flourish, and a series of women's conferences soon followed. Muhammad Jamil Bayhum organized the first conference for women in Beirut in 1919.[65] Bayhum's stated objective was to raise the consciousness of the female attendees. The

[63] Lattouf, *Women, Education, and Socialization in Modern Lebanon*, 84-85.

[64] Tanielian, 176.

[65] Muhammad Jamil Bayhum, *Fatat al-Sharq fi hadarat al-Gharb: Tatawwur al-fikr al-'Arabi fi mawdu' al-mar'a khilal al-qarn al-'ishrin* (Beirut: Matba'at al-qilfat, 1952).

conference included speeches on the purported evils of the veil, and the advancements that Western women had recently achieved.[66]

Another women's conference was held seven years later on 30 March 1926, when 140 girls from twelve different Anglophone high schools in Lebanon met at the American School for Girls in Beirut for the first-ever "Girls' Conference", which lasted for three days.[67] These three days were spent praying, studying the Bible, and learning about career opportunities for girls. The girls listened to lectures on homemaking, service, and ministry, and visited the American University of Beirut and its hospital to familiarize themselves with the campus and meet with the nurses. The Girls' Conference was organized and presided over by eight American missionary women. The timing of this conference was likely not a coincidence – education was a topical issue in 1926. That same year, a report by the French Mandate authorities stated that education would be a prophylactic against prostitution, particularly in economically vulnerable populations;[68] education would channel "female respectability"[69] instead of prostitution. Even though the Mandate authorities expressed these beliefs, they were largely neglectful of female education.[70]

[66] Ibid., 10-23.

[67] Rima Nasrallah Van Saane, "Protestant Mission Schools and Lebanese Women Between Self-Realization and Role Ambiguity," May 18, 2017, lecture delivered at the Near East School of Theology, Beirut.

[68] Nadya Sbaiti, "Education Caught Between War and Nation Building", paper presented at "Human Catastrophe, Then and Now: Social Trauma and Its Political Consequences, 1916/2016", June 1, 2016, American University of Beirut.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

F. Other American Missionary Women's Colleges in the Region

The AJC, later the BCW, was the only women's college in Lebanon, but it was not the only one in the Near East. There were two other women's colleges in the region during this era, both of which were founded by American missionaries: the American College for Girls in Cairo and the American College for Girls in Constantinople (ACGC).

The American College for Girls in Cairo was founded in 1910.[71] It was an educational institution that contained both an elementary and secondary school for girls, as well as junior college programs of study for women.[72] It never became a coeducational institution and is still operating today under the name Ramses College for Girls.[73] The American College for Girls in Constantinople was founded in 1871. In its earlier days, the majority of the student body of the ACGC was comprised of Christian minorities from the central part of the Ottoman Empire, namely Greeks, Armenians, Albanians, and Bulgarians.[74] The Ottomans did not allow Turkish students to matriculate until the early 1900s.[75] The student body was mostly Turkish by the middle of the twentieth century.[76] Similar to the college in Beirut, the American College for Girls in Constantinople regularly supplied its host society with pioneering female graduates, demonstrating the important role of higher education in women's advancement. ACGC alumnae included members of parliament, university

[71] Christine Sproul, "The American College for Girls, Cairo, Egypt: Its History and Influence on Egyptian Women. A Study of Selected Graduates," Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1982, 2.

[72] Ibid., 63.

[73] http://rcgschool.com [last accessed November 7, 2018]

[74] Mary Mills Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure: Istanbul (Constantinople) Woman's College 1871-1924* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934), 224-48.

[75] Ibid., 135.

[76] John Freely, *A History of Robert College, the American College for Girls, and Bogazici University (Bosphorus University)*, volume 1 (Istanbul: YKY, 2000), 12.

professors, secondary school teachers, lawyers, and physicians.[77] One of the most prominent alumnae was Halide Edib, a Turkish novelist and women's rights activist,[78] who claimed to "love, love, love, everything about the college!"[79]

Unlike the American Junior College for Women in Beirut however, ACGC students were required to learn physics and military science, and spent significantly less time learning household subjects.[80] Even in 1890 the only home economics course available at the American College for Girls in Constantinople was sewing.[81] While the birth of the Turkish republic witnessed lively debates on women's roles in society and the family, Kemalist rhetoric in Turkey exhorted women to explore activities beyond wifehood and motherhood.[82] This was certainly not the case in Lebanon in the early days of the republic, or even throughout the post independence era.

By 1932, domestic subjects were no longer offered at the American College for Girls in Constantinople,[83] whereas home economics education at the AJC and BCW would persevere into 1969. This also outlasted home economics courses at the Seven Sisters[84] colleges in the United States, none of which kept home economics

[77] Meta Glass, "The American College for Girls, Istanbul," *American Association of University Women* 45, no. 2 (January 1952): 95.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1927* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 25.

[80] Glass, 95-96.

[81] Freely, 150.

[82] Faith J. Childress, "Creating the New Woman in Early Republican Turkey: The Contributions of the American Collegiate Institute and the American College for Girls," *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 4 (2008): 560.

[83] Ibid.

[84] The Seven Sisters were a consortium of elite East coast colleges for women: Vassar, Wellesley, Bryn Mawr, Smith, Mount Holyoke, Radcliffe, and Barnard.

classes past the late 1950s.[85] In fact, only two of the Seven Sisters colleges, Smith and Vassar, had actually offered home economics education in the first place because popular opinion within the Seven Sisters dictated that the domestic sciences were not a serious academic endeavor.[86] This was never a popular opinion at the women's college in Beirut. The ACGC was ultimately merged with Robert College in 1971 to become the University of the Bosporus, a coeducational institution.[87]

G. Sources and Chapter Outlines

At the time of writing, there is no official archive for the former AJC and BCW. I have had to construct my own archive by collecting materials from LAU's Riyad Nassar Library (RNL); the Special Collections of the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut; AUB's Nami Jafet Library; and the records of the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS) in Philadelphia. LAU's library has course catalogues, yearbooks, alumnae bulletins, and thesis projects from the AJC, BCW, and Beirut University College. The Special Collections at NEST has course catalogues, student handbooks, and bulletins of the College, as well as missionary records such as letters, reports, and Mission publications such as *Syria News Quarterly* and *The Cedar Bough*. AUB's library contains microfilm reels of Lebanese women's magazines, such as *Sawt al-mar'a*, archival issues of *Outlook* (the AUB student newspaper), as well as biographical dictionaries of pioneering Lebanese women that feature many alumnae of the College. Finally, the PHS in Philadelphia holds missionary records and correspondences related to the operation of the College.

[85] Paul Philip Marthers, "Sweeping Out Home Economics: Curriculum Reform at the Connecticut College for Women, 1952-1962," *History of Education Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (August 2011): 382.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Freely, 12.

Unfortunately, I was not able to locate all of the College's publications, specifically publications by students such as *Veils Up, Durub,* and *The College Tribune*. These publications are referenced in yearbooks and course catalogues but did not turn up in any of the archives I consulted. My Arabic sources include *Sawt al-mar'a*, memoirs, newspapers, and biographical dictionaries. Although *Sawt al-mar'a* did not mention the College itself much, alumnae regularly contributed articles. The paucity of Arabic sources in this dissertation is largely due to the fact that the affairs of this College were conducted in English and the alumnae generally spoke about their educational life in English. Another important source is *Al-Raida* ("The [female] Pioneer"), a journal published in English by the Institute of Women's Studies in the Arab World; the Institute was founded at the College in 1973.

The chapters in this dissertation are organized around the creation, development, and disappearance of the College. Chapter Two deals with the formative years of the American Junior College for Women during the 1920s and 1930s. Chapter Three explores the College in the 1940s and 1950s, including its transformation into the four-year Beirut College for Women in 1949. Sources used for these chapters include course catalogues, student handbooks, College bulletins, yearbooks, speeches, interviews with alumnae, alumnae bulletins, newspapers, AUB records, books and articles published throughout this period, and writings by the faculty members, such as correspondences, reports, articles, and unpublished manuscripts.

Chapter Four analyzes what issues perplexed the female students on a day-to-day basis by examining their own writings via their senior thesis projects, which function as unique historical sources. These texts serve as written records of the students' educational encounter at the College during the 1950s and early 1960s, and I

make use of them as feminist theoretical conversations, illustrating that women were active agents who investigated various issues and reflected upon new ideas. These women were shrewd observers of their situations and sharp social critics; however, some of them challenged the status quo while others upheld it. This chapter examines several senior theses written about courtship, choosing a husband, changing family relationships, generational differences between parents and daughters, problems of married women, and social problems, such as prostitution and child welfare.

Chapter Five explores the lives of a selection of alumnae who pioneered in their education and occupations by achieving milestones for Lebanese women. I raise the questions: What did these women do with their education? How did they conceive of their identities? What did they believe women's roles were in society and the family? What were their perspectives on their schooling at the College and its impact on their lives? The entire chapter is narrated by mini biographies. Primary sources include alumnae bulletins, articles from the Arabic women's press, newspapers, speeches, biographical dictionaries, interviews, and a monograph by alumna Marie Sabri about her erstwhile classmates.[88]

Chapter Six examines the Beirut College for Women in the 1960s, its struggle to remain a women's college, and the formation of the coeducational Beirut University College in 1973. I consider the change from BCW to BUC to be the downfall of a women's college rather than a transition. Sources include course catalogues, yearbooks, interviews with alumnae and teachers, and AUB records.

This dissertation begins in the early years of the French Mandate over Lebanon, proceeds into World War II and Lebanese independence, continues into the post-independence era and the Six Day Arab-Israeli War of June 1967, and concludes

[88] Marie Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles: Beirut College for Women* (Beirut: Khayat, 1967).

just before the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975. The point of departure finds the Lebanese population struggling with the aftermath of the First World War during the emergence of the new state of Lebanon under French Mandate rule, and the end point finds them grappling with total collapse of their state into utter chaos and pandemonium. We now turn to the modest beginnings of the American Junior College for Women in Beirut in 1924, a groundbreaking development that pioneered higher education for Lebanese women.

CHAPTER II

THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF THE AMERICAN JUNIOR COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, 1924 to 1939

A. Introduction

In 1924, the first and only women's college in Lebanon opened its doors in Beirut. Administered by American Presbyterian missionaries, "the extracurricular activities, the home life, and certain elective subjects on the curriculum" were designed "to satisfy the special interests and needs of women students."[89] This chapter examines the creation of the American Junior College for Women in Beirut as a two-year institution in 1924 and traces its progress until the end of the 1930s. I explore the structure of the College, the general curriculum, the home economics courses and activities, the social service courses and activities, religious education, extracurricular clubs that came into being, and the student body in order to create a vivid picture of what life was like at this institution from 1924 to 1939. I consider 1939 to be the end point of the AJC's formative period due to the outbreak of World War II, which would reshape the College.

The AJC pioneered higher education for young women by creating a space for it in the first place, thereby allowing women who enrolled in the Junior College to break educational barriers. It advanced women by offering differentiated coursework in typically "male" and "female" domains while modernizing them through the distaff frameworks of home economics and social service. Although the discourse among the faculty and students often centered around improving home life via education and

[89] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1927-1928*, 6. LAU, RNL.

reforming society via social service, this narrative ignored other types of knowledge that were transmitted to the students, such as science, mathematics, business, economics, history, philosophy, and political science. The College provided an avenue of advancement beyond homemaking and social service for students who wished to seize this opportunity. What women ended up doing with their AJC diploma depended on their economic, social, and personal circumstances.

The Junior College officially opened its doors in 1924, but the momentum for creating such an institution had begun at least a decade prior. The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States started studying the possibility of developing a junior college for women as early as December 1914 while World War I was already underway. The Board voted to raise the level of education in the American School for Girls as soon as possible in order to enlarge it into a junior college.[90] Several key developments followed over the course of the next ten years. In December 1921, the acting principal of the ASG was asked by the Board to start preparing for a freshman level program of study; the principal asked for help from more Mission staff in order for this objective to materialize.[91] The following year, in 1922, a conference on women's higher education was convened by members of Protestant missionary schools such as the American School for Girls, the Tripoli Girls' School, the British Syrian Teacher Training College, and the American University of Beirut.[92] Two years later, in 1924, six students at the ASG asked the

[90] Donald Roberts, "The Beirut College for Women: A Short History," Unpublished Manuscript, 1958, 10. LAU, RNL.

[91] James Nicol, "An Outline History of the American Junior College for Women and the Beirut College for Women", Unpublished Manuscript, 1956, 6. LAU, RNL.

[92] Ibid., 6. All of these institutions were Protestant missionary establishments.

principal "if they might not go on to advanced work."[93] Therefore, the agency of young female students played a part in the creation of the AJC.

The history of the American University of Beirut is relevant to the history of the American Junior College for Women. A crucial factor that helped bring about the inception of the AJC, a seminal moment for women's education, was the refusal of AUB to admit female students on an equal basis with men.[94] Although it was founded in 1866,[95] AUB did not educate a single woman until 1905 when a School of Nursing was founded.[96] However, the administration decided that the creation of a nursing program would not result in full coeducation at AUB.[97] It was clear that the American University of Beirut "was established definitely for men students,"[98] as stated by James Nicol, an early faculty member of the AJC. While the establishment of the nursing school at AUB in 1905 was a transformative development for Lebanese

[93] "The American Junior College and its Junior Misses," speech delivered at the American Association of University Women, January 5, 1946, PHS Archives 13-0716. The author is not indicated. The only information available is that the author of the speech was an American female educator at the AJC from 1937-1945. https://digital.history.pcusa.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A144807?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=66f7662f0d8451a1034a&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=0#page/1/mode/1up/search/american+junior+college [last accessed February 12, 2019].

[94] Ellen Fleischmann, "Under an American Roof: The Beginnings of the American Junior College for Women in Beirut," *Arab Studies Journal* (Spring 2009): 65-66.

[95] AUB was initially founded under the name Syrian Protestant College in 1866. It changed its name to the American University of Beirut in 1920 after declaring itself non-denominational. The following texts are highly illuminating regarding the history of AUB: Betty Anderson, *The American University of Beirut: Arab Nationalism and Liberal Education* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011); Bayard Dodge, *The American University of Beirut: A Brief History of the University and the Lands Which it Serves* (Beirut: Khayat, 1958); Nadia Maria El Cheikh, Lina Choueiri, and Bilal Orfali eds., *One Hundred and Fifty* (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 2016); John M. Munro, *A Mutual Concern: The Story of the American University of Beirut* (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1977); Stephen Penrose, *That They May Have Life: The Story of the American University of Beirut, 1866-1941* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1970).

[96] Joseph L. Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influences on American Policy, 1810-1927* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 24.

[97] Nicol, "An Outline History," 4.

[98] Ibid.

women's higher education, there would not be any new progress in this realm until 1920.

After a fifteen-year lull, women finally gained another victory in their struggle for higher education in 1920 when AUB decided to admit female students to the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, and Pharmacy on condition that there would be a minimum of three women registered together.[99] This resulted in demands that AUB become fully co-educational, but the faculty succeeded in convincing the Mission to open a college exclusively for women instead.[100] The creation of a separate college for women would enforce the notion that the goals of education for men differed from those for women. AUB would continue to be perceived as a men's university, regardless of a small and gradually increasing female presence.

The American University of Beirut eventually decided in 1924 that women would be admitted to the sophomore level and above.[101] Seven women seized the opportunity and enrolled in the autumn of 1924; a few of them were even chaperoned by male guardians.[102] Coinciding with this development, the American School for Girls successfully added a university-level freshman year to prepare students to enter AUB as sophomores that same year in 1924.[103] This was the official founding of the American Junior College for Women in Beirut, even though its classes were held at

[99] Aleksandra Majstorac Kobiljski, "Women Students at the American University of Beirut from the 1920s to the 1940s," in *Gender, Religion and Change in the Middle East: Two Hundred Years of History*, eds. Inger Marie Okkenhaug and Ingvlid Flaskerud (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2005), 69; Fleischmann, "Under an American Roof," 67.

[100] Ellen Fleischmann, "The Impact of American Protestant Missions in Lebanon on the Construction of Female Identity, c. 1860-1950," 415; Edith Hanania, "Access of Arab Women to Higher Education," in *Arab Women and Education* (Beirut: Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, 1980), 17. It is unclear precisely when or how AUB convinced the Mission to open a women's college.

[101] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933,* 7. LAU, RNL.

[102] Munro, *A Mutual Concern*, 78-79.

[103] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933,* 7.

the ASG. A sophomore level was added to the AJC in 1925, which would enable women to enter the American University of Beirut as juniors. These new college-level freshman and sophomore programs of study eventually resulted in the establishment of a separate facility for the AJC in 1927, a period that Ellen Fleischmann characterizes as "critical in both Mission history and the history of female education in the Middle East."[104] The Mission was also competing against French schools following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 and the inauguration of the new French Mandate over Lebanon and Syria in 1920.[105] The Junior College "distinguished the Americans by the very fact that it was an American institution that was the first institution for higher education for women in Greater Syria."[106]

Besides the AJC and the limited options at AUB, the only other possibility for women's university education in Lebanon at the time was the Université Saint Joseph (USJ), which was founded by French Jesuit missionaries in 1875.[107] USJ followed the path of AUB in hesitatingly allowing women to enroll in the early 1920s. The first female student graduated in 1928 with a pharmacy degree.[108] Four female students graduated in 1931, two with medical degrees and the other two with law degrees.[109]

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[104] Fleischmann, "Under an American Roof," 63.

[105] For more on the French Mandate of Lebanon, see: Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate* (New Haven, CT: Research Publications, 1973); Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privileges and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Meir Zamir, *Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood 1926-1939* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997); Iskandar al-Riyashi, *Al-Ayyam al-Lubnaniya* (Beirut: Shirkat al-Tab'a wa al-Nashr al-Lubnaniya, 1957).

[106] Fleischmann, "Under an American Roof," 63. The term "Greater Syria" referred to the area covering both modern Lebanon and Syria.

[107] Carla Eddé, *L'USJ: Portrait d'une Université* (Beirut: Presse de l'Université Saint Joseph, 2000).

[108] Hanania, 25-26.

[109] Ibid.

Several women students enrolled in USJ's dentistry school in the 1940s.[110] Women at USJ primarily studied law, medicine, nursing, and pharmacy.[111]

Other alternatives for post-secondary education were teacher training colleges, namely the British Syrian Teacher Training College (BSTC), the first teacher training institute in Lebanon.[112] It was exclusively for women and a British Protestant missionary establishment, founded in 1860.[113] The BSTC had 3,108 students by 1914 and was the primary supplier of teachers for the Protestant mission schools until the middle of the twentieth century.[114] Despite its name, it was a Normal School rather than a college. The British Syrian Teacher Training College encompassed an elementary and secondary school as well. Girls at the BSTC were instructed in standard academic subjects, Bible study, and basic domestic skills such as sewing and embroidery.[115] Those who completed teacher training were awarded a Normal Diploma.[116] These limited choices for higher education for women in Lebanon were typical of the Levant during this period. In Egypt, for instance, the American University in Cairo admitted its first female student in 1928, and Cairo University graduated its first women students in 1933.[117]

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[110] Ibid.

[111] Ruth Woodsmall, *Study of the Role of Women: Their Activities and Organizations, in Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria, October 1954-August 1955* (New York: International Federation of Business and Professional Women, 1956), 11.

[112] Woodsmall, *Study of the Role of Women*, 10.

[113] Fleischmann, "Under an American Roof," 69.

[114] Ibid.

[115] "BSTC Grade Reports, 1893-1912," bound volume. NEST Special Collections.

[116] Letter from Frances Irwin to her parents, November 11, 1934. PHS, RG 186-2-12.

[117] Donald Malcolm Reid, *Cairo University and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 105-6.

To an outsider, it may seem odd that none of the three universities operating in Lebanon at the time was actually Lebanese, nor did any one of these universities conduct its education in Arabic. Two were American and one was French, and none of them was founded as a secular institution. This was a common trend within the wider educational scene in Lebanon at the time. Historically, Anglo-American and Latin French educational philosophies had been in competition with one another in Lebanon.[118] The pre-Mandate era saw a mixture of schools that were Ottoman, sectarian, and foreign. During the French Mandate, secular education was introduced, and what became known as the "Lebanese Program" was developed in 1929.[119] The first Lebanese institution of higher education, the Lebanese Academy (LA), was founded in 1937 through private initiatives.[120] It was non-sectarian and did not have any foreigners overseeing its management and fundraising.[121] The Lebanese Academy received partial subsidies from the Ministry of Education.[122] The primary languages of instruction were Arabic, English, and French,[123] and it had Schools of Architecture, Literature and the Humanities, Politics and Economics, Law, Painting and Sculpture, and Music.[124] It is unclear if the Lebanese Academy initially welcomed female students. Even if it was open to women, the mixing of the sexes in educational institutions was frowned upon and it is doubtful that there would have been many

[118] Wadad Cortas, *Educational Report* (Beirut: Secondary Schools Principals' Association [Lebanon] Executive Committee, 1957), 7. AUB Jafet Library.

[119] Ibid., 3.

[120] Today, the former Lebanese Academy has been integrated into the University of Balamand under the name "Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts." http://www.alba.edu.lb/french/Accueil [last accessed December 10, 2018].

[121] Cortas, *Educational Report*, 27.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid., 28.

[124] Ibid., 27.

women enrolled when it first opened. The next Lebanese establishment of higher learning that would be created was Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik (USEK) in 1938, which was established by the Lebanese Maronite Order.[125] It also unclear if USEK initially allowed women to enroll, but given the widespread social attitudes that frowned upon coeducation, one can assume that it was highly unlikely. The Lebanese University, a public institution funded by the Lebanese government, would be created in 1951.[126]

It is against this backdrop that female students began their higher education at the American Junior College for Women in Beirut in 1924. From the very beginning, higher education for women was characterized by tensions and contradictions. For women who wanted to obtain a higher education in a sex-segregated college, the AJC was the only possibility. The fact that women were largely excluded from other universities was justified by arguments regarding the fundamental nature of men and women and their appropriate functions in the family and society. The simple fact that the Junior College even existed challenged some of these arguments and confirmed others. The AJC was situated in the center of debates on reforming the status of women while offering elite women educational opportunities within certain parameters. Its existence continued to raise questions over education and professions for women of a particular class background. While women of the elite class had never worked outside of the home, lower class, rural, and peasant women had traditionally worked in the fields or as maids. Some upper class women had experience in

[125] http://www.usek.edu.lb/en/about-usek [last accessed March 4, 2019]. I could not locate any literature about this university.

[126] Cortas, *Educational Report*, 29.

philanthropic work, both as part of their religious duties[127] long before the establishment of the Junior College, and also as a result of volunteer work to help those suffering from economic hardships during World War I.[128]

B. The Structure of the College

Women were admitted to the AJC on the basis of an entrance examination; a passing score of sixty out of 100 was required for admission.[129] The academic year would commence on the first of October and conclude in mid-June.[130] During its early years, the student body was mostly derived from the American School for Girls.[131] The first few graduating classes were quite small, as was the number of faculty. From 1924 to 1927 the Junior College classes were held in the ASG until 1927 when a separate, temporary facility was created on Ma'mari Street.[132] The Junior College relocated to Madame Curie Street in 1933,[133] where it still stands today as the Lebanese American University, a coeducational four-year college. The AJC's proximity to AUB was intentional in order for women to make use of the AUB libraries and laboratories, and to enroll in nursing, medicine, and pharmacy courses in AUB's professional schools.[134]

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[127] Charitable giving was a fundamental component of religious duty for both Christians and Muslims.

[128] Melanie Tanielian, *The Charity of War: Famine, Humanitarian Aid, and World War I in the Middle East* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 47-49, 173-76.

[129] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1927-1928*, 13-14.

[130] Ibid., 5.

[131] Nicol, 16.

[132] "A Campus for the First Women's College," *Syria News Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (October 1930): 2. NEST Special Collections.

[133] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 7. LAU, RNL.

[134] Ibid.

The Junior College library had two rooms that provided literature for the students in English, Arabic, and French, including daily newspapers, as well as weekly and monthly magazines.[135] Women could keep abreast of national and international current affairs while living within their secluded, heavily supervised world of the AJC. The campus also had administrative offices, an auditorium, a gymnasium, a radio studio, science laboratories, and an "alumnae room".[136]

Students were required to live either in the Junior College hostel, with relatives in Beirut, or in accommodations approved by the faculty.[137] This was due to parental and societal concerns about potential gender mixing. Students could not leave the campus without permission and a chaperone, and approved visitors were only allowed to visit the girls on Saturdays. Visits, curfews, and social behaviors were strictly regulated.[138] Lights had to be turned off by 10:30 each night.[139] Curiously, studying was regulated as well, at least in 1928. One student, Euphronia Halebian, wrote in a personal correspondence that: "On Sundays we do not have permission to study so we write letters, long ones, to our friends and families."[140]

Students lived as roommates in the AJC hostel, with two or three students typically residing in each room; only a small number of single rooms were available.[141] This likely contributed to the bonds of sisterhood that many students

[135] Ibid., 6.

[136] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 25.

[137] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933,* 8.

[138] Ibid.

[139] "The American Junior College and its Junior Misses," speech delivered at the American Association of University Women, January 5, 1946. PHS Archives 13-0716.

[140] Letter to Corinne Byerly from Euphronia Halebian, August 17, 1928. NEST Special Collections.

[141] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933,* 17.

shared with their cohort. Residential segregation forged strong community ties among the women and created an idealized refuge. Indeed, the Junior College was their entire world; the women spent more time with each other than they did with the faculty or their own families, and they socialized within a very small and supervised network: "Life centered completely around the College. The girls had very few social interests or opportunities for fun outside the College activities."[142]

A matron and other staff supervised the hostel, and the faculty who lived on campus helped to create a homelike atmosphere where faculty and students would have some of their meals together in the common dining room. Even non-resident students could arrange to have their lunch in the dining room;[143] this would allow them to socialize with their classmates and participate in communal life. In the late 1920s, some of the Junior College faculty members lived in the hostel with the students.[144] In 1927-1928, the cost of tuition was seven Turkish Gold Liras per semester;[145] in 1932-1933, tuition cost 7.50 Turkish Gold Liras per semester. It is unclear why the cost was stated in Turkish currency given that Lebanon was ruled by France at the time.

As for academic standards in the early years of the Junior College, a score of sixty out of 100 was considered a passing grade for each subject, and a score of sixty-five out of 100 was the minimum requirement to be promoted from one class to another.[146] After obtaining a diploma, the students could be admitted to the junior

[142] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 33.

[143] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 8.

[144] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1927-1928*, 7.

[145] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1927-1928*, 11.

[146] Ibid., 9; *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 10.

class of the School of Arts and Sciences, or the Schools of Dentistry, Medicine, or Nursing at the American University of Beirut.

There were only eleven faculty and staff members in 1927-1928, one of whom was Lebanese while the rest were American;[147] all of the Americans were affiliated with the Mission. Winifred Shannon was the Principal of the Junior College, and James Nicol, Mrs. G.H. Scherer, and William McCall served on the Committee of Management.[148] The only Lebanese instructor, George Kafouri, taught Arabic while the other faculty members taught the rest of the courses.[149] The small number of faculty members was due to the first few classes of the AJC only having a handful of students. For example, the first class graduated in 1926 with only three students: Munira Barbir, Saniyya Habboub, and Armenouhi Magirdichian.[150]

By the early 1930s, the number of faculty members had increased and the facilities of the AJC had expanded. The majority of the faculty members in the 1932-1933 academic year were still well educated individuals from the Mission staff, nearly all of whom had obtained a graduate-level education. Frances Irwin taught history while Winifred Shannon taught religion and hygiene. Irwin and Shannon held Master's degrees and were single missionary women.[151] Both of these women were also the first two presidents of the AJC: Frances Irwin[152] from 1924 to 1935 and

[147] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933,* 3.

[148] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1927-1928,* 3.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles,* 39.

[151] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933,* 2.

[152] Irwin was directly recruited for this job from the United States; she arrived in Lebanon in 1922 to prepare to take on the leadership of the Junior College. See Nicol, "An Outline History," 12.

Winifred Shannon from 1935 to 1937.[153] Irwin and Shannon's service to the Presbyterian Mission abroad was dubbed "women's work for women";[154] this phrase referred to the activity of women traveling to foreign lands to uplift other women.

There were three assistants in the AJC nursery school: Mabel Erdman, Vivien Greenslade, and Saniyya Habboub (class of 1926).[155] The presence of Habboub shows that the teaching staff was enriched by its own graduates.[156] After leaving the AJC, Habboub completed her medical education in the United States. She returned to Lebanon in 1932 and opened a gynecology practice.[157] Her status as a faculty member indicated that the institution produced students who were competent enough to teach at the AJC themselves.

While women at the Junior College were technically allowed to major in whatever area of study was available, the inclusion of subjects such as child development, home economics, euthenics (defined by the AJC at this time as a combination of child development and home economics),[158] and interior decorating became the defining features of the curricula. These courses of study were not offered at the American University of Beirut, nor was there ever any official discussion about creating majors in these fields.[159] The higher education system available to women

[153] "About LAU: Presidents Since 1924," http://www.lau.edu.lb/about/history/presidents.php [last accessed July 23, 2018]. It should be noted that these two female presidents were referred to as "principals" at the time. The position name was changed to "president" when the first male, William Stoltzfus, was appointed to lead the Junior College in 1937. For more information, see Nicol, 31.

[154] Frederick John Heuser, Jr., "Culture, Feminism, and the Gospel: American Presbyterian Women and Foreign Missions, 1870-1923," Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1991, 35.

[155] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 2.

[156] Nicol, 18; Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 39-40.

[157] "Dr. Saniyya Habboub: Fifty Years of Devoted Medical Service," *Al-Raida* (November 1, 1982): 2.

[158] "Beirut College For Women Administrative Report, 1951." PHS, RG 115-3-4.

[159] Betty Anderson, *The American University of Beirut*, 96.

facilitated their entrance into feminine professions, i.e. jobs deemed appropriate for female respectability, such as teaching, nursing, and secretarial work, while other students never pursued a professional career after graduation.

C. The General Curriculum

This section considers the general curriculum of the American Junior College for Women – home economics, social service, and religious education will be discussed separately. The missionaries' educational philosophy intended to enhance the physical, social, mental, and spiritual capabilities of young women and to mold them into productive citizens of the newly emerging states of the Middle East.[160] Students could partake in three potential tracks of study in the early days of the AJC: domestic science, teacher training, and a regular academic course of social sciences, life sciences, and humanities. The domestic science and teacher training tracks were staples of women's colleges in the United States, while the regular academic course resembled that of men's colleges of the day. The central narrative of student life in the 1920s and 1930s was that women's special needs and interests were being met through their education at the AJC.[161] This recurrent theme made clear the AJC's assumptions about sex roles, which also reflected dominant Lebanese cultural values.

There were several subjects in the curriculum that were mandatory for all students, including physical education and religious education. Options for physical education included tennis or basketball.[162] The students were expected to take proper care of their health and remain physically active; this was a crucial component of their

[160] "A Campus for the First Women's College," *Syria News Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (October 1930): 2. NEST Special Collections.

[161] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 7.

[162] Ibid., 14.

education and was not purely for fun and recreation. In the late 1920s, freshmen were required to take religion, English, a second language, and athletics.[163] Their options for electives included chemistry, hygiene, history, a third language, and mathematics. Sophomores were required to enroll in religion, and an introductory social science course. Arabic and history courses were required if they had not been taken during the freshman year.[164]

Some subjects, such as social science, were brand new to women's education. The introductory social science class was interdisciplinary in nature; it dealt with psychology, economics, civics, and sociology. Apparently, it aimed to inculcate the students with a sense of civic duty; the course description in the 1927-1928 catalogue stated that it was "primarily intended as a preparation for intelligent citizenship."[165] The intended meaning of "intelligent citizenship" was never clearly explained, however.

The number of required classes would increase in the 1930s. During the 1932-1933 academic year, mandatory classes for freshmen in the Arts Course included a third language, mathematics, botany, zoology, and hygiene. In the sophomore year, two classes of special interest to women were offered as electives: Social Problems and Child Hygiene.[166] The history curriculum in the 1930s was well balanced, neither emphasizing the East over the West or vice versa.[167] There was also only one class in political science, which was introductory – it addressed the theory and nature of

[163] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1927-1928*, 16.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid., 22.

[166] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 25.

[167] Ibid., 32.

nation-states, the types and functions of governments, the notions of civil and political liberty, the electorate, political parties, propaganda, and public opinion.[168]

The AJC successfully balanced the diverse features of its curriculum by giving equal attention to different goals and ambitions that existed among its students. Women who wished to find paid employment after completing their studies were given as much attention as those who wanted to be trained for homemaking. During the 1935-1936 academic year, the College introduced a new two-year business curriculum to train women who might wish to work in clerical positions.[169] This was a pioneering development in women's education, as well as their economic autonomy and class mobility. These courses taught students skills that were in high demand in remunerative employment. One of the most drastic changes for women during this period was that they were able to work and earn their own income.

D. Home Economics Education

Course catalogues in the 1920s and 1930s regularly touted the idea that some students were being prepared for "the home life."[170] This reference to "the home life" emphasized the new worth, status, and responsibilities that women were attaining as domestic ideologies were spreading and becoming easily integrated into the local discourse. In the prevailing pre-modern discourses in the Middle East, fathers were the ones directly addressed in literature on child rearing;[171] this was no longer the case in the late 1920s. New discourses on the home did not assign any auxiliary roles for

[168] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1937-1938*, 37. LAU, RNL.

[169] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1934-1935*, 31. LAU, RNL.

[170] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1927-1928*, 6.

[171] Hoda Elsadda, "Gendered Citizenship: Discourses on Domesticity in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Hawwa* 4, no. 1 (2006): 6.

husbands or fathers[172] – women were fully in charge of governing their domestic spaces. Women's espousal of these new ideals of "prescribed middle-class domesticity"[173] imbued their lives with value, and their eagerness to be academically trained for domestic roles in a sex-segregated context was tacitly approved by society at large. Women's education was promoted as a political and social initiative that would benefit society, rather than an individual endeavor that would result in personal self-growth, let alone emancipation for women. Sarah Stage contends that home economics was the epitome of "the interplay of politics and domesticity in women's history."[174] The home was situated in connection to the broader civic order as a starting point for social change – the nation was a collection of homes that needed to be fortified.

Interestingly, the overall curricula at the College during this period were not dominated by home economics; rather, it was the *justification* for women's higher education that was domestic. Women were being educated in order to become skilled homemakers. Domesticity would not become a defining feature of the College until the 1940s and 50s. In the 1920s and 1930s, courses in hygiene were offered as electives at the freshman and sophomore level.[175] The "Child Care" course dealt with the development of the fetus and the hygienic welfare of infants and children.[176] In the Community Hygiene class, women compared community hygiene methods across the

[172] Tamera K. Hareven, "The Home and Family in Historical Perspective," *Social Research* 58, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 267.

[173] Sarah Stage, "Home Economics: What's in a Name?" in *Rethinking Home Economics: Women and the History of a Profession*, eds. Sarah Stage and Virginia B. Vincenti (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 1.

[174] Stage, "Home Economics: What's in a Name?" 2.

[175] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1927-1928*, 16.

[176] Ibid., 20.

globe. This course included lectures and "laboratory with health clinic, and further practical work in Beirut schools".[177] Women demanded that the AJC offer these courses, according to a report written about the Junior College in 1930.[178]

The focus on hygiene and sanitation in the curriculum was not unique to the AJC. Proper hygiene and sanitation were of the utmost importance in the time before the discovery of antibiotics and the implementation of asepsis practices. Bacteriology and the germ theory of disease had been widely accepted in the United States by the architects of the home economics movement in the second half of the nineteenth century.[179] Following American examples, women needed "to master the invisible workings of the microbe in everyday life" in order to control their environments,[180] hence the focus on these subjects during the formative years of the College.

By the time the American Junior College for Women had opened its doors, childcare was no longer the duty of maids, servants, or other household attendants. Women were responsible for the upbringing and care of their own offspring, the future citizens of the nation; this was a core component of the timeless trope of women determining the progress of the homeland.[181] Women had been reconceived as home managers – authorities of their domestic environments. Their responsibility was

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[177] Ibid.

[178] "A Campus for the First Women's College," *Syria News Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (October 1930): 2-3. NEST Special Collections.

[179] Nancy Tomes, "Spreading the Germ Theory: Sanitary Science and Home Economics, 1880-1930," in *Rethinking Home Economics: Women and the History of a Profession*, eds. Sarah Stage and Virginia B. Vincenti (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 34.

[180] Tomes, "Spreading the Germ Theory," 34.

[181] This trope appeared throughout the Arab world and Iran. See, among many other texts, Ellen Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its "New" Women: The Palestinian Women's Movement 1920-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*; Beth Baron, *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women With Mustaches and Men Without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

to transform their homes into "a training ground for future citizens and a haven for beleaguered husbands seeking refuge from the brutalities of the new industrial order."[182] Women's supposed innate sensitivity and benevolence made them the natural choice to take on this task in the family.

In the late 1930s, the field of child development gained an eminent place in the field of home economics "as the behavioral sciences joined the ranks of the legitimate sciences" and home economists realized that topics relating to child welfare had universal interest.[183] There was a nursery school on campus for two and three year old children that served as part of the hygiene laboratory curriculum for the sophomores.[184] The educational philosophy of home economists maintained that observing children in the nursery school would allow women to see "the tantrum-throwing toddler… in the context of her developmental stages."[185] The AJC faculty agreed with this philosophy, claiming that allowing students to care for toddlers provided them "a practical knowledge" that textbooks would not have been able to impart.[186]

Freshman hygiene courses in the 1930s dealt with personal and community hygiene, while sophomores studied child and school hygiene in hands-on courses. Students in the Child Hygiene course helped in and observed the care of two to four-year old children in the Junior College's nursery. These young children served as

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[182] Patricia R. Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), 25-26.

[183] Julia Grant, "Modernizing Mothers: Home Economics and the Parent Education Movement, 1920-1945," in *Rethinking Home Economics: Women and the History of a Profession*, eds. Sarah Stage and Virginia B. Vincenti (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 57.

[184] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933,* 6.

[185] Megan J. Elias, "No Place Like Home: A Survey of American Home Economics History," *History Compass* 9, no. 1 (2011): 98.

[186] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933,* 6.

guinea pigs for the their studies. For the School Hygiene class, students carried out "practical work in Beirut schools [which] serves as laboratory work."[187] Wadad Sibai was enrolled in one of these classes at the AJC in 1929. Sibai recounted her hands-on experience in this course in a personal letter to a friend:

> I am very much interested in my work. I have (as a hygiene lab) little children to weigh, measure and ask their histories to report on them to the class. The little children go to a club and there with the help of a nurse I do the described work. I give directions to their mothers how to keep the baby well, in giving it the proper kind of milk, or food, in giving its food regularly and in giving him the proper rest and sleep. The families that come there are all poor and the club is organized for them especially. Prizes are given to the child of six if he keeps the directions given to him.[188]

What it is most remarkable about this excerpt from Sibai's correspondence is that the course catalogues indicating that women helped and observed in the care of babies and children occluded what Sibai describes above. Specifically, the catalogues failed to mention that children were weighed and measured as if they were objects. It is unclear if the children's parents were aware of this situation.

By the spring of 1937, students could enroll in Interior Decoration, Sewing, and Costume Design.[189] Such courses equipped young women with skills that were both marketable to employers and practical in a home setting. A woman could potentially find work if she was skilled in any of these subjects, and could sew clothes for herself and her family. This was an important advancement for women's economic independence but at the same time restricted women to particular roles.

Students created scrapbooks entitled "My Ideal Home" as part of their laboratory work.[190] They were required to envision their future homes before they

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[187] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933,* 33.

[188] Letter to Corinne Byerly from Wadad Sibai, March 8, 1929. NEST Special Collections.

[189] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1936-1937,* 38-39.

[190] Ibid.

would marry and produce children, since this was what most women were expected to accomplish after they completed their education, and was also the primary reason that some students matriculated at the Junior College in the first place. An education rooted in domesticity would prepare women to navigate the intimate politics of their personal worlds at home.

Domesticity was important for women both as a concept and a practice. The 1937-1938 academic year was the first time the word euthenics[191] appeared in the course catalogue; this development coincided with the first meeting of the Near East Home Economics Association held in the Lebanese mountain village of Shweire in 1937.[192] The Association adopted a resolution to prepare and publish home economics literature in Arabic in 1938. This modernization of domesticity would allow women to study life sciences, social sciences, and arts. All of these subjects existed and overlapped in the home, which was being revolutionized.

Euthenics courses offered at the AJC during the 1937-1938 academic year dealt with nutrition, interior decoration, costume design, and family relations.[193] This was the first time that these types of courses were taught at the collegiate level in Lebanon. The textbooks they used were imported from the United States, as courses in household subjects were present in at least thirty American colleges since the turn of the nineteenth century. However, there was no consensus on the larger purpose of

[191] At the AJC, the word "euthenics" was often used interchangeably with "home economics" during this period. Its correct usage, however, refers to the improvement of the human race: "Euthenics precedes eugenics, developing better men now, and thus inevitable creating a better race of men in the future. Euthenics is the term proposed for the preliminary science on which Eugenics must be based." See Ellen H. Richards, *Euthenics, the Science of Controllable Environment; A Plea for Better Living Conditions as a First Step Toward Higher Human Efficiency* (Boston: Whitcomb and Barrows, 1910), Preface, viii.

[192] "Syria Mission Newsletter No. 380," September 16, 1937. NEST Special Collections.

[193] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1937-1938*, 33.

the domestic sciences in the overall pedagogical system in the United States at the time.[194]

Future professional housewives had a space on campus to immerse themselves in domesticity outside of the classroom: the Home Economics Club. Dedicated to all subjects related to home and hearth, the club held lectures, demonstrations, and discussions on topics such as color selection, style, make-up, and flower arrangements.[195] The professionalization of the housewife turned homemaking into an art and a science. A learned housewife made her own clothing, elegantly applied cosmetics to her visage, decorated her house with the expertise of an interior designer, cooked meals like a seasoned chef, and arranged her flowers with the skills of a professional florist. The diversity of the female experience at the College meant that women were free to participate in activities as different as arranging flowers or even debating international law, as students in the International Relations Club did.[196] There is no reason to think that women did not participate in both clubs.

What can we make of the fact that some students enrolled at the AJC with the intention of becoming housewives? For many women, desiring to become a housewife was economically sensible and certainly not a sign of a lack of ambition or marketable skills. Lebanese women did not have an autonomous legal existence – they were either daughters, defined by their fathers, or wives, defined by their husbands, legally under their guardianship and control.[197] Women were separated by their social and economic class but shared a status subordinate to men. The hierarchy

[194] Emma Seifrit Weigley, "It Might Have Been Euthenics: The Lake Placid Conferences and the Home Economics Movement," *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (March 1974): 83.

[195] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1936-1937*, 38-39.

[196] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1936-1937*, 17.

[197] Lamia Rustum Shehadeh, "Gender-Relevant Legal Change in Lebanon," *Feminist Formations* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 213.

of family relations remained unaltered although women were granted improvements in their status inside this network. Working within the confines of the structure of the family household was a low-risk, pragmatic maneuver that would not upset male authority figures or jeopardize a woman's status within her immediate family.

Even if women planned to pursue a career, they still expected a domesticated future in certain respects. Women were economically dependent on the male heads of their families and needed to cooperate with them to some degree. Rather than feeling trapped in the domestic sphere, the students could be empowered within it and safely work within its boundaries. Women were elevated within the domestic sphere "to the office of moral guardian in the society."[198]

E. Social Service

At the American Junior College for Women, social service was part of both coursework and extracurricular activities. However, there was no Department of Social Work in the 1920s and 1930s. Courses related to social service were mainly offered through the Social Science Department, which offered only one course in the late 1930s: Social Civics.[199] This course dealt with human relationships and social problems such as child welfare, women's conditions, poverty, crime, public health and sanitation, labor conditions, civic issues of local and national governments, and international organizations and affairs. The Social Civics class included field trips to factories and schools in Beirut where students could witness the conditions they learned about.[200] As part of their social awareness education in 1930, the students

[198] Hill, *The World Their Household*, 26.

[199] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1937-1938*, 37.

[200] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1937-1938*, 37.

were taken on field trips to the Lebanese Parliament, the National Museum, the American University Hospital clinics, the women's jail,[201] and other locations of interest:

> The class visited the rug factory and the industrial plant for handwork of the Near East Relief; the Armenian Refugee Camp; the maternity hospital in the refugee quarter; an orphanage; an industrial school for the blind; the women's section of the prison; cigarette and box factories, where women and children are employed for long hours and low wages; the home for old people; and the general clinics of the American Hospitals. These expeditions may sound commonplace to us from the West, but here, where hand labor is still more common than machine, and where the majority of students have never seen even very simple machinery or any form of charitable institutions, these visits were very stimulating.[202]

It appears that these classes expanded the possibilities for women's citizenship before women were formally granted political rights, and also questioned the notion of citizenship being solely political in nature. Women had the opportunity to impact society and work with its most vulnerable populations that were mostly forgotten or ignored by the French Mandate government.

Some aspects of the social service education at the AJC sanctioned a wide range of interventions into the private lives of various groups of Lebanese. For example, on 21 November 1931, students listened to a lecture about prostitution in Lebanon and Syria by a British woman named Alison Neilans. Neilans spoke about Josephine Butler and supposedly applied Butler's principles to local conditions in the French Mandate.[203] According to a textbook prepared by the American University of

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[201] Roberts, "The Beirut College for Women," 36; "A Campus for the First Women's College," *Syria News Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (October 1930): 3. NEST Special Collections.

[202] "A Campus for the First Women's College," 3.

[203] Letter by Alison Neilans, "Summary of My Activities in Syria October 26th – December 8th, 1931." London School of Economics Women's Library, Binder 34. Josephine Butler was an English feminist and social reformer who was active in the Victorian era. See Josephine Butler, *The Education and Employment of Women* (Liverpool: T. Brakell, 1868).

Beirut, due to the "problem of prostitution", intercourse outside of marriage was gradually increasing in Beirut.[204]

Outside the classroom, the Junior College Activity Club was created for the students "who were willing, [to] try to be of use to the community"[205], i.e., through social service projects. The members of the Activity Club taught classes for poor girls in the neighborhood surrounding the campus, supervised playtime for children, and participated in various YWCA[206] initiatives during the 1932-1933 academic year. This feature of the AJC was shared with the Seven Sisters women's colleges in the United States.[207]

In addition to the social service coursework and activities offered in the 1920s and 1930s, there was also the AJC's Village Welfare Camp. Winifred Shannon founded the Village Welfare Camp in the summer of 1932, purportedly the first endeavor of its kind in Lebanon.[208] Its first summer camp was held in 1932 in the southern Lebanese village of Bint Jubayl, where the AJC student volunteers taught hygiene, infant care, reading, Bible stories, and handiwork to the mostly Shiite Muslim residents. Other activities included singing, prayers, and playtime.[209] The

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[204] Stuart Carter Dodd, *Social Relations in the Middle East: A Textbook in Citizenship Prepared for the Freshmen at the American University of Beirut*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: American Press, 1946), 37. AUB Jafet Library.

[205] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1927-1928*, 10; *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 14.

[206] The Beirut YWCA was established in 1900 and was also a project of the American Presbyterian Mission. See Leila Shaheen da Cruz, *The Lebanon YWCA: One Hundred Years of Service* (Beirut: National YWCA of Lebanon, 1999), 14.

[207] Mary Breese Fuller, "Religious Life in the Eastern Colleges for Women: A Resume of the Christian Activities at Mount Holyoke, Wellesley, Smith, Vassar and Bryn Mawr," *Congregationalist and Christian World (1901-1906)* 87, no. 6 (February 8, 1902): 203.

[208] Roberts, 97.

[209] Nicol, 50. See also Viola Petit, "College Girls in a Metawali Village," *Syria News Quarterly* 3, no.1 (October 1932): 4. NEST Special Collections.

following year the summer camp's location was moved to northern Syria, and in succeeding years it was held in the northern Lebanese villages of Deir Mima and Jibrail. The students taught boys in Jibrail how to build houses, construct roads, and raise rabbits. Girls were taught elementary principles of health, hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, cookery, childcare, sewing, and family relationships.[210] These voluntary activities were an essential component of the young women's edification and preparation for their roles in society. Summertime volunteer work was a staple of higher education at some elite women's colleges in the United States as well, particularly at Bryn Mawr.[211]

The education given to the young boys and girls of these villages was intended to improve village life and simultaneously prevent the residents from migrating to more developed towns and cities, an indication that the upper classes wished to stem the flow of people from rural to urban surroundings while "modernizing" them within their own rural environments. This seems to have been a deliberate ideological ploy. The AJC, by preparing women to be of service, would simultaneously keep the lower classes in rural areas by teaching them in their own villages. This work was a method of maintaining the social order by disciplining and training the rural poor, a technique that would impede their social mobility. The Junior College did not invent this concept, but was perpetuating the work of others. For example, after the First World War, many elite Lebanese women were active in social service. One of these women,

[210] Ava Milam Clark and J. Kenneth Mumford, *Adventures of a Home Economist* (Portland, Oregon State University Press, 1969), 301.

[211] Rita Rubinstein Heller, "The Women of Summer: The Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers: 1921-1938," Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1986.

Salma Sayegh,[212] claimed that such work was intended "to create national industries to prevent people from emigrating in search of a livelihood."[213]

A fourteen-page student publication dedicated to these summertime social service activities was printed during the fall semester of 1932.[214] The most striking aspect of this short-lived development was the title of the publication: *Veils Up*.[215] There is no information available as to why this title was chosen, especially since the content of the periodical appeared to have nothing to do with the removal of the Islamic veil, as the title misleadingly implies. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that students had the opportunity to reflect and report on their work.

According to Lily Badre, a student in the class of 1934, social service projects and other extracurricular activities "developed and strengthened" her "idealistic tendencies."[216] Indeed, most students appeared enthusiastic about their village welfare work. Rose Ghurayyib and Salwa Nassar, both of whom were students in the early 1930s, claimed that their social consciousness was awakened at the AJC through their participation in social service. Ghurayyib would continue to participate in social welfare activities for the remainder of her life.[217]

Lily Badre confirms in her memoir that students taught in a neighborhood school for the poor, taught porters to read and write, and spent one month of every

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[212] Salma Sayegh, born in 1889, operated an orphanage that was founded by Jamal Pasha. Sayegh was also a co-founder of the Women's Union in Syria and Lebanon. See Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 95, 122.

[213] Quoted in Yumna al-'Id, "Lebanon," in *Arab Women Writers: A Critical Reference Guide 1873-1999*, eds. Radwa Ashour, Ferial J. Ghazoul, and Hasna Reda-Mekdashi (Cairo and New York: American University of Cairo Press, 2008), 22-23.

[214] Roberts, 105.

[215] Ibid. I could not locate any copies of *Veils Up*.

[216] Lily Badre, "My Life: Episodes Still Remembered," unpublished memoir, 1996, n.p.

[217] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 76.

summer in poor Alawite mountain villages in Syria instructing adults and children how to read and write, and teaching mothers how to take care of their own health and their children's health. The AJC students additionally operated outdoor baby clinics and traveled from village to village by foot or donkey. "What fun we used to have! I am certain that we [the students] benefited much more from our unforgettable 'village welfare' experience than did the villagers whom we tried to serve," wrote Badre.[218] These sentences suggest that some students did indeed take up this work passionately and selflessly, finding it "fun" and "unforgettable". Badre would voice sentiments of noblesse oblige regarding her village welfare work several decades later:

> In my early student days, our enthusiasm for social service was generated from our belief that poverty and deprivation were an inevitable and permanent condition of society and that, therefore, the rich, should help the poor, the fortunate should take pity on those who were less fortunate.[219]

Badre's classmate, Najla Aqrawi, portrays a very similar narrative.[220] Akin to Badre, Aqrawi describes the villagers they helped as primitive people, but felt that the student presence brought significant change to the villages. The dominant framework within the social service education that women at the College received was that rural people were ignorant and that their hygiene and childcare practices were primitive, and that urban people were civilized and their hygiene and childcare practices were sophisticated. The students never seemed to question the colonial binaries brought by the American missionaries of urban/good and rural/bad, even though some of the students themselves hailed from rural areas. Attempting to bring a middle class

[218] Badre, "My Life: Episodes Still Remembered," n.p.

[219] Lily Badre, "Founder's Day Address," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1974): 7. Badre explained that these sentiments transformed in accordance with political developments. The spirit of social service was still present at the college by the 1970s, according to Badre, but had shifted from charity based on pity to a desire for social justice.

[220] Najla Aqrawi, *Qutuf al-ayyam: Wujuh wa maqalat wa mushahidat* (Beirut: Dar Nelson, 2005), 49-50.

standard of living to the rural poor was considered a philanthropic endeavor. The fact that women were participating in social service was not new – Lebanese women's social service works date back to the late nineteenth century[221] – but the activity of traveling to remote villages and spending several weeks away from home to do this kind of work was highly unconventional.

Social service at the Junior College impacted the American University of Beirut. AUB would eventually adopt the same village welfare program.[222] Civic welfare work at AUB was inspired by the model at the AJC, and men took an active role in organization and participation.[223] The extracurricular club, Village Welfare Service, was founded at AUB in 1933,[224] one year after Winifred Shannon had implemented it at the Junior College. Both men and women volunteered in AUB's club, including alumnae from the Junior College who had transferred to AUB, such as Eva Badre Malik, Najla Aqrawi, Najla Cortas, Angela Jurdak, and Anissa Rawda Najjar.[225] One AUB alumnus, Afif Tannous, recalled:

> It was predominantly a movement of and by the students, in which they volunteered their services for the benefit of the village people of Lebanon. The objectives at which we aimed were to help (within our very limited means) improve living conditions in the villages, but more importantly, to bridge the gap between the educated elite and the deprived rural people, and to create a consciousness of the basic role of village life in total national development.[226]

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[221] Fleischmann, *The Nation and its "New Women,"* 95-114; Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 96, 99-100, 142, 144-46, 162, 179, 207, 262-63.

[222] Najla Aqrawi, *Qutuf al-ayyam*, 49-50.

[223] Afif Tannous, *Village Roots and Beyond: Memoirs of Afif I. Tannous* (Beirut: Dar Nelson, 2004), 137-38.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Ibid.

[226] Ibid.

Tannous' vision of society promoted humanitarian ideals that attempted to close the gap between rural people and the upper classes in developed cities. The American Junior College for Women and the American University of Beirut "connected the formation of elites with outreach projects"[227] and created new elite communities with a certain element of noblesse oblige in nation building. At the Junior College, women's social service to society was glorified alongside household and familial duties; women carried the burden of reforming society's ills, and this could be achieved through social and charitable work. This role was conferred upon women with the same level of prestige that came with men's responsibility for the political realm of society.[228] However, civic welfare work at AUB was one example that contradicted this notion, due to the significant involvement of male students in an ostensibly "female" domain.

F. Religious Education

From its foundation the American Junior College for Women was organized as a Christian institution with the aim of instilling "Christian principles of character"[229] in its pupils. This was a defining characteristic of all Mission schools. Their goal was not only to uplift women in the material sense, but spiritually as well. Therefore, their education would have to include religion in one form or another. Women were the ideal receivers of religious teachings according to the missionaries. As explained by Patricia Hill, "their sensitivity and innate compassion made them naturally susceptible to the teachings of religion—especially a religion that featured a

[227] Valeska Huber, "International Agendas and Local Manifestations: Universities in Cairo, Beirut, and Jerusalem after World War I," *Prospects* 45 (March 2015): 87.

[228] Elsadda, "Gendered Citizenship," 9-10.

[229] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933,* 14.

gentle Jesus and benevolent Father anxious for His children to find salvation."[230] It is impossible to discern how successful the Mission was in achieving its goals of spiritually molding the young women, given the private nature of spirituality.

Freshmen and sophomores were required to take courses in religion during the 1920s and 1930s regardless of their major.[231] The religion courses were Christian-centered;[232] there were no classes dealing with Islamic or Jewish studies in the 1920s and 1930s. Muslim and Jewish students were obligated to take these courses in order to graduate, but did not have the option of studying their own religion at the AJC.

Some form of religious or spiritual worship was obligatory; however, specifically Christian forms of worship were not, as the Junior College had a religiously diverse student body since its earliest days. Though the missionaries still wished to spread the gospel, worship services of a general, ambiguous nature were arranged for the non-Christian students who could select which type of service to attend.[233] These services were held in various rooms on campus. The putative goal of this requirement was to help the students develop morally and spiritually.[234] Although the missionaries had mostly abandoned their direct efforts at evangelization, they did not give up attempting to transmit Christian teachings to the students.[235] Yet this did not sit well with everyone in the student body. For example, in 1936, Muslim and Jewish students refused to participate in joint worship services in the Junior College

[230] Hill, *The World Their Household*, 25-26.

[231] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1927-1928*, 16..

[232] Ibid., 21.

[233] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 14.

[234] Ibid.

[235] Fleischmann, "The Impact of American Protestant Missions," 417.

chapel,[236] and went on strike for at least a few weeks.[237] This episode confirmed that students were not inclined to follow all the institution's rules if they appeared to be unreasonable.

G. Extracurricular Activities

Eva Badre Malik, a student from 1932-1934, declared that the wide variety of extracurricular activities available to the students left them "busy and happy day and night."[238] The student clubs provided women the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and build strong bonds with one another. The resident Junior College staff encouraged and cultivated extracurricular activities such as sports, choir, literary clubs, and social clubs.[239] Other forms of entertainment included a series of concerts and recitals performed at the American University of Beirut that all students were encouraged to attend.

Several extracurricular activities were available on campus in the early 1930s, in addition to the Home Economics Club and Village Welfare Camp discussed previously. Other clubs included the English Forum, the French Club, and the Arabic Society.[240] The English Forum had as its objective to cultivate an interest in the English language outside an academic setting, while the French Club promoted interest in the French language and culture, and the Arabic Society intended to foster an enthusiasm for Arabic. This club also had its own publication, entitled *Durub*.[241]

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[236] This was not an actual chapel; it was a room where chapel services were held.

[237] Fleischmann, "The Impact of American Protestant Missions," 418.

[238] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 33, 102.

[239] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 7, 14-15.

[240] Ibid., 15.

[241] Roberts, 106. I have not been able to locate any copies of *Durub*.

The missionaries never prevented the students from being their Arab selves; removing the Arabic language from campus would have signaled an attempt at deculturization. These organizations allowed students to be active agents on campus regardless of which language they were most comfortable socializing in. All of the language clubs hosted lectures, debates, discussions, and dramatizations, and contributed to a Junior College magazine that published articles written by the students in all three languages.[242] One alumna, Rose Ghurayyib, claimed that the students did this on their own, without any help from the faculty.[243]

There existed some form of student government on campus, known as the House Committee, which hosted a social gathering for the students at least once a month.[244] Drama and theater arts were quite popular as well; the students regularly performed in a variety of plays. But the AJC's curfew was quite early - rehearsals after 7:00 p.m. were only allowed if the gateman was willing to accompany the day students back to their homes and if the administration agreed.[245] The theatrical works performed at the Junior College ranged from popular American and European plays, to newly written Arabic plays. At least one musical, Albert Ketelbey's *In a Persian Market*, was performed on campus sometime between 1933 and 1935.[246]

By the early 1930s, it was mandatory for students to choose at least one extracurricular activity.[247] Those who did not find an interesting activity were allowed to create one. Shafica Karagulla (class of 1934) claimed that she and some other

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[242] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 15.

[243] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 31.

[244] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1932-1933*, 15..

[245] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 34.

[246] Ibid., 191.

[247] Ibid., 121.

students found the extracurricular options that were available to be "boring and dull," but that Francis Irwin encouraged her, Najla Cortas, and Arpine Halabian to create a news bulletin.[248]

Some extracurricular activities took place outside of the AJC campus. For instance, in 1932, the students participated in a conference called "Conference for the Young Women of the Near East" in Beirut.[249] Other participants included AUB students, nurses from the AUB hospital, and young teachers from schools in Tripoli, Beirut, and Damascus. The proceedings of what went on during this conference are unavailable, but it is likely that the women studied the Bible, learned about career opportunities, and listened to lectures on homemaking and childcare.[250] In stark contrast to this event, a "Boys' Conference" was held the same year, where seventy young men met in Baalbeck over four days "to consider the changing economic and political world, and finally the changing religious world", and participated in Bible study, sports, and recreation.[251] This conference for boys was the thirteenth of its kind, and its content diverged from that of the girls' conference due to the need to train boys and girls differently for their future roles in society. This small group of women and men exemplified changing relations between the sexes within the upper classes and their cultural assumptions about sex roles. Men were to be educated in

[248] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 121. Karagulla would end up becoming "a prominent psychiatrist". See "Achievements of LAU Women Graduates Throughout its History," *LAU Magazine* 13, no. 4 (Winter 2012), 29.

[249] "The Conference for the Young Women of the Near East," *Syria News Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (October 1932): 51. NEST Special Collections.

[250] This assumption is based on the activities of the three-day "Girls' Conference" of March 1926, mentioned in the first chapter. See Rima Nasrallah Van Saane, "Protestant Mission Schools and Lebanese Women Between Self-Realization and Role Ambiguity," May 18, 2017, lecture delivered at Near East School of Theology, Beirut.

[251] "Thirteenth Annual Boys' Conference," *Syria News Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (October 1932): 49-50. NEST Special Collections.

national and international politics, sciences, and modern industries while women were to be primarily educated in good housekeeping and child rearing.

New clubs were formed during the 1936-1937 academic year.[252] Some clubs allowed the students to transcend their traditional sex roles, such as the International Relations Club. This was normally viewed as a male domain, as exemplified by the Boys' Conference above where the young men discussed a changing political world. The International Relations Club was organized by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace[253] and aimed to teach students the fundamental tenets of international law and international relations. The political and social conditions of modern nations and current international affairs were discussed at club meetings.[254] It seems that students were politically aware and even willing to push social boundaries of acceptable feminine behavior from time to time. For example, Ellen Fleischmann indicates that the AJC "students were involved in political activities such as striking in 1936 in sympathy with the 1936-1939 revolt in Palestine."[255] It is plausible that students may have gotten involved in additional demonstrations dealing with other major political events in this period as well.

H. The Students

[252] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1936-1937*, 17.

[253] The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was created in 1910 and is the oldest American think tank dealing with international affairs. See http://www.carnegieendowment.org [last accessed April 18, 2019]. I have not been able to determine why the Carnegie Endowment would be interested in financing the International Relations club at the AJC, but one could hypothesize that it viewed the Junior College as an American outpost in the Middle East, and therefore, a site for cultural imperialism or influence.

[254] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women 1936-1937*, 17.

[255] Fleischmann, "Under an American Roof," 76.

Enrollment gradually increased as the years rolled by. In 1924 only five students matriculated at the AJC, but this number jumped to sixty-eight by 1931.[256] Thirteen students graduated with an Associate's degree in 1932. Of these thirteen women, nine were from Lebanon, three were from Palestine, and one was from Egypt.[257] At the end of the 1932-1933 academic year, thirteen students graduated and nine of them were Lebanese.[258] There were 118 students registered at the Junior College during the 1938-1939 academic year.[259]

According to the Mission staff, reasons for enrolling at the American Junior College for Women varied from student to student: "The purpose of girls in entering the Junior College shows a wide variation. It has extended beyond the professionally ambitious to those who desire higher education for its cultural value."[260] Some women were keen to produce a healthy family and improve their communities while others wanted to prepare for a career. But the AJC was not just a training ground for wives and mothers. Other students had purely academic interests and simply sought intellect and knowledge – no more, no less.[261] Yet others desired freedom, a chance to get away from the routines they were accustomed to, which such a novel experience would certainly provide.[262] Some women had to struggle through disagreements with their families in order to register at the Junior College, "fighting all the prejudices and

[256] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 28.

[257] *Catalogue of the American Junior College for Women, 1932-1933*, 36.

[258] Ibid.

[259] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 291.

[260] "The American Junior College for Women," *Syria News Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (April 1939): 12. NEST Special Collections.

[261] Fleischmann, "Under an American Roof," 74.

[262] Nicol, 9; William A. Stoltzfus, "Junior College Notes," *Syria News Quarterly* 15 no. 1 (October 1946): 18. NEST Special Collections.

adverse opinions of their relatives and friends."[263] For instance, Rose Ghurayyib almost did not enroll because her parents thought that higher education could hurt her chances for marriage.[264]

The students performed their concept of freedom in an eponymous pageant hosted at the AJC in June 1938.[265] The specific content of this pageant is unavailable, but the mere fact that young women were acting in a pageant called "Freedom" indicates that the concept had been on their minds and was discussed at the Junior College to a certain extent. One form of freedom for the young women was that being at the AJC allowed them to have candid conversations. Rose Ghurayyib described "the freedom and frankness with which they [the students] discussed religious, political and scientific questions" with one another.[266] She did not mention if the students discussed gender issues amongst each other.

To other students, freedom stood for the unrestricted enjoyment of social activities. A former student, Euphronia Halebian, envied how American women "had all sorts of freedom to enjoy" themselves in 1928 since they had access to cinemas, plays, and concerts.[267] She felt that women in Lebanon were denied this kind of freedom. Halebian explained in a personal letter to an American friend:

> You must not forget that this is a country where education for girls is considered something wrong. We girls and women are still deprived of many rights. There are many girls who are just mad about education but they are prevented from attaining their goal mostly by old headed parents and financial

[263] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 42. Sabri quotes a leaflet issued by the Presbyterian Board in New York in 1928.

[264] Anita Farah Nassar, "Remembering Rose Ghurayyib (1909-2006)," *Al-Raida* 23-24, no. 114-115 (Summer/Fall 2006): 102.

[265] "Syria Mission Newsletter No. 418," June 8, 1938. NEST Special Collections.

[266] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 82.

[267] Letter to Corinne Byerly from Euphronia Halebian, September 11, 1928. NEST Special Collections.

> difficulties. We College girls consider ourselves most fortunate and privileged beings on earth.[268]

Halebian's condemnation of "old headed parents and financial difficulties" in keeping women out of higher education indicates that social attitudes and economic circumstances were indeed factors in whether or not families would send their daughters to college. The fact that she and other students profoundly cherished their opportunity to study at the AJC – to the extent that they thought they were the luckiest people in the world – suggests that this the time spent at this institution was a formative and special experience for the young women.

Some faculty members, such as President William Stoltzfus,[269] believed that being enrolled at the American Junior College for Women liberated all students in one way or another:

> To all applicants for admission, College is an opportunity for emancipation. To the few, it is a way to a definite goal. Both to those who seek emancipation only and to those who in addition are striving toward a definite goal, the college offers spiritual, educational, and vocational guidance. It is the responsibility of the college to lead them toward a clarifying of their vision of their country's spiritual and social needs, and the part which they can take in meeting these needs.[270]

Emancipation meant different things to different classes of women. Malek Abisaab argues that: "ideas about 'emancipation' are associated with the upper and middle classes."[271] This was certainly the case at the AJC. A certain segment of Junior College students eagerly embraced this concept and reiterated it whenever discussing

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[268] Letter to Corinne Byerly from Euphronia Halebian, August 28, 1928. NEST Special Collections.

[269] Stoltzfus had worked for the American Presbyterian Mission in Lebanon and Syria since 1921, mainly as a teacher in missionary schools. He was the President of the AJC from 1937 to 1958.

[270] William A. Stoltzfus, "The American Junior College for Women," *Syria News Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (April 1939): 13. NEST Special Collections.

[271] Malek Abisaab, "Arab Women and Work: The Interrelation Between Orientalism and Historiography," *Journal of the Middle East and Islamic World* 7 (2009): 171.

their alma mater. For a significant number of alumnae, higher education was the key to empowering women and this concept was articulated frequently throughout the institution's history. Recall the opening quotation by Marie Sabri in the first chapter of this dissertation claiming that knowledge provided the College students with freedom.

Whether or not a student felt that being at the Junior College was liberating for her, the significance of the AJC and the objectives of women's education were on the students' minds. In an English course during the 1932-1933 academic year, students were asked to write about "the meaning of College, its life, purpose and activities."[272] Three essays were selected by the instructor of the course to be displayed on a notice board on campus,[273] which meant that these compositions were available for all students to read.

Another reason for enrolling at the AJC, according to some of the faculty, was that a significant number of women may have wished to delay marriage by a couple of years.[274] Marriage patterns in Lebanon were gradually shifting from arranged to companionate marriages, yet many women were forced into marrying a man chosen by their parents.[275] Some women never wed after refusing the partner their parents selected for them, who was usually much older.[276] Women also complained of being

[272] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 120.

[273] Ibid. I could not locate any other record of these student compositions.

[274] William A. Stoltzfus, "Junior College Notes," *Syria News Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (October 1946): 18. NEST Special Collections.

[275] Ora B. Dodds, "Toward Better Family Relations in the Near East," *The Cedar Bough* 17, no. 3 (Autumn 1949): 2-3. NEST Special Collections.

[276] Ibid.

chaperoned by their parents or brothers, unable to go out alone in public places, which contributed to their yearning for personal "freedom."[277]

The students were aware that they were achieving a significant milestone for women, according to the recollections of some alumnae. Jamal Karam Harfouche, a graduate of the class of 1935, declared that her cohort felt that studying at the College "meant to them a real privilege."[278] Eva Badre Malik claimed that the students

> were all made conscious that of the fact that we were 'pioneers', 'Women leaders,' 'setting the example.' Thus general behavior, manners, dress, morals and hard work were all very much stressed. In short, Miss Irwin insisted 'we must be *ladies*' and we were![279]

This image of womanhood was not a significant departure from the classical notions that had preceded it before the AJC had opened its doors – its essential characteristics were unchanged. Women seemed to be complacent with the state of the social order in this respect. Although there was no radical transformation in the conception of womanhood that the students had been familiar with prior to commencing their studies at the College, the status of women in the upper classes had changed through education. These women were still expected to be well dressed, mild mannered, well behaved, and moral, but now that they were educated, their status had been improved. After all, the missionaries, the students themselves, and the wider Lebanese society did not wish to overhaul the boundaries of traditional womanhood, but to uplift women within its framework.

However, it would be incorrect to assume that the women were "ladylike", docile, or obedient at all times. A number of students had no problem openly defying the rules. For instance, visitors to the AJC needed to obtain special permission in

[277] Ibid.

[278] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 33.

[279] Ibid., 32. Emphasis original.

advance to enter campus and only males who were related to the students were allowed to visit. It became common practice for a young woman to pretend that a male visitor was actually her cousin, rather than her boyfriend.[280] Some students used the word "cousins" to refer to males in general.[281] Although they were aware of their special status and unique situation, the students were not always on their best behavior and could be as mischievous as young women anywhere else in the world.

Some women would occasionally leave the campus without the knowledge and permission of the faculty, including students who were trusted with the responsibility of monitoring the residence halls.[282] There was even an annual event amongst the students called the "Sneak", which one alumna, Najwa Shaheen Haffar, described as "a cherished College tradition" and "a secret getaway planned by the sophomore class at the end of each year."[283] Haffar was a pupil in 1947, but her description of the "Sneak" as a "tradition" suggests it had begun as early as the 1930s. Even the freshmen participated in this event by scoping out information for the sophomores on whether or not the path to the "Sneak" destination was clear.[284] Hence, the Junior College also functioned as a space for young women to experiment with subverting authority while obtaining a higher education, and managing the appearance of being "ladylike".

Given the small number of students during the formative years of the College, the faculty and the young women became well-acquainted. Angela Jurdak, a graduate of the class of 1935, reminisced:

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[280] Ibid., 33.

[281] Hala Sakakini, *Twosome* (Jerusalem: Habesch – The Commercial Press, 1993), 12.

[282] Ibid., 14.

[283] Najwa Shaheen Haffar, *We Once Were Like That: A Memoir* (Seattle: Ameera Publishing LLC, 2009), 159.

[284] Ibid.

> Class enrollment was small, which made it possible for the teachers to know the students individually, appraise their ability and assist them personally in their tasks. The student-teacher relationship was based on mutual respect and sincerity. The students were serious, mature and genuinely interested in the pursuit of their studies and campus activities.[285]

Another former student, Najla Aqrawi, contended that most of the students assumed that their education would conclude after they obtained their Associate's degree after two years, and that the logical next step was for them to return to their homes and await their future marriages or find employment in secondary schools. Only twenty percent of the students typically continued on to four-year colleges, Aqrawi argued. She claimed that this trend motivated the two-year American Junior College for Women to transform into the four-year Beirut College for Women that specialized in home economics education and preparing women for home and family life.[286] This explains why the College curricula did not become overwhelmingly domestic until the late 1940s.

Those women who did seek employment before retreating to family life could join a corps of graduates who traveled abroad for work. Another defining characteristic of the American Junior College for Women is that throughout the 1920s and 1930s, up until the outbreak of World War II, many of the graduates worked as elementary and secondary school teachers, particularly in Palestine, Egypt, and Iraq. These countries were under British rule and were in need of educated women from the region to teach in English. Not only were these alumnae formally employed and earning their own salaries, the fact that they had traveled to foreign countries for these jobs mirrored the behavior of the single American missionary women who traveled

[285] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 34.

[286] Najla Aqrawi, *Salwa Nassar kama 'araftuha* (Beirut: Lebanese American University, Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, 1997), 85.

abroad to teach young women about domesticity, such as Frances Irwin and Winifred Shannon.

One alumna, Anissa Rawda Najjar, explained that she went to Iraq to work as a teacher for the "adventure."[287] Najjar lived with a group of AJC alumnae together in one house while they were employed at a school in Mosul between 1937 and 1941.[288] The women she cohabitated with were Rose Ghurayyib, Najla Aqrawi, and Salwa Nassar. Rose Ghurayyib expressed sentiments similar to those of Najjar regarding their reasons for moving to Iraq to work at the Ministry of Education: "I guess we were young, full of enthusiasm, determination, and we dared to travel to different places for a good cause."[289] Ghurayyib felt that the AJC alumnae working in Iraq had become civilizing agents by introducing young Iraqi girls to Western culture.[290] These women returned to Beirut during World War II, and Ghurayyib became the head of the Arabic department at the AJC.[291]

The example set by the American missionary women may have opened the doors for Junior College graduates to both seek out careers after completing their higher education, and to specifically pursue employment opportunities abroad at a time when such possibilities for women were highly unconventional. Some alumnae may have been perceptive of the influence of their teachers, "cultural mediators"[292]

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[287] Anissa Rawda Najjar, interview with Pascale Graham, Beirut, August 9, 2014.

[288] Anita Farah Nassar, "Remembering Rose Ghurayyib (1909-2006)," *Al-Raida* 23-23.114-115 (Summer/Fall 2006): 104.

[289] Nassar, "Remembering Rose Ghurayyib," 103-4. Anissa Najjar was the principal of the school that Rose Ghurayyib taught in.

[290] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles,* 72.

[291] Ibid.

[292] Sharon Halevi and Fruma Zachs, "'The Little Kingdom Over Which God Made You Queen': The Gendered Reorganization of a 'Modern' Arab Home in Turn-of-the-Century Beirut," *HAGAR Studies in Culture, Policy and Identities* 11, no. 1 (2013): 142-43.

who unintentionally pushed new boundaries of womanhood while inspiring their students to do the same. Eva Badre Malik, believed that the two faculty members who impacted the students the most were Frances Irwin and Winifred Shannon.[293] Malik also described her experience at the AJC as "formative and effective."[294] Angela Jurdak also agreed that Irwin and Shannon greatly influenced the young women.[295]

At the end of the 1937-1938 academic year, President Stoltzfus reported to the Mission that a total of 254 women had graduated from the AJC.[296] Twenty percent of graduates had continued their higher education at AUB or other universities while forty percent were teaching.[297] Six percent were working as secretaries, and three percent had become physicians.[298] Fifteen percent worked as nurses, technicians, pharmacists, and dentists.[299] Twenty percent of all the graduates were married and seven percent were homemakers.[300] Eighty percent of all graduates did not continue their education, regardless of whether they worked or not.[301] This confirms the monumental significance of the AJC, particularly from 1924 to 1939. Without the creation of this institution, upper middle class women would not have obtained Associate's degrees, continued on to their Bachelor's degrees, and pursued careers.

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[293] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 32.

[294] Ibid., 25.

[295] Ibid., 194.

[296] Roberts, 45.

[297] Ibid.

[298] Ibid.

[299] Ibid.

[300] Ibid.

[301] Roberts, 46. President Stoltzfus' math does not quite add up to 100 percent. I believe that the categories he listed here overlap. For example, an AJC graduate could have opted not to continue her education beyond the Associate's degree level and to work as a teacher. An alumna could have continued her education but become a full-time homemaker afterwards. Etc.

The Junior College "was filling the needs of a majority of young Arab women who could not expect at that time to pursue advanced study farther."[302] At the very least, it instilled a sense of self-reliance in the students, as articulated by Euphronia Halebian: "One feels free and the true master of herself."[303] The fact that it was the only women's college in Lebanon rendered it even more consequential.

I. Conclusion

The founding of the AJC was a transformative moment for women's higher education and autonomy. This chapter has detailed the creation and development of the American Junior College for Women in Beirut during its formative years, from 1924 to 1939. It developed rapidly from its modest beginnings in a classroom at the American School for Girls in 1924 till it ultimately found its permanent location in 1933.[304] This institution evolved to respond to women's needs in accordance with the social, economic, and political context of the era that it operated in. The AJC presented domestic life and social service in a modern guise while providing an avenue for women who wanted to pursue other alternatives. Students practiced a form of self-rule and struggled for freedom, however defined.

Women studied differentiated subjects in what were typically considered "male" domains: science, mathematics, humanities, social science, art, philosophy, business, and clerical studies. The Junior College students were aware of society's urgent preoccupation with the position of women and were conscious of their special status of being among the earliest Lebanese and Arab women to receive a higher

[302] Roberts, 46.

[303] Letter to Corinne Byerly from Euphronia Halebian, November 29, 1929. NEST Special Collections.

[304] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 32.

education. Hardly any women obtained a higher education around this time, confirming the major impact of the Junior College and its pioneering role in creating higher education for women in Lebanon and the Arab world.

CHAPTER III

THE GOLDEN AGE OF HOME ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SERVICE, 1940-1959

A. Introduction

The College's pioneering role in women's higher education continued into the 1940s and 1950s. This chapter will examine the evolution of the AJC from 1940 to 1959, including its transition from a two-year junior college into the four-year Beirut College for Women in 1949. The first group of women to receive a four-year degree from the Beirut College for Women graduated in June 1950.[305] The creation of the College marked the start of new possibilities and experiences for young women, at a time when the prevailing view held that the future of most women entailed domesticity. In letter written in 1943 by an administrator at the AJC to the Dean of the American University of Beirut, it was stated that:

> The ultimate future of women is fairly certain. With few exceptions she will become a wife and mother. In any case, she will be responsible for the child life of the nation. She will also carry the major share of responsibility in the cultural life and social welfare of the country. The immediate future of women is temporary and for the most part uncertain. The period between adolescence and marriage is to a high degree exploratory. It is a period of intellectual and cultural development. A small percentage of women will continue permanently in a profession or career either married or unmarried.[306]

Hence the College was meant to serve as an experimental transition phase for many women between finishing high school and venturing into marriage and motherhood; women could use this time to advance intellectually and culturally. Here we find a dynamic that both disciplines and empowers women by providing them an exploratory space before moving on to their socially determined destiny of

[305] Marie Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles: Beirut College for Women* (Beirut: Khayat, 1967), 27.

[306] Unsigned letter to Dean Harold Close at the American University of Beirut, November 9, 1943. PHS, RG 115-3-4.

homemaking, motherhood, cultural activities, and social service. The organization of the College and the modern education system in general continued to sustain old dichotomous definitions of sex roles in the public arena that would maintain masculinity as a gender identified with abstract reason and social regulation while femininity was preserved as fulfilling the emotional needs of the family and society. In this context, the special status of home economics and social service at this institution made perfect sense.

The students at the AJC, later the BCW, were simultaneously liberated and limited. On the one hand, the College was a space where women had a voice, a certain degree of autonomy that they had never experienced before, the chance to participate in leadership, and the opportunity to learn a broad range of subjects, which was a liberating experience. On the other hand, women were confined by an ideology that modernized them via domesticity and social service. Although this modernizing framework was empowering in several ways, it also closed off other opportunities. The most pervasive set of contradictions at the College included the tensions of gender traditionalism that somehow both advocated a more emancipatory vision for women by educating them, while simultaneously promoting women's education as a path to the improvement of family life and social problems.

B. The Road to a Four-Year College

During World War II, many discussions were held among the faculty and administrators regarding transforming the American Junior College for Women into a four-year college offering a Bachelor of Arts degree. One justification for this change was that there was a need to offer more courses of particular interest to women to train mothers and potential child welfare workers, namely in the fields of euthenics,

child development, and "Education-Psychology."[307] It is important to state here that the College defined euthenics as a combination of child development and home economics in the 1920s and 1930s, but in the 1940s and 1950s, it used these two terms interchangeably. My use of euthenics and home economics in this chapter corresponds with how this institution used them at the time. New courses in literature, history, social sciences, and the arts would also be created.[308] These changes may have been a consequence of a discussion held at the American University of Beirut at some point during the Second World War on the subject of women's education. The underlying point of agreement among the opposite sides was that women's education must be equivalent in intellectual standards to men's education, regardless of what they planned to do with their education after graduating.[309]

Despite conflicting ideas on what the goals and nature of women's education should be, as well as the ongoing uncertainties of wartime, the AJC continued to thrive. Local women who were unaffiliated with the Junior College asked for an adult education program to be created. In response, a public lecture series was inaugurated during the 1940-1941 academic year and featured a diverse series of lectures on politics, homemaking, art, and literature. Some of the lectures that these adult women attended included "The Development of Personality in Women" and "Political and Social Ideologies." Some of the attendees even paid money for these courses, ranging from fifty cents to US $2.50.[310] The variety of topics suggests that the women who

[307] Rhoda Orme, "A.C.W. a Four Years College," *American College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (December 1949): 2. LAU, RNL.

[308] *Supplement to the Catalog for the American Junior College for Women June 1949-1950: Announcement of Courses Offered in the Junior Class 1949-1950*, 1. NEST Special Collections.

[309] "American Junior College Annual Report 1943-1944," July 7, 1944. PHS, RG 115-3-4.

[310] James Nicol, "An Outline History of the American Junior College for Women and the Beirut College for Women," Unpublished Manuscript, 1956, 36. LAU, RNL. It is unclear why there was no standard price for the lectures. Other lectures that were presented in this series were "The East

asked for the public lecture series had multiple interests and were not limited to wanting to learn about specifically distaff issues.

Another factor that led the faculty to transform the two-year Junior College into a four-year institution was that the AJC could not accommodate its increasing number of applicants, as it was the only women's college in Lebanon.[311] Additionally, the percentage of AJC graduates who continued their education at AUB was very small. According to President William Stoltzfus in 1948, the number of transfer students to AUB had not increased throughout the entire history of the AJC.[312] The number of women who attended AUB was increasing annually, but most of these women were not graduates of the Junior College. Stoltzfus speculated that the causes behind this phenomenon were many:

> Conservatism both among Christians and Moslems, the kind of work offered by the University, which is designed for men, the reluctance to join a minority group in the University and the opportunities outside classes are among the reasons that the number who transfer from the College to the University has never exceeded one in 5 or 6 of the Junior College graduates.[313]

The factors listed above by President Stoltzfus were also the primary reasons that studying at the AJC had attracted women in the first place, particularly the opportunity to study in a sex-segregated institution. Julius Brown, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the American University of Beirut, wanted to keep women students at the Junior College rather than bring more of them to AUB. Brown was of the opinion that his university specifically provided men's education, stating in a letter to President Stoltzfus that fields in higher learning that explicitly belonged to

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and West during the Crusades", "Social Problems in Syria", "The Child at Home and in School", "Feeding the Family", "Omar Abi Rabia, an 8th Century Poet", "Mysticism", "The Household Budget", "Art", "Money", and "Arab Costumes during the Middle Ages."

[311] Letter to Dr. Daniel Dennett from William A. Stoltzfus, June 9, 1944. PHS, RG 115-3-4.

[312] William A. Stoltzfus, "American Junior College for Women Annual Report 1948." PHS, RG 115-3-4.

[313] Stoltzfus, "American Junior College for Women Annual Report 1948." PHS, RG 115-3-4.

women were not currently available at the American University of Beirut and that it would be impossible for euthenics courses to be created there.[314] Bayard Dodge, President of AUB from 1923 to 1948, agreed with his colleague Brown, and stated that AUB's financial responsibilities in creating scientific and professional work prevented it from establishing courses that would prepare middle class women for homemaking.[315] Dodge agreed that there was a significant need to train women teachers and educate wealthy women, even though he claimed that the latter would probably rely on servants for household work.

Both men preferred that the AJC rather than AUB offer courses related to good housekeeping. Brown and Dodge continued to deflect any attempts to make AUB more welcoming of women. "We shall be glad to cooperate in every way that we can but we feel very strongly that it will be a tremendous boon to the country if the Junior College can develop courses, which will train girls to manage their homes and bring up their children."[316] Dodge lamented that even women from wealthy families did not know how to raise their children, and that the situation was even worse among poorer families who had an infant mortality rate of fifty percent. According to Dodge, this could only be rectified through formal education for "intelligent motherhood."[317] Dodge also blamed "the Mohammedans" for the inability of AUB to provide coeducation, claiming that it would be a long time before most Muslims would allow their daughters to study with men, and therefore the Junior College should be the one

[314] Letter from Julius Brown to William A. Stoltzfus, July 17, 1940. PHS, RG 115-3-4.

[315] Letter form Bayard Dodge to William A. Stoltzfus. July 18, 1940. PHS, RG 115-3-4.

[316] Ibid.

[317] Ibid.

to create courses for Muslim girls.[318] He also called for a fundamental overhaul of home life, arguing that the uplifting of Near Eastern society should be done via women, not men. Women would not be allowed to join the freshman class at AUB until 1952.

Other than the AJC, AUB, the Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts, or the limited choices at the Université Saint Joseph, the only other option for women's education beyond the high school level in Lebanon during this period was formal teacher training. During the 1948-1949 academic year, there were 114 teacher-training institutes for men and fifty-nine for women.[319] There were more teacher training institutes for men even though teaching was one of the most common jobs held by women; teaching was the first occupational career for which Lebanese women were specifically trained via these institutions.

The administration's perceived impact of the AJC on society also played a role in its eventual expansion. In 1949, President Stoltzfus believed that the AJC was "in a large measure responsible for the progress that has been made during this quarter century and it has become a symbol of emancipation and opportunity."[320] At this point in time, the majority of graduates continued to become homemakers, and the time they spent at the Junior College was mostly "exploratory"[321] and not intended by most students for career training. But the AJC administrators and faculty were pleased with the productive influence that their graduates were exerting over Lebanese domestic life. The missionary philosophy for training home managers was that home economics

[318] Ibid.

[319] British Foreign Office 16727/25/52, "Education Statistics for the Lebanon, School Year 1948-1949," July 4, 1952, British Legation, Beirut. USEK Library.

[320] Report by William Stoltzfus, September 10, 1949. PHS, RG 115-3-4.

[321] Unsigned Letter to Harold Close, November 9, 1943. PHS, RG 115-3-4.

education produced "real homemakers and not… housemaids."[322] Several tracks at the AJC did, however, prepare women for employment in the formal economy; it was just that most students did not seek careers at the time. Higher education provided women more options in life, though whether women acted on the opportunities they were offered depended on their socioeconomic status and the social attitudes of their families.

All of these factors finally culminated in a trial junior year that was approved for the 1948-1949 academic year, and in 1949 the College began to award Bachelor's degrees after receiving accreditation through the New York State Board of Regents. Two-year Associate's degrees were still available for those who were not ready to pursue a Bachelor's degree. The College briefly went by the name "American College for Women" (ACW) until "certain members of the board of trustees 'pointed out the wisdom of emphasizing the indigenous character of such institutions by eliminating the word 'American.'"[323] Shortly after, it was known as the Beirut College for Women.[324] It would be known as the BCW until 1973, the year that it became coeducational.

C. The Structure of the College

While the College expanded into a four-year institution with increasing numbers of students, its rules remained unchanged throughout the 1940s and 1950s. In 1952-1953, tuition cost 285 Lebanese Liras for freshman and sophomores, and 325

[322] Sophie Wakim Karayusuf, "Preparation of High School Girls for Homemaking and Marriage," *The Cedar Bough* 3, no. 17 (Autumn 1948): 8. NEST Special Collections.

[323] Ellen Fleischmann, "The Impact of American Protestant Missions in Lebanon on the Construction of Female Identity, c. 1860-1950," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13, no. 4 (2002): 416.

[324] *Supplement to the Catalog of the American Junior College for Women June 1949-1950: Announcement of Courses Offered in the Junior Class 1949-1950*, 1.

Lebanese Liras for juniors and seniors.[325] Students were still required to live either on campus or with relatives in Beirut, and visits were strictly regulated. This did not dissuade women from sneaking off campus or interacting with "cousins", however.[326] Although basic school rules were the same, the composition of the staff and faculty would change. In the early 1940s, many American staff members departed Lebanon due to the outbreak of World War II. The eventual participation of the United States in the war in 1941 meant that most of the American staff members of the American University of Beirut and the American Junior College for Women were evacuated from Lebanon. The urgent need for instructors resulted in the recruitment of wives of local professors. One such teacher was Lily Badre, who had graduated from the AJC in the early 1930s. She taught Business English, English as a Second Language, freshman-level English, Typing, and Stenography at both the AJC and AUB for twelve years.[327]

After the conclusion of the Second World War, the American Junior College for Women stated its objectives more explicitly in 1946:

> These courses in higher education are offered in a women's college, where the extracurricular activities, the home life and certain subjects in the curriculum such as hygiene, family relations, child training, nutrition, dress design, interior decorating, and social problems, are definitely planned to satisfy the special interests and needs of women students.[328]

The AJC offered educational opportunities that would help students to gain admission to AUB, prepare them for marriage, or train them to work as teachers or in other professions that had recently become available to educated women. At the College,

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[325] *Catalog of the Beirut College for Women 1952-1953*, 14. LAU, RNL.

[326] Hala Sakakini, *Twosome* (Jerusalem: Habesch - The Commercial Press, 1993), 12, 14. "Cousins" was a term used to refer to any male.

[327] Lily Badre, "My Life: Episodes Still Remembered," Unpublished Manuscript, n.p.

[328] *Bulletin of the American Junior College for Women June 1946*, 6. LAU, RNL.

marriage was treated as a something that required a formal education; marriage had become professionalized and women's scientific training in household management and housewifery was advancing every few years. President Stoltzfus maintained that as the number of enrolled women increased each year, so did their responsibilities in life.[329]

At the end of the academic year of 1949-1950, ninety-one women received diplomas. By 1950, the College (now the BCW) had produced 1000 alumnae who could be found residing in thirty-three different countries, working in diverse professions, and excelling at homemaking.[330] The graduating class of 1950 listened to a speech by President Stoltzfus reminding them that most women shift their attention towards their homes, families, and communities after leaving the BCW. Stoltzfus noted that the women who took up careers were exceptions, and that many educators had noticed a prevalent sense of exasperation among educated women due to "the fact that temporary interests have received undue attention in college at the expense of those interests upon which her life will depend when they leave college."[331] This is one possible explanation for the heavy emphasis on domesticity, social service, and traditionally feminine occupations at the College during this period. A student who majored in Political Science, for example, would not have been adequately equipped to deal with the needs of her home and future family since this is what most women were expected to do with their education in the 1940s and 50s.

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[329] William Stoltzfus, "President's Word," *American College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (December 1949): 1. LAU, RNL.

[330] "Address by Mary Hanania, President of the Alumnae Association, on the Occasion of the Dedication of Frances Irwin Hall, on November 5, 1950," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (December 1950): 2. LAU, RNL.

[331] William A. Stoltzfus, "Excerpts from President's Address to the Graduating Class," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 1, no. 4 (June 1950): 1. LAU, RNL.

In the spring of 1952, the College added extension courses leading to the Associate of Arts and the Bachelor of Arts degrees in response to women who were unable to attend regularly scheduled daytime classes.[332] That summer, seventy-seven students graduated with an Associate's degree.[333] Of twenty-four women who received Bachelor's degrees, three of these students were married. Two of the married students had previously graduated from the BCW when it was still a junior college. Married women continuing their undergraduate education at the BCW was a new trend that continued into the 1960s.[334] It is unclear how widely supported this initiative was outside the BCW network. Some women, such as Hilda Musa, faced ridicule from their family members for attending classes that could be taught by women who were the same age as their daughters.[335]

In 1955 the Lebanese government proclaimed that the Bachelor of Arts degree awarded at the Beirut College for Women was equivalent to those offered at the American University of Beirut and Univerité Saint Joseph, and permitted graduates to register for examinations for government positions.[336] The Board of Regents of the State of New York gave the BCW the right to grant the Bachelor of Science degree to students the same year.[337] The BCW remained the only women's college in Lebanon in this period. From 1959-1960, Lebanon had a total of ten institutions of higher

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[332] *Beirut College for Women Catalogue 1955-1956*, 7. NEST Special Collections.

[333] "Alfred Carlton, Marie Sabri Impress Commencement Audience," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 3, no. 4 (June 1952): 1. Students could still opt for an Associate's degree once the institution became a four-year college. LAU, RNL.

[334] Lily Badre, "A New Phenomenon: Mothers Attend Classes," *Beirut College For Women Alumnae Bulletin* (April 1960): 3. LAU, RNL.

[335] Jean Makdisi, *Teta, Mother, and Me: Three Generations of Arab Women* (London: Saqi Books, 2005), 346.

[336] Mirna Lattouf, *Women, Education, and Socialization in Modern Lebanon: 19th and 20th Centuries Social History* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004), 93.

[337] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 27.

learning and 7348 students enrolled. There were 3266 pupils in American institutions, 2069 in other foreign institutions, and 2013 in national institutions. The BCW had 517 students; in comparison, AUB had 2749 students, USJ had 1569 students, and the Lebanese University had 1413 students. Other institutions of higher learning in Lebanon at this time were the Middle East College, the Near East School of Theology, Beirut Center of Higher French Studies, the Arab University of Lebanon, the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts, and Hagazian College.[338] By 1960, only three out of ten colleges and universities in Lebanon were national institutions.

D. The General Curriculum

This section covers the general curriculum, excluding home economics and social service, which will be dealt with separately. Courses outside of these realms that were offered in the late 1940s included basic academic subjects such as Art Appreciation, Education, English, French, Arabic, European History, Near Eastern History, Political Science, Journalism, Music, Religion, Economics, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Zoology, Botany, and Chemistry.[339] Physical education was mandatory – this feature was unchanged since the 1920s and 30s; by the mid-1940s, the College had acquired tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts.

The AJC had not dropped its tagline of being a Christian institution that aimed to foster Christian character in its students.[340] It claimed to emphasize "the cultural and spiritual development of every student."[341] Students were required to attend daily

[338] W. Stanley Rycroft and Myrtle M. Clemmer, *A Factual Study of the Middle East* (New York: United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1962), 94.

[339] *Bulletin of the American Junior College for Women June 1946*, 17-27.

[340] *Catalogue of the Beirut College for Women 1952-1953*, 8.

[341] Ibid., 6.

chapel services every morning. On Sundays, optional services were held in the evenings.[342] Religion courses were still mandatory and were still exclusively biased towards Christianity.[343]

History and Political Science courses in the late 1940s dealt with both the Middle East and the West.[344] A diary entry by a former student, Hala Sakakini, reveals that heated arguments often erupted between the students in at least one of these courses:

> Today in Political Science we had again one of those hot arguments over politics. It began with Najla Kiwar and Winnie Fowler contradicting each other, then the whole class joined in. I think this interest in politics and the tendency to attack people and defend others is the effect of the War on us people who have not joined the War but watched it from outside. Miss Fuleihan was very angry with us, and she felt that she could not continue the lesson. She said that we could not control our emotions, that we were waiting for opportunities to attack each other and that our arguments were not reasonable or scientific.[345]

Even though politics was widely considered a "male" domain, the excerpt from Sakakini's diary indicates that politics were immediately relevant to the lives of these young women, particularly during World War II. The fact that politics were debated on campus highlights the complexity of the students' experiences. Such debates were happening on campus at the same time that other women were preoccupied with improving domestic life.

Other students, however, were concerned with career training. Electives such as Stenography, Bookkeeping, and Typewriting offered women marketable skills if

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[342] *Catalogue of the Beirut College for Women 1955-1956*, 11.

[343] *Supplement to the Catalog of the American Junior College for Women 1948-1949*, 5. NEST Special Collections.

[344] *Supplement to the Catalog of the American Junior College for Women 1949-1950*, 13-14.

[345] Sakakini, *Twosome*, 11.

they wished to work "for the average professional man or small business."[346] These courses had also been offered during the 1930s, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Increasing numbers of women entered secretarial work in the 1940s, and many women worked as secretaries for the French and British colonial presence in Lebanon during the Second World War.[347]

At the start of the 1950s, the BCW stated that its programs of study were "designed to prepare women to assume their place of responsibility in the modern world as mothers, wives, professional women, and community leaders."[348] The phrase "community leaders" implied leaders of social service activities. Students had the option of majoring in five fields at the Bachelor's level in the early 1950s: Literature and Arts, History-Politics, Education-Psychology, Euthenics or Home Economics, or Social Work.[349] A Science major was only available at the Associate's degree level. All other courses offered at the Beirut College for Women at this time were either electives or required for graduation.

The Education-Psychology major in the 1950s intended "to give prospective teachers a broad cultural foundation, an understanding of the major social problems of their time, and some of the skills and attitudes that would make them effective community leaders."[350] The required coursework was interdisciplinary; students in this major enrolled in classes in Education, Psychology, Science, Arabic, English,

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[346] *Bulletin of the American Junior College for Women June 1946*, 18.

[347] Ruth Woodsmall, *Study of the Role of Women: Their Activities and Organizations, in Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria, October 1954-August 1955* (New York: International Federation of Business and Professional Women, 1956), 15.

[348] *Catalogue of the Beirut College for Women 1952-1953*, 6.

[349] Ibid., 27-30.

[350] Ibid., 27.

History, Music, Political Science, Social Science, Euthenics, Art, Literature, and Philosophy.[351]

In 1955, the BCW pioneered by being the first college in Lebanon to introduce Radio Production courses; students utilized the radio facilities on campus to broadcast programs to the students and faculty.[352] Although majoring in Visual and Performing Arts was not an option, a wide range of courses in Art Appreciation, Drama, and Music were available.[353] The College was also a center of abstract thought, offering rigorous Philosophy and Mathematics courses.[354]

Traditionally masculine majors, such as Science, were adapted to meet social expectations. For instance, in 1955, a General Science major was created at the Bachelor's level, and was designed to meet the needs of women who planned to teach science as well as those whose interests were "purely cultural."[355] Apparently, the faculty assumed that women were interested in science either to become teachers or out of cultural interest, not to become actual scientists. This did not preclude the possibility that some women might become scientists or healthcare professionals.

E. Home Economics Education

Although women naturally had maternal instincts, they still needed to be scientifically trained to know exactly how to use their motherly inclinations. The women who studied at the AJC and BCW were typically well prepared for this type of

[351] *Catalogue of the Beirut College for Women 1952-1953*, 27-28.

[352] *Catalogue of the Beirut College for Women 1955-1956*, 68-69.

[353] *Catalogue of the Beirut College for Women 1952-1953*, 33-34, 37, 50-51.

[354] Ibid., 48-49, 51.

[355] "General Science Major, Beirut College for Women," 1955. PHS, RG 115-3-4.

education, as they already had some experience in domestic sciences. Home economics courses were taught to various degrees in most girls' schools in Lebanon, whether American, French, Christian, Islamic, Arab nationalist, etc.[356]

Courses in Euthenics (defined by the College as a combination of home economics and child development) were required of all students as of 1946, regardless of their major. This meant that *not a single student* would graduate in the late 1940s without some knowledge of running a household and raising children. This was a critical development in women's technical preparation for housewifery and motherhood, and allowed them to negotiate their position and relationship within the nuclear family by attributing to them more autonomy and opportunities within the family structure. The students were now ready to play a role in negotiating the social order by default because the household was the basic unit of the homeland.

The College began to offer courses above the sophomore level in home economics in 1948-1949. New courses were introduced that dealt with nutrition, sewing, the family, and marriage.[357] These courses were not a novel innovation or culturally specific phenomenon – they had either already been taught or were still being taught at some women's colleges in the United States.[358] For instance, a course titled "Marriage and the Family" was offered at the Connecticut College for Women as early as 1933.[359]

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[356] Adnan Tarcici, *L'Education actuelle de la jeune fille musulmane au Liban* (Vitry-sur-Seine: Librairie Mariale, 1941), 138.

[357] *Supplement to the Catalog of the American Junior College for Women 1948-1949*, 3-7. These courses included Food Principles and Preparation, Family Nutrition and Meal Management, The Family and Human Society, Marriage and the Family, Household Physics, and Clothing: Principles of Construction.

[358] Paul Philip Marthers, "Sweeping Out Home Economics: Curriculum Reform at the Connecticut College for Women, 1952-1962," *History of Education Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (August 2011): 370.

[359] Ibid., 370.

Other new courses taught women about the arrangement of furniture, interior design, costume design, and the planning and selection of the wardrobe. The scientific and artistic nature of the coursework cannot be overemphasized – students were not learning how to carry out menial household tasks; they were being trained for work based in aesthetic principles. Courses in home management instructed students in how the family unit could most effectively improve its economic, social, and cultural life, and how family needs could best be fulfilled to the benefit of both the family and the community at large.

A class in Family Relations studied the family as a social institution while considering its origins and history. Students evaluated the myriad functions of the family unit in relation to current social change and contemporary issues. The instructor of the Family Relations course, Katherine Hoffman, declared in a personal letter that family life in Lebanon was changing radically because women began to have more authority and because Western influences were prevalent.[360] A Home Nursing course was informative both in its theoretical and practical aspects in teaching future homemakers how to follow a doctor's prescription while learning about new advances in modern medicine. Nutrition intended to help students understand the importance of a balanced diet.[361]

Euthenics aspired to instill happiness and harmony within the home. One alumna described it as "the art of living" and insisted that the family was being tested on a daily basis by the vast amount of new products appearing on the market, hence

[360] Letter to Mrs. Walter Fox from Katherine Hoffman, September 10, 1947. PHS, RG 492-6-17. It is not clear who Mrs. Walter Fox was or if she was affiliated with the Mission.

[361] *Bulletin of the American Junior College for Women June 1946*, 19-20.

the urgent need to study this subject.[362] Majors in Euthenics and Child Development were created during the 1949-1950 academic year,[363] the same year that the institution became a four-year college. Prior to the fall semester of 1949, students could take courses in these fields but not actually major in them. The intent of the Euthenics major was to equip the students with basic skills in homemaking and home management. Another stated purpose for this major was that it would train prospective dietitians and home economics educators, as well as those students interested in developing nutrition in a community public health program.[364] It seemed that the College was designing majors for women's professions in a much more deliberate way than it had in previous decades; it is unknown, however, if this was due to the desires of women themselves, their parents, or wider society.

The Child Development major was a cross-disciplinary one comprised of courses in Euthenics, Psychology, and Sociology that intended to provide "future mothers and community leaders" knowledge of children's and adolescents' needs in addition to skills necessary for family and community planning.[365] This major provided training which would be valuable for students who might work in child welfare organizations in the future.[366] The faculty felt that since this major was directed at the prevention of behavioral disorders, it could help strengthen the social life of a country. The College nursery school, the Neighborhood House, the College

[362] Kathleen Zehr, "College Major: Towards Better Homes," *American College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 1, no. 3 (April 1950): 2. LAU, RNL.

[363] "Two New Majors," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 1, no. 4 (June 1950): 2. LAU, RNL.

[364] *Supplement to the Catalog the American Junior College for Women June 1949-1950: Announcement of Courses Offered in the Junior Class 1949-1950*, 2.

[365] Ibid., 3-4.

[366] "College Majors: Child Development," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 1, no. 4 (June 1950): 2. LAU, RNL.

food laboratory, a local hospital and clinic, and the housekeeping department of one of the dormitories were utilized for fieldwork and research for this major.

Some domestic courses were economic in nature. The Consumer Education class implemented in 1949-1950 aimed to enlighten students about the problems the family would encounter in the selection and use of food and clothing. It taught women about insurance, credit, and consumer cooperatives, as well as how to analyze standards and comparative costs. Women learned about the efficient use of time and money in Principles of Home Management, where students gained practical experience in keeping accounts and balancing a family budget. Homemaking education envisioned that many of the students would teach home economics at some point either as a career or in voluntary organizations working in rural areas. The Family and Community Welfare class taught a subject that was of grave concern to most educated women of the period; students in this class studied the place of the home in the community and the responsibility of the home to improve society socially, culturally, and environmentally (i.e., through the improvement of sanitary conditions).[367] Finally, a course in Marriage and the Family considered the components of "wholesome family life" and analyzed potential issues in parent-child relationships, courtship, and marriages, all of which were undergoing significant transformations.[368] Topics addressed in this course included the selection of a romantic partner, the mutual obligations of a husband and wife in marriage, and sexual reproduction. It is remarkable that men never had to learn about any of these

[367] "Proposed Plan for Major in Social Work at the Beirut College for Women," June 1950. PHS, RG 115-3-4.

[368] *Supplement to the Catalog the American Junior College for Women June 1949-1950: Announcement of Courses Offered in the Junior Class 1949-1950*, 16.

topics; social attitudes maintained that women were responsible for the state of their marriages.

By the mid-1950s the discourse of "preparing mothers, wives, professional women, and community leaders" was still prominent, as was the concern with cultural and spiritual development of the students, and their relationships with "the family, the community, the nation and the world." [369] Two new classes had been introduced: Social Skills and the Art of Entertaining. These skills were cultivated and perfected through the hosting of numerous formal and informal social affairs such as class parties hosted by the students, tea parties given by the faculty, and receptions for outside visitors.[370]

The Euthenics program flourished due to funds from the Ford Foundation, which helped to erect a Home Management House at the College in 1952 that would function as the Euthenics building. President Stoltzfus believed this addition would significantly enhance the BCW's influence on the home and family life in Middle Eastern countries.[371] In November 1953, the Home Management House officially opened with an inaugural celebration of what was ostensibly the first home economics building in the entire Middle East.[372] Incidentally, 1953 was also the same year that Lebanese women were granted the right to vote and run for public office. This was not reflected in the educational curriculum, however. There were no new additions to courses in Political Science nor was there an inauguration of a building dedicated to

[369] *Beirut College for Women Catalogue 1955-1956*, 8.

[370] Ibid., 11.

[371] William Stoltzfus, "Founder's Day – 1952," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 4, no. 3 (May 1953): 2. LAU, RNL.

[372] "College Celebrates Twenty-Eighth Anniversary: Only Home Economics Building in Middle East Dedicated," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 4, no. 5 (December-February 1953-1954): 1. LAU, RNL.

studying this subject. Instead, the Home Management House was born. Home economics had officially transitioned from a means to an end. It first functioned as a justification for supporting women's higher education; it eventually became a reason to enroll in the College.

The first floor of the Home Management House served as the child nursery and food laboratories, while textile laboratories and classrooms were located on the second floor. The third floor functioned as space for laboratories "for the application of home management theory" where students had the "chance to put modern ideas of home making into practice."[373] All Euthenics classes, including Psychology, Education, Textiles, and Child Nursery were held in this building. Some students even lived in the Home Management House instead of the residence halls. Three faculty members and several students permanently resided there and two groups of students lived in it for six weeks at a time as part of the Home Management course where they learned "the value of conserving money, time, and human energy."[374] The students were additionally taught to employ these concepts in situations of crisis – such as how to survive without running water for a week without compromising cleanliness standards.[375] Entertaining guests and hosting parties for children were also important aspects of life in the Home Management House. At least three "Home Economics Conferences" for high school teachers were held in this building in the 1950s.[376] This building became *the* distinguishing feature of the Beirut College for Women, an emblem of the zeitgeist of domesticity at the time.

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[373] "New Addition to Campus," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 4, no. 5 (December-February 1953-1954): 2. LAU, RNL.

[374] "Beirut College for Women," *The Cedar Bough* 22, no. 1-2 (December 1954): 11. NEST Special Collections.

[375] Ibid.

[376] Ibid., 6.

In the 1950s, the College nursery school had advanced significantly from the previous decade; it was now furnished with a kitchenette and observation booths. The nursery school was utilized for specialized and scientific training for students enrolled in Child Development courses, students considering teaching as a career, professional women, and the children's mothers. The nursery school had a capacity for eighteen children between the ages of three to four years old, and an afternoon session was added in 1954-1955 to satisfy the demands of a growing number of student observers.

Hala Sakakini noted in her diary that the students in her Child Psychology class were required to write a report about four children they observed in the nursery, highlighting the practical nature of the education she received.[377] The nursery school functioned as a site for the scientific study of children and was an adjunct to euthenics coursework. This arrangement was not unique to the College; this same configuration was found at Vassar, an elite women's college in the United States. The only difference between euthenics education at Vassar and the AJC/BCW was that Vassar's Institute of Euthenics was open to men.[378] The significance of this type of education is highlighted by the regrets of some Vassar alumnae who did not seize the opportunity to learn the domestic sciences, having complained that their alma mater promoted the idea that it was more beneficial for them "to read Plato than to wash diapers, and that it was more important to hear a lecture by T.S. Eliot than to stay home with babies after graduation, they had to unlearn what they had learned in college in order to find the value of homemaking or office work."[379] While this genre of education kept Lebanese women in their traditional, gendered sphere of the home

[377] Sakakini, *Twosome*, 16.

[378] Adaline Gilstrap, "Vassar's Institute of Euthenics," *Journal of the American Association of University of Women* 34, no. 1 (1940): 32.

[379] Marthers, "Sweeping Out Home Economics," 363.

and could be viewed as a setback, domestic science also happened to be an education that was most practical and immediately applicable to their everyday lives, highlighting its Janus-faced nature of being at once liberating and limiting.

F. Social Service

A song in the student handbook of 1941-1942 entitled the "Social Service Song" confirmed that the students had successfully and enthusiastically internalized the missionaries' ideal of devotion to social service; the students were ready to help "wherever needy people are"[380] and took immense pride in their accomplishments. The chorus ran:

> At home we hear the challenge ring, challenge ring.
> It greets our voices as we sing, as we sing.
> We are coming from our classes. We are going to the masses,
> Of the children who are running in the street all day.
> We teach them games, and work, and fun, work and fun.
> We strive to help them everyone, everyone.
> And our high ideals we carry as we go,
> To spread whatever good we know.
> Beyond we feel a coming day, coming day, coming years,
> And work as hardy pioneers.[381]

The Protestant ethic of service and reform gave the students the opportunity to be active citizens in public spaces, and to call for social, economic, and gender equality by carrying out social service work. Through social service, women implicitly criticized the government for not doing enough to help its citizens; their work in these charitable organizations served as a challenge to the Lebanese government's hegemony by offering social services that states would normally provide. Philanthropy was one of the first forms of "feminist" activity by Arab

[380] *American Junior College for Women Student Handbook 1941-1942*, 22. NEST Special Collections.

[381] Ibid. The author is unknown.

women and had important gender and class implications[382] Social service accelerated women's access to the public sphere. Many bourgeois women and men believed that schools and charity organizations were the only appropriate domains for women's socialization and women's employment. Philanthropy became incorporated into the pedagogy at the College via social service courses and extracurricular activities. The College shared with Wellesley and Bryn Mawr a firm conviction that social service should be a lifetime commitment for women, particularly educated ones.[383]

In October 1940 the growing enthusiasm for social service resulted in the foundation of the "Neighborhood House", which would become a core feature of the College.[384] The Neighborhood House was a learning center for local neighborhood children who were not enrolled in school. The College students taught reading, writing, and arithmetic to the children and hygienic healthcare to their mothers. The importance of hygienic healthcare was highlighted via a student contest called "the Health Pageant for young girls" in which "the winner was crowned The Queen of Health and Cleanliness."[385] This educational methodology was understood as social uplift of the less fortunate. The College students additionally participated in other social work projects with the approximately 100 families who regularly attended classes at the Neighborhood House.[386]

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[382] Ellen Fleischmann, *The Nation and its "New Women": The Palestinian Women's Movement, 1920-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 95-114; Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republic Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 96, 99-100, 142, 144-46, 162, 179, 207, 262-63.

[383] Lynn D. Gordon, "A Tale of Two 'Sisters': Public and Private Lives at Bryn Mawr and Wellesley, 1875-1930," *Reviews in American History* 24, no. 1 (March 1996): 64.

[384] *The Social Service Story: A Brief History of Social Service in Village and Community, Beirut College for Women 1933-1964* (Beirut: Beirut College for Women, 1964), n.p. RNL, LAU.

[385] Ibid.

[386] Ibid.

Much of the social service activity of the College was done in Jibrail, a rural Lebanese village with only 1000 inhabitants.[387] A typical Lebanese village during this period lacked fuel and cooking facilities, seemingly existing in a different country than larger Lebanese cities such as Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, and Tripoli. The American missionaries opened a home economics school in Jibrail for the College students to work in during their summertime social service. Home economics was intended to civilize and discipline both the middle class and the rural class through the edification of women. While the village women and girls received guidance in matters of the home and child rearing, village boys were instructed in scouting and recreation.[388]

"It is a well-established fact that Social Service and family life are responsibilities carried primarily by women",[389] claimed President Stoltzfus in 1948. Therefore, a new major in Social Work was added during the 1949-1950 academic year, which the faculty described as "distinctly a woman's field."[390] This was a groundbreaking development in women's higher education. Young women could now be trained professionally to carry out social service, rather than volunteer in charitable organizations in their spare time. The College was the first institution in Lebanon to create a Bachelor's degree in Social Work,[391] a liberating and pioneering development for women who wished to have a career but were restrained by social attitudes on what domains were acceptable for them. Required courses in this major overlapped

[387] "Personal Report of Mrs. S.N. Alter 1944-1945." PHS, RG 492-6-17.

[388] "Personal Report of Rhoda Orme, Syria-Lebanon Mission," October 1950. PHS, RG 492-6-17.

[389] William A. Stoltzfus, "American Junior College for Women Annual Report 1948," 8. PHS, RG 115-3-4.

[390] "Two New Majors," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 1, no. 4 (June 1950): 2. LAU, RNL.

[391] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 53.

several fields, including Euthenics, Political Science, Social Science, and Psychology.[392]

Throughout the 1950s, the Social Service Organization arranged various social work projects. The Neighborhood House was staffed by student volunteers and functioned as the laboratory for Social Work majors.[393] It also served as an informal school for refugees; the influx of Palestinian refugees in 1948 caused the Neighborhood House to double in size.[394] The College students taught sewing, childcare, hygiene, and handicrafts to teenage girls and mothers. The Village Welfare Summer Camp was still thriving as well, providing various forms of healthcare and education to mountain villagers in the summertime. Adult villagers were taught about the efficient use of time, plant and animal pests, healthy diets, and recreation.[395] However, not all parents sent their daughters to volunteer in the summer camps. Social attitudes among the upper classes meant that some parents were uncomfortable with their daughters sleeping outside of home, while other parents did not understand why the students should exert so much effort to uplift lowly villagers.[396]

Additional projects of the Social Service Organization included a discussion at AUB to analyze "various aspects of the work done by the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs", which examined the Ministry's "successes and failures, and the reasons for

[392] *Beirut College for Women Catalogue 1952-1953,* 30.

[393] *Beirut College for Women Catalogue 1955-1956,* 12.

[394] "Personal Report of Rhoda Orme, Syria-Lebanon Mission," October 1950. PHS, RG 492-6-17.

[395] "Village Welfare Work Camp," *The Cedar Bough* 2, no. 16 (March 1948): 23-24. NEST Special Collections.

[396] "Personal Report of Rhoda Orme, Syria-Lebanon Mission," October 1950.

both."[397] The Social Service Organization was self-sustaining, regularly raising funds for its work by hosting American-style events such as carnivals and tea parties. The organization's volunteers occasionally taught reading and writing to the maids who cleaned the classrooms, dormitories, and other buildings of the Beirut College for Women.[398]

The young women occasionally coordinated with AUB students to undertake social service work for refugees. For example, in January 1952, young women from both universities drove around Beirut to collect clothing and other donations for Palestinian refugees.[399] In April 1957, BCW Social Work majors participated in a debate with AUB Sociology majors hosted at the College. Students debated the following subjects: "Sociologists should be concerned with the practical usefulness to social workers in their research"; "Is hereditary or Environment [sic] more important in determining personality?"; and "Social work is a science by itself."[400] The fact these women had the chance to reflect on the state of their field, its potential for improvement, and its relevance to others was an empowering experience. In 1959, a poll revealed that half of the lower income population of Beirut sought the assistance provided by social service groups; the other half indicated that they solely relied on government help.[401] Therefore women's work in these philanthropic organizations

[397] "Sociology Panel to Analyze Job of New Ministry," *Outlook*, March 1, 1958. AUB Jafet Library.

[398] Beirut College For Women, *Trireme 1952 Yearbook*, 22. RNL, LAU.

[399] "Volunteers Scour Town for Clothes in Borrowed Cars," *Outlook*, January 19, 1952. AUB Jafet Library.

[400] "AUB Sociology Students Debate with BCW Girls," *Outlook*, April 13, 1957. AUB Jafet Library.

[401] Lincoln Armstrong, "A Socio-Economic Opinion Poll in Beirut, Lebanon," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1959): 25.

was radical, because they complemented and challenged the services offered by the Lebanese government.

G. Extracurricular Activities

Membership in various cultural clubs was a mandatory part of the students' social education. All clubs were under the supervision of faculty members, and students were asked to join at least two. The diversity of the students' interests is exemplified through the variety of clubs that were active on campus in 1950.[402] An interest in typically feminine affairs such as social service was as prestigious and respectable as a curiosity for traditionally male-dominated fields such as international affairs or science. Some of the student clubs that were functioning at the College in the 1940s and 50s included the Arabic Society, Art Club, Debating Club, Folk Dancing Club, Garden Club, Glee Club, International Relations Club, Play Reading Club, Science Club, *Scoop* (a College newspaper), Social Service Organization, and Sports Club.

The Student Government Association, founded in the 1930s, was still active in this period. It intended to instill a sense of responsibility in the students and was comprised of six students who were elected by their classmates.[403] Their responsibilities included dealing with disciplinary issues and recommending appropriate punishment for students who misbehaved. The Association was additionally responsible for the social service projects of the College, the promotion of sports, and social life on campus.

[402] Beirut College For Women, *Trireme 1950 Yearbook*, 70-77. RNL, LAU.

[403] "The Student Council," American Junior College For Women, *Trireme Yearbook 1947*, n.p. RNL, LAU.

The Home Economics Club, mentioned in the previous chapter, had grown since the 1930s. In 1951, the club members felt that the field of home economics had significantly evolved: "By Home Economics we no longer mean cooking and sewing only, but many other subjects such as Nutrition, Decoration, Textiles, etc."[404] The members were proud of the advancements made in the field, which had expanded from basic household skills into an art form. Club activities included an outdoor party where the members roasted steak in the barbecue pit, a Bedouin wedding-themed party, a "Spring Style Show", and a flower show. The students who participated in the Home Economics Club hoped it would continue to flourish because "Home Economics is very important to women all over the world."[405]

The International Relations Club hosted panel discussions and debates on topical issues. In 1952, the club hosted lectures "by some eminent politicians and journalists in Beirut" such as Afif Tannous, Ghassan Tueni, and Cecil Hourani.[406] In April 1955, the club coordinated with the AUB Political Science Society to co-host a panel discussion on "The Political and Social Role of Arab Women" to be held at the BCW.[407] The club organized a panel in 1954 among prominent Lebanese female activists such as Laure Tabet, Emily Fares Ibrahim, and Ellen Rihan on "tackling the problem of women in politics."[408] The status of women was discussed again in December 1957, when a forum led by alumna Saniyya Habboub was held on women

[404] Beirut College For Women, *Trireme Yearbook 1952*, 19. RNL, LAU.

[405] Ibid., 19.

[406] Ibid., 20.

[407] "Political Science Majors Discuss Role of Arab Woman with BCW Relations Club," *Outlook*, April 6, 1955. AUB Jafet Library.

[408] *Trireme*, Beirut College For Women Yearbook, 1954, 36. RNL, LAU.

in Islam.[409] In this sense, the College was a "feminist" space where the conditions of women were deliberated and analyzed.

Student plays were still popular at the College during this period; performing in theatrical productions eventually provided a means for the sexes to interact with one another on campus. Prior to 1950, female students played the roles of male characters. In March 1950, the College allowed men from AUB to act in two plays alongside women: *Grandma Pulls the Strings*, a one-act comedy by Edith Delano and David Carb, and *Suppressed Desires*, a satirical short play on psychoanalysis by Susan Glaspell.[410] The College women had other opportunities to interact with AUB men, such as a steamboat trip to Jounieh in that same month,[411] and a ball held at AUB in April 1950 where men and women danced together.[412]

Some extracurricular activities were deliberately designed to help students plan for the future. For instance, events were held on campus to help guide students who wished to work after graduation. Women needed information about what jobs would be available to them, where they could train for these jobs, and how to figure out whether they qualified. The faculty began organizing yearly "Vocational Conferences" and providing literature in the library on possible career paths.[413] Nursing was heavily promoted to women under the pretext that no other profession for women provided such security and satisfaction, and that it was useful for both

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[409] "Feminine Writers Called Vanguard of New Freedom," *Outlook*, December 14, 1957. AUB Jafet Library.

[410] "Males Infiltrate: 'Suppressed Desires' at ACW," *Outlook*, March 17, 1950. AUB Jafet Library.

[411] "ACW Trips AUB," *Outlook*, March 24, 1950. AUB Jafet Library.

[412] "WSO Gives Ball," *Outlook*, April 29, 1950. AUB Jafet Library.

[413] *Beirut College for Women Catalogue 1955-1956*, 14.

single and married women, as it would form one into "the best wife, mother and citizen."[414]

All of the other careers that were promoted to women at the Vocational Conference in 1952 were in fields that were taught at the BCW: teaching, radio, commercial art, home economics, applied science, child guidance, social work, library science, Arabic journalism, and business and secretarial work.[415] The group of expert speakers on the various professions featured both Lebanese and Americans. Alumnae Wadad Cortas[416] (class of 1927), Pergroughi Najarian (class of 1942), and Rose Ghurayyib (class of 1932) enlightened the women about careers in teaching, child guidance, and writing in Arabic. Margaret Fedde, former director of the School of Home Economics at the University of Nebraska, discussed home economics with the students. The fact that this Vocational Conference was held in 1952 – the same year that the Home Management House began to be built – highlights the tension between the conflicting messages of careers and domesticity that were simultaneously promoted at the BCW. Women were encouraged to pursue careers at the same time that they were granted the opportunity to reside in apartments with other students in the Home Management House in order to practice various aspects of home economics twenty four hours a day, even though life in the Home Management House did not resemble life in a real home given the conspicuous absence of men and the large numbers of women cohabitating in what was effectively a scientific laboratory.

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[414] Violet Antypas, "Nursing and College: You Can Have Both!" *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 3, no. 4 (June 1952): 5. LAU, RNL.

[415] "Vocational Conference Includes Interesting Speakers," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 3, no. 4 (June 1952): 6. LAU, RNL.

[416] Wadad Cortas became the second principal of the Al-Ahliyya School for girls in Beirut, a non-sectarian institution that had originally been envisaged with Syrian nationalist undertones; she would remain in this position until 1974. Cortas transformed Al-Ahliyya into an unwaveringly nationalist school.

Home Economics majors who did not work outside of the home after graduation were still understood to have a career, albeit in the home. Alumna Marie Sabri proclaimed in her monograph about the College: "Truly the Home Economics Department has become a showcase for BCW graduates. Many of them have made their careers in this field and thus have had a profound influence on homes all over the Middle East."[417] When careers outside the home were promoted through various conferences, women were encouraged to explore traditionally feminine careers, or newer careers that were considered appropriate for women. In spite of these efforts, College President Rhoda Orme (1954-1955) conjectured that the majority of graduates would wind up in teaching careers or getting married without having had any work experience.[418]

H. The Students

The number of students continued to steadily increase each year. In 1941, there were 162 students and twelve faculty members at the College.[419] Ten years later, in 1951, the number of students had more than doubled to 283 and the number of faculty members had increased to forty-four.[420] By 1957 there were 450 students and forty-four faculty members.[421] The student body was religiously diverse since the College's earliest days, and this trend continued throughout the institution's existence. During the 1957-1958 academic year, the religious composition of the student body

[417] Marie Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 57.

[418] "Personal Report of Rhoda Orme, Syria-Lebanon Mission," September 1954. PHS, RG 492-8-10.

[419] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 28.

[420] Ibid.

[421] Ibid.

was fifty-four percent Christian, forty-one percent Muslim, and three percent Druze. There was also one Zoroastrian and four Jewish students.[422]

A school song from the early 1940s entitled "Where Are the Little Freshman?" explained how and where the freshmen students grew up while longing for a past gone by:

> Where O where are the grave Alumnae?
> Back today at the A.J.C.
> They've come back from the work they're doing;
> They've come back from the schools they teach in;
> They've come back from loving their husbands;
> Back today at the A.J.C.[423]

The song indicated that some former students came back to teach at the College after completing their studies. Indeed, in 1941-1942, Eva Badre Malik taught Near Eastern History, Wadad Cortas taught Euthenics, and Rose Ghurayyib taught Arabic. These three women had graduated in the early 1930s and had returned to the College for employment in order to help influence the education of other young women in their society. The lyrics held the alumnae up as examples to aspire to, and revealed that the students identified with the school and wished to build the College community. The alumnae themselves confirmed these various post-graduation paths described in the song (returning to the College, finding formal employment, teaching, loving their husbands). The alumnae bulletins that began to be published in the late 1940s showed that the graduates were found working in various domains of society as doctors,[424] teachers, mothers, nurses, various other careers, or ladies of leisure. One bulletin declared that each alumna had "a soft spot in her heart for the green College campus

[422] Ibid., 29.

[423] *American Junior College for Women Student Handbook 1941-1942*, 22. The author is unknown. NEST Special Collections.

[424] Alumnae who worked as physicians had continued their education after graduating from the College. The AJC and BCW did not offer medical tracks.

and her greener college days."[425] Both students and alumnae regularly expressed glowing tributes to the College and the role it played in shaping and influencing their lives.

Alumna Pergrouhi Najarian (class of 1942) asserted that: "the College atmosphere has proved to be one of the most constructively powerful and inspiring atmospheres I have experienced."[426] Najarian also depicted the character of the College as one that inspired "disciplined liberality, continuous inspiration and vision."[427] Of course there are exceptions to the standard alumna who effusively praised her alma mater. Sumaya Khauli (class of 1944) is one of the few alumnae of the College who did not share the usual encomium:[428]

> I chose the easiest classes. Cooking, cakes, stuff like that. Home Economics. I liked the Hygiene class. During the break I'd go down and help the teacher in the nursery. In the second year I took Child Psychology because I loved children so I always wanted to be around them… I didn't take Mathematics because I didn't like it or understand it. My memories of the College are not pleasant. I don't have good memories of the College. I don't reflect on it with affection. They were not the most beautiful days of my life.[429]

When asked what she liked about the College, Khauli answered: "Nothing!" She explained that she never cared to attend the AJC in the first place, but had to do so at the insistence of her father; her main priority was to marry and have children as soon as she could.[430] Her father was disappointed that she did not want to study beyond the Associate's degree level nor find formal employment. He even offered to open a

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[425] Mary Hanania, "About This Bulletin," *American College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (December 1949: 3). LAU, RNL.

[426] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 34.

[427] Ibid., 35.

[428] Sumaya Khauli, interview with the author, Beirut, May 31, 2018.

[429] Ibid.

[430] Ibid.

nursery school for her to operate since she loved children. She turned down his proposal and was a lifelong homemaker,[431] which was not an unusual path for a College graduate. When asked if any of her friends experienced a conflict between getting married and pursuing a career, she said that most of her friends accomplished both, and that the majority of them worked as secretaries.[432] But Khauli did not feel that she was part of a pioneering movement: "I did not feel anything."[433] Most of the other students, however, did feel that they were part of a pioneering movement.[434]

The American Junior College for Women, now the Beirut College for Women, represented something simultaneously traditional and progressive. The yearbook of 1950 featured a quote by a graduate named Habibeh Farouhandeh stating: "Maids must be wives and mothers to fulfill the entire and holiest end of a woman's being."[435] This student was ready to embark on the journey of homemaking and motherhood; other students who shared her views imagined their lives following their graduation as "a merry wife" and "a mother of future scholars".[436] Those who were not ready for domestic and maternal roles described their future trajectories in various ways such as: "future Hollywood star", "editor of a musical magazine", "principal of a famous school", "woman politician", "Einstein, Jr.", "a nursery school teacher", "religious educator", "a painter", and "a scholar".[437] It does not appear that the women were

[431] Ibid.

[432] Ibid.

[433] Ibid.

[434] Statements by the students in their publications and yearbooks, as well as statements by alumnae in their bulletins, regularly proclaimed that the College generated women pioneers.

[435] Beirut College For Women, *Trireme 1950 Yearbook*, 19.

[436] Ibid., 58-59.

[437] Ibid.

confused about the purpose of their education – they seemed to understand that many options were possible and that every student made her own choice. The College churned out a mixed bag of women; the students had an extensive variety of hobbies and passions and seemed supportive and welcoming of one another's choices.

Nida Makdisi (class of 1945) believed that the College played a huge part in the liberation of Lebanese women. She declared that studying at the College did not dissuade women from marriage, but that it made them more "choosey"[438] about *who* they married. Makdisi contended that her classmates rejected situations involving being set up with much older men, men they did not know, or men that were coming from abroad to take a wife back with them to whichever country they were residing in.[439] But women were not free to behave however they wished with the opposite sex. They still had to behave strategically in a way that society approved of to ensure that they could still get married someday. An article printed in 1957 by TIME, an American magazine, highlighted the crux of the issue:

> At the American University of Beirut and the Beirut College for Women modern young Moslem girl students wear blue jeans, go water skiing, and behave just like US co-eds. But the past is still with them. Their fellow male students complain that they cannot get dates. 'I just want somebody to take to the movies,' one student said. 'Would you marry a woman who has been to the movies with someone else?' asked a friend. The boy thought for a moment, and then replied: 'Well, no. I guess I wouldn't.'[440]

Young women at the College were pioneering in the sense that they were being educated at the university level, participating in new social mores, working in the formal economy, having their status in the home elevated, delaying marriage, and choosing their own spouses, but they were still limited by a patriarchal society that

[438] Nida Makdisi, interview with the author, Beirut, May 28, 2018.

[439] Ibid.

[440] Leila Khairallah, "Is it True What TIME Said About Coeds Here at AUB?" *Outlook*, November 23, 1957. AUB Jafet Library.

considered their marriage prospects to be ruined if a woman had dared set foot at a cinema with a man while she was single. These dynamics kept women in a bind that managed to be both traditional and progressive.

I. Political Activism

The students and alumnae of the pre-independence period came of age in a highly politicized era and actively engaged the social and political realities of their time. Many College women impacted the ideological and organizational direction of the Lebanese women's movement. The social and political activism carried out by College women must be understood as a continuation of the work undertaken by Lebanese women in previous decades. Their presence in major events does not negate the role of other women who were not educated at the AJC or BCW.

The first major event that College women were significantly involved in was the struggle for an independent Lebanon. Lebanese women played an important role in the armed clashes with the French colonial presence during the demonstrations for national independence in November 1943. This was a pivotal moment in the history of the women's movement, and its members believed that participation in the nationalist struggles would bring them emancipation under the new state. Their organized, large-scale mobilization for independence from the French was characteristic of other Arab women's movements that called for national liberation before they called for women's rights, as Arab feminism and nationalism were inextricably linked.[441] Women had to seek the end of colonial rule before they could

[441] See Ellen Fleischmann's discussion of Middle Eastern women and nationalism in "The Other 'Awakening': The Emergence of Women's Movements in the Modern Middle East, c. 1900-1940," in *A Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East,* eds. Margaret Meriweather and Judith Tucker (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 89-138.

obtain social, political, and economic rights – only a nationalist government, rather than a foreign one, could confer these rights.[442]

According to alumna Marie Sabri, three College alumnae were responsible for the mobilization of large numbers of women on the eve of Lebanese independence: Eva Badre Malik, Lily Badre, and Jamal Karam Harfouche. Sabri claims that these women "played an effective role in this movement; they were the 'brains' behind it all."[443] Other alumnae who participated in the protests for Lebanese independence were Thurayya Malhas,[444] Mounira El Solh,[445] Nejla Abu Izzeddin,[446] and Huneini Tarsha.[447]

Lily Badre's memoirs of the independence period confirm that many College women were a visible and transformative force in the struggle for Lebanese independence, where the participating students and alumnae appropriated Lebanese nationalism as a liberating discourse.[448] Yet women's liberation was not an outcome of these actions – being wholly committed to the independence movement did not result in any political gains for women until a full decade later. Lebanese women would not obtain the right to vote and hold public office until a full ten years after independence, in February 1953.

Students participated in the protests alongside the alumnae that they so admired. Nida Makdisi, mentioned above, was a student during World War II. She

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[442] Ibid.

[443] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 139.

[444] Ibid., 36.

[445] Mounira El Solh Obituary, *Al-Mustaqbal*, November 29, 2010.

[446] Badre, "My Life," n.p.

[447] Ibid.

[448] Ibid.

recalled in an interview that the AJC students received news from male students at AUB asking them to join in the demonstrations against the French.[449] Makdisi claimed that a group of Senegalese soldiers, who were part of the French army, had surrounded the Junior College campus. It is unclear from her narrative why this happened. When President Stoltzfus found out that a large number of students were planning to attend the demonstrations, he addressed them during the daily morning prayer service: "No ladies go into demonstration!"[450] Makdisi recalled that she stood up and defied the President: "Sir! This is a turning point in our history and we are going! We are going! We are going to take our independence!" According to Makdisi, when Stoltzfus shouted, "no!" she countered, "yes!"[451] Makdisi went to the protests but was eventually taken to the emergency room after a stray bullet fired by Senegalese soldiers hit her in the leg.[452]

Although a significant number of AJC women were politically active during the war, it would be incorrect to assume that all of them participated in protests, or that all of them even cared in the first place. The students at the College lived in an isolated bubble, to the extent that Sumaya Khauli, a former student mentioned earlier, said she was politically unaffected by the war.[453] But Khauli could not have avoided the war altogether; a different alumna recorded in her diary an episode where students had to hide in the AJC's air raid shelter.[454] Although Khauli was encouraged by her classmates to join them in the protests, she never attended a single one. She explained

[449] Nida Makdisi, interview with the author.

[450] Ibid.

[451] Ibid.

[452] Ibid.

[453] Sumaya Khauli, interview with the author.

[454] Sakakini, *Twosome*, 12.

in an interview: "I don't like politics, I didn't like [politics] at the time, I don't like protests and things of that nature."[455] However, she did take advantage of social events that were being held during the war, such as tea dances (*thé dansants*), where she met the man she would marry shortly after she graduated.[456]

On the eve of Lebanese independence, a handful of alumnae founded a women's magazine called *Sawt al-mar'a* ("The Woman's Voice"). This was a magazine that was established, edited, and operated by women whose elementary, secondary, and higher education had been in English, yet the periodical was printed in Arabic. Articles in French and English only appeared occasionally, as the women favored their "mother tongue of which we are very proud."[457] By founding this paper, the alumnae helped revive literary production in Lebanon, which had been on hiatus since the 1930s.[458] *Sawt al-mar'a* raised important questions such as the right of women to vote, the rights of married women employees of the Lebanese government, women's inheritance equality, equality in the custody of children, and the rights of women to be civil officers. It also dealt with typically distaff subjects that were featured in most women's magazines such as childcare, housework, fashion, beauty, and pleasing one's husband. This magazine seemingly addressed nearly all aspects of Lebanese womanhood and allowed the upper-class women's construct of femininity to become the de facto national ideal of womanhood. This group of alumnae also founded the Lebanese Women's Federation around the same time and many took on

[455] Ibid.

[456] Ibid.

[457] "To the Daughters of Lebanon Overseas From Their Sisters in Lebanon Through the Lebanese Women's Federation," *Sawt al-mar'a* (1951). AUB Jafet Library.

[458] Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 295.

"responsible positions of leadership."[459] *Sawt al-mar'a* would be published until 1958, then reincarnated as *Dunya al-mar'a* ("The Woman's World") in 1960 by the same group of women.[460]

Just over a year after the November 1943 protests, elite Lebanese women continued their activism in Cairo at the "All Arab Women's Congress" in December 1944. Although a proposal for women's suffrage had been defeated a month before in the parliament,[461] Lebanese women persisted in their struggle for more rights. Twenty-seven representatives from Lebanon attended and seventeen of the women in the Lebanese delegation had a college-level education; twelve of them were graduates of the AJC.[462] Alumna Zahiya Macksad Salman (class of 1936) delivered a speech at the conference on the importance of child welfare.[463] Another alumna, Jamal Karam Harfouche (class of 1935), gave a speech calling for state and municipal authorities to open recreational clubs and public gardens for poor and disadvantaged children.[464]

College students and alumnae played a significant role Lebanese women's activism in the 1940s, but women did not win any political rights by the end of the decade. BCW students in the 1950s came of age in the era when Lebanese women would be granted political rights. But not all College women were necessarily in favor of these advancements. The BCW yearbook of 1951 declared that the students were "very enthusiastic about women's rights of which they feel they are being deprived",

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[459] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles,* 46.

[460] Both of these magazines are available at the AUB Jafet Library. At the time of writing, *Sawt al-mar'a* is available on microfilm and *Dunya al-mar'a* is available in hard copy.

[461] Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 272.

[462] Donald Roberts, "The Beirut College for Women: A Short History" Unpublished Manuscript, 48. RNL, LAU; *Al-Mu'tamar al-nisa'i al-'Arabi 1944,* (Cairo: Dar al-ma'arif, 1945), 60.

[463] *Al-Mu'tamar al-nisa'i*, 64, 161-62.

[464] Ibid., 184-88.

and that most of them were of the opinion that women should participate in politics. A minority of students, however, considered the political realm to be irrelevant for women.[465] Souad Hoss, a student at the time, claimed that women should avoid politics and "stay at home and raise more children" because home management amounted to more than enough work. "No one can handle both dishpan and debate," she contended.[466] Apparently, the College women of the 1940s were more progressive than those of the 1950s.

J. Conclusion

This chapter has described the evolution of the two-year American Junior College for Women into the four-year Beirut College for Women, and the economic, social, and practical factors behind this transformation. The two distinguishing features of the College were its programs of study and extracurricular activities in home economics and social service, although it offered a wide assortment of classes in other subjects, including typically "male" domains. Students had the option of majoring in fields that were socially acceptable for women, such as Home Economics, Social Work, and Education. Other majors were modified to fit social expectations for women. The AJC, later the BCW, was a space where women could thrive in their studies, social life, and extracurricular activities. The College transformed higher education for women but limited their modernization through the lens of domesticity and social service.

Traditional and emancipatory messages were institutionalized at the AJC and BCW. The College was all things to all students – for some, it was a training ground

[465] Amineh Faour, "Hurrah, Take Heart! Here is a New Job For You," Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1951 Yearbook*, n.p. RNL, LAU.

[466] Ibid.

for domesticity. For others, it was a path to economic autonomy and formal employment. Yet for other students, it was an institution of higher education that opened doors for further academic study. The College helped its students find their voices and develop their intellectual abilities and leadership skills in a setting that bolstered traditional sex roles at every turn while simultaneously redefining these roles by claiming that women were serving their nation and improving society, and offering women the option to pursue careers or further academic work. In this sense, the College functioned in a traditional/progressive dyad that appealed to the various ambitions among the student body.

CHAPTER IV

STUDENT THESIS PROJECTS

This chapter will humanize the College by examining women's voices and concerns through an analysis of their own writings. The BCW[467] functioned as a space for students from elite families where the roles of women were conceptualized, debated, and enacted. This is keenly demonstrated in their senior thesis projects that were based on original research. This was a new graduation requirement as of the 1952-1953 academic year[468] as a result of curriculum restructuring. Students selected their own thesis topics, which would be approved by their respective departments. They spent the majority of their senior year researching and writing their theses under the guidance of professors.[469] This chapter is primarily based on these projects, written in the early 1950s until the early 1960s, which provide a rare opportunity to actually enter the minds of these women to understand their concerns, self-perceptions, and identity politics. These unique sources have not been used before in studies on Lebanese women, and I make extensive use of these texts as feminist theoretical conversations. By "feminist", I refer to a reflection on women's status in the family and society that resulted in an explicit expression of dissatisfaction and desire for improvement; their feminism was created from this tension.

[467] I will refer to this institution as the BCW for the remainder of this chapter due to the thesis requirement being implemented when the institution's name was changed to Beirut College for Women.

[468] Donald Roberts, "The Beirut College for Women, A Short History," Unpublished Manuscript, 1958, 91. It is unclear if this requirement was kept once the institution became BUC. The thesis projects listed in the online library database of LAU suggest that writing a senior thesis eventually became optional at some point in the 1970s.

[469] Roberts, 91.

I argue that engaging in this mandatory research project was liberating for these students, because the topics that they chose to discuss were salient to women of their social and economic class at the time, and reveal what issues may have perplexed them on a day-to-day level. Such salient topics include courtship, marriage, balancing home and work duties, generational differences, and social issues. These projects allow us to view the students at the Beirut College for Women as a diverse group of individuals who seriously contemplated women's conditions. By raising the questions that they did, they were actively participating in the shaping of new discourses on women in Lebanon, and hence being liberated to an extent. The subjects they researched necessarily invoked the politics of modernity, social control, power dynamics, family relations, and cultural authenticity. Lebanese women's feminist consciousness was first cultivated in the context of home and family – these projects mirror this development among the students. The BCW students suffered various ills as daughters and sisters, and anticipated that later on they would experience new problems as wives and mothers. These senior theses were an attempt to make sense of women's positions in Lebanon; the projects highlight subtleties within debates about a certain class of women who came of age in the post independence period when Lebanon was establishing itself as a new nation. By engaging in knowledge production on issues of concern to women of their social and economic class, these women were questioning the status quo. Whether the status quo was upheld or challenged differed for each student.

Although the experience of researching and writing on these issues was liberating, the students were still limited in several respects. Their limitations become clear in the results section of these research projects. The subjects of study in many of these texts are the BCW students themselves, indicating that these women were

conscious of the fact that they were engaging in new behaviors that disrupted the status quo. There were internal differences among the students as well; the results of various studies showed that these young women were constrained by parental and social expectations in several different dimensions, such as their choice of future husband and whether or not they would be allowed to work after graduation. Additionally, they faced limitations in their social and personal lives – there were certain activities they were not allowed to engage in such as dancing, playing sports, wearing trousers, and using cosmetics. Some students were not allowed to socialize with, much less date, males. Other limitations they faced included what they perceived to be unfair restrictions such as curfews as early as 6:00 p.m., and being forbidden to socialize without their brothers present.

In other cases, the subjects of study were women who the students would later become, such as wives struggling to find a balance between work and home life, or future social workers wanting to stop prostitution and improve child welfare. These projects are not merely homework assignments; they are informative in terms of understanding the limits in which these women found themselves and the ways in which they challenged those limits as a newly emerging class of women. Some of these women upheld what Deniz Kandiyoti refers to as the "patriarchal bargain"[470] while others challenged it. In Kandiyoti's "patriarchal bargain", women work within the constraints of patriarchal structures to maximize their options and benefits.

Utilizing these thesis projects as a method of inquiry also produces a more coherent picture of the cross-cultural encounter between educators and students at the BCW. The mostly Arab students were enrolled in an American institution in an Arab capital that imported American curricula that was taught by mostly American

[470] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender and Society* 2 (1988): 274-90.

instructors. Previous chapters relied on many letters and reports written by the faculty; this chapter is based solely on the women's voices. The importance of exploring women's own voices regarding their cross-cultural educational experience is fittingly expressed by Hoda Elsadda: "It is the problem of assuming that local populations were passive recipients and were uncritically open to outside influence, that the people involved had no demands, no agendas of their own and no agency."[471] Drawing upon the BCW students' own voices via their senior thesis projects provides a more balanced and reliable account of the students' experiences, or "educational encounters", and demonstrates that they had both agency and agendas of their own. Christine Lindner articulates in her research on missionary education in late Ottoman Syria that: "The phrase 'educational encounter' grants agency to all involved, for even if an imbalanced dynamic of power defined the relations amongst the teachers, students, and parents, they all played an important role in shaping the encounter and the nature of educational development."[472] By studying the "educational encounter" of the BCW women through their intellectual production, one begins to comprehend their interpretations of their situations. Their own understandings of their lived experiences at school and in their communities are of fundamental importance in studying the role of the Beirut College for Women in the advancement of a certain class of Lebanese women.

There was a stereotype in wider Lebanese society that the women who studied at the BCW were spoiled and had no ambitions other than becoming housewives. This

[471] Hoda Elsadda, "A 'Phantom Freedom in a Phantom Modernity?' Protestant Missionaries, Domestic Ideology and Narratives of Modernity in an Arab Context," *Rethinking History* 15, no. 2 (June 2011): 221.

[472] Christine B. Lindner, "Educational Encounters Between American Protestant Missionaries and the Residents of Late Ottoman Syria: One Path Toward a Modern Education," in *Entangled Education: Foreign and Local Schools in Ottoman Syria and Mandate Lebanon (19th-20th Centuries)*, eds. Julia Hauser, Christine B. Lindner, and Esther Moller (Beirut: Orient Institute, 2016), 239.

stereotype made its way into *Al-Qamar al-muraba'* ("The Square Moon"), a book of short stories published in Arabic in 1994 by Ghadah Samman. In the short story, "Bayda mukayafa al-hawa" ("An Air-Conditioned Egg"), a female character recalls an interaction with a male: "On the night I left, he said encouragingly, 'It would be lovely if you decided to study Finance and Business Administration at the same university I studied at. Girls who are pampered like yourself are usually happy with studying home economics at the Beirut University College and participating in beauty contests.'"[473] The male character trivialized female students who attended the College, claiming it was a space for "pampered" women. Furthermore, his statement reduces home economics to an unintellectual pursuit with no intrinsic value, a pointless activity as superficial as beauty pageants.

This chapter will demonstrate otherwise – the students of the Beirut College for Women seriously reflected upon women's conditions and intervened in conversations about their roles in society and problems plaguing their country. All of the projects examined in this chapter reconsidered familial roles or reassessed gender relations, a liberating pursuit for women in a limited social and familial context. This chapter is organized by the themes of the thesis topics that students selected. All of the theses considered here specifically deal with conditions in Lebanon. I begin each section by providing context on the subject matter dealt with in the theses, followed by a discussion and analysis of each project. I have provided some information on each student whenever possible.[474]

[473] Ghadah Samman, *Al-Qamar al-muraba'* (Beirut: Ghadah Samman Publications, 1994), 185. Translation mine.

[474] Some students provided brief biographical sketches in the preface to their projects, including what country they were from and what they were majoring in.

A. Making Sense of Courtship, Love, and Marriage

At the time that these students were writing their theses, courtship was a new social behavior that only certain segments of the middle and upper classes dabbled in. Courtship functioned as a strategy to help women find a suitable husband to marry, but what did being married *mean* for women? Examining the historical specificity of marriage in Lebanon emphasizes the limitations that came along with it. Broadly speaking, marriage and citizenship in Lebanon (as elsewhere) have always been interconnected. Marriage had significant consequences for Lebanese women's citizenship, which would change once they were married. Up until 1960, marrying a foreigner deprived Lebanese women of their citizenship,[475] pushing them outside of the Lebanese national community. A woman's choice of husband gave the Lebanese state a direct role in shaping the body politic and defining its citizenry as male. This was especially important in the early independence period; if a Lebanese woman were to be deprived of her citizenship, she would also lose most of her other rights in Lebanon and would be legally treated as a foreigner.

As for Lebanese men, marriage bolstered their civic status and conferred new rights upon them. Husbands became heads of households while wives automatically became dependent on husbands. Being dependent on a male head of household was not new; women had already been dependent on their fathers prior to being married. Furthermore, men were never punished for marrying non-Lebanese women. On the contrary, they retained their citizenship and passed it along to their foreign wives and children. Lebanese women have never been able to grant citizenship to their

[475] Rita Stephan, "Women's Rights Activism in Lebanon," in *Mapping Arab Women's Movements: A Century of Transformations from Within*, eds. Pernille Arenfeldt and Nawar Al-Hassan Golley (Cairo and New York: American University of Cairo Press, 2011), 123.

offspring;[476] in fact, Lebanese women are still deprived of this right at the time of writing. This is the climate that the BCW students were living in, anticipating that marriage would follow after they completed their undergraduate degrees.

In this context, a student named Nameeda Kanawaty wrote a thesis on courtship in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. According to the short biography in the preface to her thesis, this student was born in Baalbeck and was the eldest of seven sisters. Kanawaty had previously graduated from the College with an Associate's degree in 1950 and taught in secondary schools. She re-enrolled at the BCW in 1956 to complete a B.A. in Child Development. Her thesis project was titled "Changing Patterns of Courtship in Selected Communities of the Near East."[477]

Kanawaty's methodology involved interviewing 300 Muslim and Christian men and women of different ages living in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.[478] Her stated purpose for writing on this subject was "to show the importance of courtship to marriage and to compare the new and old patterns of courtship in certain selected communities and localities of the Near East."[479] Courtship was an unorthodox idea to the parents of Kanawaty and those of her classmates – she explained that it was another Western practice that young people had decided to adopt, and that it disrupted the traditional practices of selecting a mate in the region. Yet she felt that courtship was advantageous regardless of its disruptive qualities of tradition, because it could prevent unhappy marriages. She argued that unhappy marriages were caused by "the

[476] Suad Joseph, "Civic Myths, Citizenship, and Gender in Lebanon," in *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*, ed. Suad Joseph (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 128.

[477] Nameeda Kanawaty, "Changing Patterns of Courtship in Selected Communities of the Near East," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1958. LAU, RNL.

[478] Ibid., 33.

[479] Ibid., 1.

great parental influences on marriage."[480] Young women were at risk of ending up in an unhappy marriage if their parents forbade them from meeting with their future husbands before the wedding day. Kanawaty elaborated further: "Marriage is… a social institution in which individuals who participate reorient their lives with each other. One of its focal points is…emotional satisfaction. So the strict isolation of the sexes before marriage produces an important problem."[481]

The results of Kanawaty's interviews pointed to many significant changes in patterns of courtship and marriage during the early 1950s in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. Both men and women were obtaining more education than previous generations and were delaying marriage past the age that their parents had been married. The older generations that Kanawaty surveyed were wed by parental choice and had only consented because they had no other options.[482] The younger generations in her sample were married by personal choice, and had selected partners with whom they shared common interests, companionship, and love. The only pattern of traditional courtship or marriage that had not undergone any transformation at all was that the parents still had to approve of the potential husband. Most importantly, all of the younger interviewees had the chance to meet their spouse before marriage.

This project was situated in the politics of modernity, and questions of social control and cultural authenticity, regardless of the fact that Kanawaty did not use such terms. Kanawaty was charting conceptual and cultural shifts in a practice that she wanted to engage in; her depiction of courtship illustrates that she was in favor of it. Kanawaty and her cohort were coming of age in an era where various social changes

[480] Ibid., 3-4.

[481] Ibid., 3.

[482] Ibid., 47.

were "resulting in the decline of the traditional, arranged relationships and the increase of romantic marriage practices."[483] There were inherent tensions in the idea of departing from a traditional process that her parents and grandparents had been through. Kanawaty and her peers were stuck in different relational tensions at different levels: "mainly, the tensions between child-parent, individual-collective and progressive-conservative."[484] The youngest generation that Kanawaty had interviewed were the products of the French Mandate and early independence era; the oldest generation may have been Ottoman subjects. The interviewees' ideas on marriage would have been shaped by when they were born and the sociocultural climate that they grew up in.

Kanawaty does not give any indication that she viewed the basic idea of matrimony negatively. Rather, her writing suggests that marriage was attractive to her if based on mutual love and affection between two partners, and that she was in favor of economic autonomy for women. The timing of her research was not coincidental – she was contesting arranged marriage during the same decade that it would cease to be the norm among most Muslims in Lebanon in the 1950s.[485] Therefore, her project reflects broader concern about this issue. Even parents and grandparents were beginning to act as "supervisors over, and advisors about, the marital process."[486]

This student's efforts to deduce reasons behind various trends are highly illuminating. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this project is her analysis of Muslim women's reasons for marriage, in which generational shifts were immediately

[483] Khaled Nasser, Yasmine Dabbous, and Dima Baba, "From Strangers to Spouses: Early Relational Dialectics in Arranged Marriages Among Muslim Families in Lebanon," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 44, no. 3 (May-June 2013), 387.

[484] Ibid.

[485] Ibid., 388.

[486] Ibid.

apparent. Kanawaty comes across as having been perceptive of new "freedoms" for women in her generation that entailed a lesser degree of parental control and somewhat more flexible social standards. She acutely illustrated how liberating it was for women of her generation to have a love-based marriage when she compared a loveless marriage to slavery – she declared that a woman was no longer the husband's "slave or tool for his pleasure as she used to be." [487] A desire for a love-based marriage was a progressive stance, not some girlish desire for romance.

Kanawaty makes an expressly feminist criticism on what she perceives as widespread inequality between men and women in marital relations. The straightforward language she uses demonstrates that this young woman was questioning patriarchal practices that she was exceedingly appalled by:

> The woman in the Near East is used to being dominated… She is brought up in a home where the father who is older dominates his family, so she accepts that from childhood and finds it difficult to change. So the woman has to be younger than her husband in order to submit to his power. At the same time the man identifies himself with his father, so he wants to possess a woman whom he can dominate. Therefore he needs to be older than his wife in order to have a stronger and more developed personality than she has.[488]

Kanawaty accuses fathers of "dominating" their kin, and husbands of maintaining hierarchical power dynamics to exercise control over their wives; it is obvious that she had no interest in marrying such a husband. Kanawaty differed from previous generations by possibly having some choice in the matter and by being able to question the practice in this thesis project. And yet, merely embarking on this project was extremely controversial, particularly for her older interviewees. She recounted her experiences with some of the individuals in her sample:

> To many older people it was a big shame for a girl who was not married to know so much about marriage and interfere in such a study. A few refused to

[487] Kanawaty, 51.

[488] Ibid., 41-42.

> answer at all because they were afraid of being ridiculed by the interviewer. They thought she knew what should be the best answers for the questions and they felt they might be wrong in theirs. Others still, were afraid to reveal such personal matters to a stranger for they considered anything that has to do with sex relations as shameful.[489]

Kanawaty also asked her interviewees about their sexual lives before and after marriage,[490] a radical act for a young woman of her time. She wanted to know how often couples had sexual intercourse and what sexual activities they had participated in prior to being married. Kanawaty even went as far as inquiring whether men and women felt any guilt in engaging in sex, and explained that one's sexual freedom was dependent on their cultural context.[491] Making such a powerful intervention that disrupted social norms was a type of liberation.

Another student who was concerned with courtship was Wafa Sartan, a Euthenics and Education major from Tripoli in northern Lebanon. Sartan wrote her thesis four years after Kanawaty in 1958, entitled "Attitudes of College Students to Dating."[492] She observed that she was living in a changing time where there were opportunities for men and women to meet in public and maintain freer social relationships than previous generations had.[493] She believed that the spread of education as well as the popularity of Western films and magazines had resulted in the Western concept of dating being practiced in Lebanon.[494] However, Sartan was not nearly as progressive as Kanawaty; Sartan was worried that Western films and

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[489] Ibid., 38.

[490] Ibid., 62.

[491] Ibid.

[492] Wafa Sartan, "Attitudes of College Students to Dating," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1958. LAU, RNL.

[493] Ibid., 1.

[494] Ibid.

magazines "may hit at the extremes of these practices and give the wrong impression to the youth about dating and other practices."[495]

Sartan's project investigated student attitudes towards dating at the Beirut College for Women in 1958 by comparing the views of freshmen and seniors. She discovered that most freshmen did not partake in mixed activities while seniors were much more likely to do so. Prior to attending the BCW, the types of mixed activities that the students had participated in were parties, dances, school trips, picnics, cultural activities, religious activities, sports, scouting, camping, and music.[496] It turned out that the BCW did not provide women with their first interactions with men outside of their kin networks.

Sartan found that there was no consensus on the definition of dating among the students in her sample. Almost half of the respondents (forty-six percent) either did not answer her question or replied that they did not know the definition. The most common answers were "going out with boys"; "going to parties, movies, etc. with boys"; "it is bad", "it is an imitation of what is done in the West"; "fun and recreation"; and "friendship and mixing with boys."[497] There was no general agreement on the purposes of dating; some just wanted to have fun while others saw it as a means to meet their future husbands. Of the 124 students in the study, only thirty-nine percent *actually* dated (however defined). Sartan's own definition of dating was that it was an American practice: "The writer… believes that dating, as practiced in Lebanon, is adapted from the United States."[498] Yet she believed that it would not be

[495] Ibid., 24.

[496] Ibid., 32-33.

[497] Ibid., 30-31.

[498] Ibid., 2.

easily adapted in Lebanon: "Some practices are expected and natural to the people of one culture while they appear odd and immoral to other people."[499] Sartan seemed to have agreed that dating was "odd and immoral" for her cultural context.

What can we make of the results of Sartan's study? Firstly, not all young women at the BCW cared to engage in dating or courtship, or felt that they were able to. The mere fact that dating was available to them in some form or another did not necessitate a sudden rush to experiment with going out with males, although they may have been constrained anyhow. It seems that some students may not have understood dating as a new form of social empowerment, or perhaps they were not prepared to empower themselves further. Other students approved of dating but had not had the opportunity yet. Reasons for dating ranged from having fun to seeking marriage. Interestingly, parents' views on dating appeared to be as variegated as those of the BCW students; parents who allowed their daughters to socialize in settings where young men were present did not necessarily condone dating as a logical next step in what else they might permit their daughters to do.[500]

Sartan's preoccupation with the politics of modernity and Westernization led her to wonder whether this meant adopting all that the West had to offer. By using the word "extremes" in describing dating practices, Sartan was likely hinting at her wider society's disapproval of pre-marital sexual intercourse, which she apparently perceived to be a hallmark of Western style courtship. Her results indicated that most students in the late 1950s had some interaction with the opposite sex in wholesome settings prior to commencing their studies at the BCW, rather than in "extreme" settings. She was clearly not in favor of exporting the Western model of dating to

[499] Ibid., 3.

[500] Ibid., 29-30.

Lebanon, explaining that it did not fit the local culture. "Although there is a trend towards Westernization, it is not necessarily good to imitate other countries' practices unless they are modified and adapted to suit the culture. This modification will be more effective in helping solve the problems of the youth."[501]

The predicament of courtship in the two theses discussed above reflect what Lila Abu-Lughod describes as "the complex ways that the West and things associated with the West, embraced, repudiated, and translated, are implicated in contemporary gender politics."[502] Western traditions such as education were positively received, while questionable behavior that might sacrifice cultural authenticity was rejected by some BCW women. Kanawaty was clearly in favor of courtship as she felt that it would prevent unhappy marriages, while Sartan was wary of it and thought that it did not benefit Lebanese society. The two senior thesis projects in this section contributed to a larger conversation on changing trends in courtship and marriage while simultaneously restructuring current approaches to both practices. Kanawaty was challenging the status quo while Sartan was enforcing it.

B. Married Women: Economic Expectations and Problems at Home and Work

Women experienced life within the family structure differently from men. From its inception, the Lebanese state had an interest in maintaining the gendered organization of power via the patriarchal and patrilineal family.[503] Lebanese women did not have a public legal existence; they were either daughters defined by their

[501] Ibid., 48.

[502] Lila Abu-Lughod, "Feminist Longings and Postcolonial Conditions," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 3.

[503] Suad Joseph, "Descent of the Nation: Kinship and Citizenship in Lebanon," *Citizenship Studies* 3, no. 3 (1999): 295-318.

father's legal status or wives defined by their husband's legal status. Once they were married, their rights as wives and mothers were under the jurisdiction of the government, the clergy, and their kin groups.[504] Lebanon had a dual legal system: civil laws and personal status codes. The latter allowed confessional groups to determine women's rights in marriage, inheritance, divorce, and child custody; all personal status laws, regardless of confession, significantly disadvantaged married and divorced women.[505] Hence, despite having had different class and religious backgrounds, Lebanese women shared a general subordination to men.

There were (and still are) fifteen personal status codes for eighteen different sects.[506] Essentially, the implications of this system were that Lebanese women from each sect, whether Christian, Muslim, or Jewish, would have different sets of rights. These rights differed for women in the same religious group. For instance, Maronite, Protestant, and Orthodox women, though all Christian, did not have the same rights in marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody. The same was true for Shiite and Sunni women, though both were Muslim. The personal status codes for Muslim sects date back to the Ottoman Law of Family Rights of 1917 and are actually still the law in present-day Lebanon, never having been replaced by more modern legislation.[507] The discriminatory gendered characteristics of the Lebanese legal system are aptly described by Maya Mikdashi: "The regulation of sexual difference is not limited to the arena of personal status, but rather is the constitutive knot at the center of civil,

[504] Stephan, "Women's Rights Activism in Lebanon," 124.

[505] Lamia Rustum Shehadeh, "The Legal Status of Married Women in Lebanon," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30, no. 4 (November 1998): 501-19.

[506] Ibid., 503.

[507] Judith Tucker, "Revisiting Reform: Women and the Ottoman Law of Family Rights, 1917," *Arab Studies Journal* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1996), 4-5.

criminal, and procedural law in Lebanon."[508] The legal Lebanese system unfairly disadvantaged women from the outset of its configuration, when French authorities, religious leaders, and male politicians struck a deal that would place women at the bottom of the civic totem pole.[509] This context would eventually become applicable to the BCW students once they were married, and possibly later, divorced.

Lectures held on the BCW campus such as "The Psychology of Making a Marriage Work"[510] made it explicitly clear that it was a woman's responsibility to maintain a successful marriage. It seems logical then that some students wanted to explore this issue further, given that marriage was the norm for women. Samia Accari, a Euthenics major from Beirut, wrote a thesis in 1958 titled "Economic Expectations of Marriage of Moslem College Women."[511] Accari's rationale for choosing this subject for her thesis was that she and her friends at the Beirut College for Women had discussed the problems of marriage countless times. They considered these problems to entail questions of who they wished to marry, "what is love?", whether love was important relative to the qualifications and wealth of a potential husband, and how much sway parents should have in the choice of a future spouse.[512] Additionally, Accari explained that her "friends have shown a great interest in the amount of responsibility their parents should have for their marriage"[513] and that "the

[508] Maya Mikdashi, "Sex and Sectarianism: The Legal Architecture of Lebanese Citizenship," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34, no. 2 (2014): 281.

[509] This is recounted extensively by Elizabeth Thompson in *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

[510] Beirut College For Women, *Trireme Yearbook 1953*, 15. RNL, LAU. This lecture was delivered by Dr. Pergrouhi Najarian, an alumna of the AJC (class of 1942).

[511] Samia Accari, "Economic Expectations of Marriage of Moslem College Women," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1958. LAU, RNL.

[512] Ibid., 1.

[513] Ibid.

beautiful girls," i.e., the most physically attractive students, were worried that they might be "sold for wealth."[514]

Accari and her friends understood marriage to have become "a social problem these days" due to a clash between the expectations of young, educated Muslim women and their parents who expected them to uphold certain customs. "Families are usually strongly attached to its [sic] own culture, habits and customs. While other girls who have been exposed to ideas from other cultures may question the traditions of their family."[515] Muslim BCW students were questioning tradition and wanted something different for themselves, and the tension this brought to their families was a social problem that needed to be addressed, argued Accari.

Accari then set out to investigate the economic and social expectations for marriage of Muslim students at the Beirut College for Women, and to find out to what extent their expectations were influenced by parental control and tradition. To discover exactly how widespread this problem was on campus, Accari distributed a questionnaire to fifty students aged between nineteen and twenty-four years old, which she deemed to be an appropriate age range for marriage.[516]

What were the factors that influenced the BCW students' attitudes towards marriage? The respondents indicated that their expectations were primarily based on their personal family experience, witnessing the marriages of their friends, and from books they had read. Other students stated that they were influenced by the teachers and courses at Beirut College for Women.[517] Previous chapters have shown that

[514] Ibid.

[515] Ibid., 3-4.

[516] Ibid., 49.

[517] Ibid., 57.

students at the BCW learned about family relationships and how to select a suitable husband in various Home Economics classes. The fact that students explicitly gave credit to the BCW confirms that the institution played an important role in shaping these women's expectations in marriage as well as other life choices. Most women (sixty-five percent) asserted that they would not marry if they did not love the man their parents selected for them. Only thirty-five percent were willing to marry a man they did not love.[518] Half of the respondents indicated that love would come after marriage, and the vast majority expressed that children were necessary for a happy marriage.[519] In terms of parental influence, students claimed that they did not plan to yield unwillingly to their parents but would not reject them altogether. They shared their parents' view that both parties would work together in selecting a suitable mate.

Accari determined from her data that if parents forbade a daughter to marry the man she loved, the daughter would deal with this problem by marrying a rich man in order to at least enjoy "money, jewelry, castles, travels, and the luxurious life."[520] She inquired if these young Muslim women might be stuck in trying to choose between the happiness they believed would result from marrying a man they loved or the financial security they would be guaranteed if they married a wealthy man. She felt that money was still important in marriage but that it was not the only consideration anymore.[521]

Accari's justification for writing this thesis is a clear indication that a number of BCW students were reconceptualizing familial relations and the notion of freedom

[518] Ibid., 54.

[519] Ibid., 54.

[520] Ibid., 1-2.

[521] Ibid., 3-4.

of choice. Decision-making power between parents and daughters had been redistributed. This was a liberating gain for Lebanese women, who were profoundly economically disadvantaged at the time this student was researching her project. For instance, at the time Accari was writing her thesis, married Lebanese women did not have the right to open businesses or the right to life insurance.[522] It was highly practical to ponder whether or not it made sense to marry a man who was excessively wealthy. At the same time, Accari's choice of words suggest that she and her friends were worried they were expendable in exchange for large sums of money. Her data suggests that young women would maximize their options in the "patriarchal bargain"; they strategized for economic security if denied their first choice of a husband. Therefore, we can infer from this student's results that the overall purpose of marriage for women had not been radically changed; marriage was still ultimately for economic stability. This explains why the marriage trope was so viable that it straddled multiple time periods.

I find the most interesting aspect of Accari's results to be the students' plans post BCW. Forty-four percent of her sample would choose domesticity, twenty-two percent planned to enter the work force, and thirty-four percent were looking to continue their education.[523] Most of the women in the sample came from an upper class background where the majority of the mothers did not work outside the home; a total of three mothers were formally employed. Two of the mothers were social workers and one worked in education administration.[524] It is striking that the majority of the students were choosing situations that were different from those of their

[522] Lebanese women would be proscribed from opening business until 1994. They did not have the right to life insurance until 1995. See Stephan, "Women's Rights Activism in Lebanon," 123.

[523] Accari, 51.

[524] Ibid., 51.

mothers. The fathers of the women in the sample worked as merchants, judges, lawyers, engineers, and doctors. Therefore, we can infer that some economic elites allowed their daughters to have choices; this was a privilege that was not available to all Lebanese women.

The justifications, questions, and results of Accari's study mirrored marriage trends among the upper and middle classes in Lebanon, as more and more marriages were transitioning to a companionate basis and women were given a say in who they would like to marry.[525] However, the study confirmed that in many cases, parents were still involved in the decision-making of selecting future husbands, and tended to focus more on financial security than on love and affection. Conceptions of tradition and modernity in this student's thesis project are highly instructive regarding the complex process of women's identity formation in Lebanon in the 1950s.

Continuing with the theme of marriage, Alia Dajani, a Palestinian student from Jaffa, wrote her thesis in 1958 on "Home Problems of Married Women Teachers."[526] Dajani, who majored in Euthenics, was interested in this topic because she believed that this issue had never been discussed in Lebanon before and therefore required an investigation. Another reason given by the author was that many married women were "entering into business, professional work or industry",[527] which was a recent development in Lebanon during the time she was writing: "Women used to stay at home and bring children, but now some of them marry and work so they hold

[525] Ruth Woodsmall, *Study of the Role of Women: Their Activities and Organizations, in Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria, October 1954-August 1955* (New York: International Federation of Business and Professional Women, 1956), 6.

[526] Alia Dajani, "Home Problems of Married Women Teachers," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1958. LAU, RNL.

[527] Ibid., 1.

two jobs at the same time."[528] Dajani considered domesticity to be a formal occupation, even if it was not remunerative labor. She worried how this novel situation of a woman working in two jobs could potentially cause problems in her job or her family – if she paid too much attention to her work, she might neglect her family, but if she paid too much attention to her family, her work could suffer.[529] Dajani also wondered why married women wanted to work and if "it is a good or bad thing to marry and work outside the home."[530] This indicates a possibility of choice for elite married women, which itself was a new development.

Dajani's results revealed that the women in her sample were working in order to supplement their husband's salary, but that this did not relieve them from their financial problems. Most of them were working out of necessity and not a desire to have a career, although a substantial number of them did enjoy their jobs.[531] Dajani also found that their social life suffered due to working, because they returned home from work exhausted and had no energy to socialize. Furthermore, she discovered that married women teachers were neglecting their health due to being overworked and not finding sufficient time to rest. They were additionally frustrated because they enjoyed housework but were not able to find enough time for it.[532] Some of the mothers in Dajani's study felt that they were not giving their children a sense of security or enough love, care, and attention because the vast majority of the mothers had their children taken care of by maids or relatives during the day.[533] Finally, their

[528] Ibid.

[529] Ibid.

[530] Ibid., 3.

[531] Ibid.

[532] Ibid., 53.

[533] Ibid., 53-54.

relationships with their husbands were negatively affected due to their lack of common interests and not spending enough time together.

This student concluded that her research confirmed that the problems of married women teachers mandated "more attention and a better attitude from society."[534] She proposed that public nurseries with qualified staff be established in order to alleviate stress on married women teachers. Dajani called for female teachers with children under the age of five to work part-time in order to pay enough attention to their work and homes. Furthermore, she suggested that parks, clubs, gardens, and public libraries should be created to improve their social lives. Finally, Dajani demanded that the Lebanese government pass legislation to increase the salaries of married women teachers, regulate their work hours, and provide them with hospitals and health insurance.[535]

Dajani's uncertainty towards the idea of married women joining the formal labor market illustrates that this student was navigating the tensions between domesticity and careers. Were both possible, or were the two mutually exclusive? Dajani was redefining domesticity by undertaking this study, which led her to openly criticize the Lebanese government for not doing enough to help married women teachers. This was a bold call within a feminist theoretical conversation that articulated a new domestic ideology. Making such a politically charged statement was quite a progressive action for a young woman at the time who had originally started her project by reflecting on her consciousness of women's issues. Her suggestion to the Lebanese authorities was a redefinition of the responsibilities of the government.

It is logical that Dajani was preoccupied with problems of marriage even though she was still a student – this was the natural next step for her according to

[534] Ibid., 32.

[535] Ibid., 54-55.

social and familial expectations and traditions. The author may have faced her own internal struggle of desiring both a career as a teacher and a successful marriage; although both might be possible, her data seemed to suggest that juggling the two was difficult. The conflicts of expectations, financial security, and cultural traditions had joined forces to create problems for married women teachers. Women were caught in a self-contradictory bind through a consistent pattern of liberation and limitation as evidenced through the social institutions of daily life.

The two theses in this section raise a broad set of issues related to marriage. They examine the relationships of the sexes to each other and question relationships within the family. BCW students were challenging the boundaries of gender hierarchies in the family; they were perceptive that to be a wife and mother would be fairly different from the experiences of their own mothers and grandmothers. They were critical of the power dynamics that existed in the relations between spouses. These trends were an outcome of a reconceived construct of the bourgeois nuclear family, which privileged the relationship between husbands and wives over that of other family members.

Both Accari and Dajani wrote their senior thesis projects in 1958, a particularly turbulent year for Lebanon that entailed a revolutionary crisis and armed insurrection.[536] These young women seemed to be living in a bubble in 1958, a time when the core identity of the Lebanese nation was being fought over in the midst of

[536] For more on the events of 1958, see Erika G. Alin, *The United States and the 1958 Lebanon Crisis: American Intervention in the Middle East* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993); Sami Baroudi, "Divergent Perspectives Among Lebanon's Maronites During the 1958 Crisis," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 5-28; Douglas Little, "His Finest Hour? Eisenhower, Lebanon, and the 1958 Middle East Crisis," *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1996): 27-54; Roger Owen and William Roger Louis, eds., *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002); Roland Popp, "Accommodating to a Working Relationship: Arab Nationalism and US Cold War Policies in the Middle East, 1958-60," *Cold War History* 10, no. 3 (August 2010): 397-427; Kamal Salibi, "Lebanon Since the Crisis of 1958," *World Today* (January 1, 1961): 32-42.

the Cold War between pro-Western and pro-Nasserist camps. Not one student wrote a thesis on the sociopolitical events that were transpiring in the country. The conflict of 1958 apparently had no effect whatsoever on the BCW, a striking contrast from the events of 1943 and discussed in the previous chapter.

C. Tensions Between Parents and Daughters

In Lebanon, family relationships were the cornerstone of national life.[537] Changes in women's behavior necessitated changes in family relations, as the hierarchy and honor of the family were based on controlling women's behavior.[538] BCW students were extremely concerned with changes in family relationships that were caused by new social behaviors, and were particularly interested in comparing their situations with those of older generations. The two projects discussed in this section reveal that young women were negotiating their positions in their communities and their families, and that this created serious tensions between them and their parents. This tension was an unforeseen consequence of modernity, which impacted national identity and social constructions of Western womanhood and local womanhood. The two theses in this section can be read as commentaries on how women of a particular class struggled in navigating their relationships with their parents, their siblings, and with the opposite sex.

The theses in this section reflect the importance of the relationships that Lebanese women had with their families. According to Suad Joseph, Arab women's conditions can best be understood when examined through the framework of the

[537] Samih Farsoun, "Family Structure and Society in Modern Lebanon," in *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East: An Anthropological Reader: Life in the Cities, Towns, and Countryside*, ed. Louise Sweet (Garden City, NY: The American Museum of Natural History Press, 1970), 257-307.

[538] M. Kamel Nahas, "The Family in the Arab World," *Marriage and Family Living* 16, no. 4 (November 1954): 300.

family: "The study of families, in their pluralities and multiplicities, is positioned in many ways to challenge the study of Arab women as singular 'individual' subjects and repositions them in the relational context of familial matrices that are so crucial to Arab societies."[539] The family was a source of identity, protection, and economic security for all its members; ruptures in the family were viewed as social crises, which could be just as dangerous as economic or social crises. Changes in women's behaviors created anxieties in the family; although parents enforced rules and boundaries, young women navigated the "patriarchal bargain." They worked within the boundaries of patriarchy while trying to maximize their options and benefits in spite of tensions that arose. Sociopolitical and economic forces shaped the tensions that daughters and parents were dealing with.

In this context, a Lebanese student named Daad Shuman wrote her thesis in 1960 on "The Difference in Attitude Between College Students and Their Parents."[540] Shuman explained that she was personally struggling to see eye to eye with her parents, a problem she felt was widely shared by young women all over the Middle East: "Many girls in the Middle East are facing the problem of conflicts between them and their parents. Being one of these girls, the writer chose this subject in order to gain more understanding about the nature of the problem and its frequency."[541] She distributed questionnaires to thirty-five seniors at the Beirut College for Women on their social lives, their parents' attitudes towards the daughters' social lives, conflicts

[539] Suad Joseph, "Thinking Intentionality: Arab Women's Subjectivity and Its Discontents," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 8, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 14.

[540] Daad Shuman, "The Difference in Attitude Between College Students and Their Parents," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1960. LAU, RNL.

[541] Ibid., 17.

at home, community attitudes, expectations for marriage, and vocational opportunities.

Shuman's data showed that the students' social lives were spent outside the home without parental supervision, in activities such as parties, trips, BCW club activities, BCW lectures, dinners, movies, and sports.[542] The vast majority of seniors indicated that they participated in mixed-gender activities, and fifty-nine percent of them went out with males alone. These results differed significantly from those that Wafa Sartan found in her project in 1958, two years before Shuman wrote her thesis. Shuman's data also indicated that not all parents permitted their daughters to go out with males, but that the daughters managed to do this undetected by lying to their parents about spending time with female friends. Additionally, some students had problems with their mothers regarding how to dress and what time they should return home. Specifically, staying out past 6:00 p.m. caused major conflicts between daughters and mothers.[543]

Shuman's study allows us to see her grappling with the notion of freedom of choice. She interrogated the social and familial boundaries that her classmates were operating in by raising questions such as what would spoil a young woman's reputation and whether her classmates would be permitted by their parents to join the formal labor market. Only three students said that their parents would not allow them to work whatsoever. There was nearly unanimous agreement among parents that teaching was the most suitable career for women, an indication that the reason many families sent their daughters to the Beirut College for Women was unrelated to improving their job prospects. Apparently, the purposes of higher education for

[542] Ibid., 19.

[543] Ibid., 21.

women at this time was *not* for them to be employed on an equal footing with men or to expand their horizons in terms of what fields they could work in.

For many families, education for women was understood as a social investment.[544] This sentiment was not unusual given their class background.[545] Although women did gain the right to be employed as well as several labor rights, they were still limited in what types of work they could participate in, both legally and due to social pressure, and never achieved full equality in the workplace.[546] Their gains were mostly symbolic and did not translate into civil society or the home, especially since they were expected to leave the workforce once they were married. This was a bourgeois conviction,[547] clearly shared by the parents of the students at the Beirut College for Women.

A similar thesis was written five years later in 1965 by a Syrian student from Aleppo. Hind Bahjat Barakat, a Child Development major, intended to find out what problems the BCW students were facing in their personal lives in her thesis, "Emotional Problems of the Adolescent Girl."[548] Her rationale for choosing this subject was that it was particularly relevant to the Near East, as adults in this region "are generally not aware of the importance of understanding adolescence as one of the

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[544] Mariline Karam, "Esther Azhari Muyal (1873-1948): Aspects of a Modern Education in *Bilad al-Sham*", in *Entangled Education: Foreign and Local Schools in Ottoman Syria and Mandate Lebanon (19th-20th Centuries)*, eds. Julia Hauser, Christine B. Lindner, and Esther Moller (Beirut: Orient Institute 2016), 255, 259.

[545] Woodsmall, *Study of the Role of Women*, 6.

[546] For more on women's work and economic status, see the following: Malek Abisaab, *Militant Women of a Fragile Nation* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009); Joan Clarke, *Labor Law and Practice in Lebanon* (Washington D.C.: United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1966); Charles Churchill, *The City of Beirut: A Socio-Economic Survey* (Beirut: Dar Al-kitab, 1954); *Women and Work in Lebanon* (Beirut: Monograph Series of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, 1980).

[547] Woodsmall, 6.

[548] Hind Bahjat Barakat, "Emotional Problems of the Adolescent Girl," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1965. LAU, RNL.

developmental stages."[549] Barakat argued that the problems girls faced in the Near East arose "chiefly from a difference between her conception of her role and that conception of her family and society."[550] She posited that the difference was due to the girls' exposure to education. In the Near East, adolescent girls were forced to ignore their own needs to satisfy the expectations of their parents and communities who wanted to constrain their personal freedom, Barakat asserted. Her project was concerned with the problems adolescent girls faced in "playing their roles" in their families, in social groups, in their communities, as students, and as females.[551] Sixty-five BCW freshmen students served as the sample for Barakat's project.

The findings showed that myriad students were unhappy in their roles as daughters and sisters. Young, educated women were questioning and redefining familial and social structures of power. Students lamented that fathers and brothers regularly exercised authority over their female family members. A number of students detested having to be chaperoned by their brothers in public, even if the brothers were younger than the girls. Apparently, brothers were domineering, harsh, and controlling, and had a tremendous amount of influence on the girls' behavior, nearly as much as their fathers did.[552]

Additionally, numerous students were restricted in their choice of future vocation. The young women complained of being forbidden to pursue careers as secretaries, flight attendants, actresses, nurses, pilots, engineers, or in some cases, any career at all. Some of these jobs were prohibited because they lacked social prestige,

[549] Ibid., 1.

[550] Ibid., 2.

[551] Ibid., 1.

[552] Ibid., 197-98.

according to the parents.[553] All jobs were off limits to girls whose fathers provided enough money for the family.[554] Family honor and respectability were likely factors as well, though the students did not mention this.

Barakat's analysis of her results led her to conclude that the activities adolescent girls were not allowed to participate in were strictly because of her sex. She was dismayed that adolescent girls in the Near East were not permitted to consider a career in politics, which she argued was due to the widespread belief that this field should be left for men while women should think about homemaking.[555] Barakat explained that society "gives more importance to the boy who is regarded as a future citizen while the girl is regarded only as a future housewife."[556] In fact, Barakat continued, the community did not hold professional women in high regard at all, unless they were teachers; single adolescent women who worked before their marriages were the subjects of lively gossip, and risked ruining their reputations. These statements bring to mind Daad Shuman's thesis, where parents felt that the most acceptable job for women was teaching. This notion had not changed since Shuman had written her thesis five years earlier.

Barakat's thesis project reveals that much of the students' complaints reflected certain patriarchal cultural and social practices that were still intact irrespective of women receiving a higher education. Students frequently complained of their social role in the family as daughters and sisters – higher education did not liberate women from the authority of their fathers and brothers. Barakat was placing herself in the

[553] Ibid., 130.

[554] Ibid., 130.

[555] Ibid., 135.

[556] Ibid.

philosophical terrain in debates about means of controlling women's sexuality and socialization. Many reported grievances were about imposed norms of femininity, though the students themselves did not use such words to describe their problems. These students were challenging the practices, concepts, and expectations related to gender by vocalizing their discontent with social norms. Barakat had identical results to Shuman's thesis, which also found that women were limited in the types of social activities they could participate in. The students interviewees in both studies navigated the "patriarchal bargain" to still do what they wanted to as long as their parents and brothers would not find out.

We can see that Barakat herself was battling the "patriarchal bargain", particularly when she resisted normative sex roles. This is most clear in her criticism of the sexual division of labor; she expressed discontent that women were not allowed to pursue careers in politics, which she argued was due to social attitudes that maintained that the political sphere belonged to men. The BCW students in Barakat's sample were unsatisfied with not being able to enjoy rights and freedoms as individuals; the workings of particular cultural values are blatant when the women stated that they despised being supervised by their brothers or that they worried about sullying their reputations. A negative reputation that women tried to avoid at all costs was that they had engaged in physical intimacy. If any suspicion arose that a young woman was not a virgin, her marriage prospects would become nil. As two AUB professors bluntly paraphrased the problem in 1954: "Virginity at marriage is extremely important."[557] With no marriage prospects, many women would have been economically doomed.

[557] Levon Melikian and Edwin Terry Prothro, "Sexual Behavior of University Students in the Arab Near East," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 49, no. 1 (1954): 60

D. Prostitution

In Lebanon during the twentieth century, the prostitute body was politicized and became an intersectional site for public health concerns, sexuality, and social mores. The French Mandate authorities were concerned with regulating prostitution for the sake of public hygiene, and this system remained in place until the 1970s,[558] even though French troops had departed the country in 1946. Prostitutes had to register with the local police, carry identification cards, work in designated licensed brothels, and undergo medical exams twice a week. These exams were done at separate hospitals and clinics that were built purely for this purpose. Leaving prostitution still required policing of the individual woman; the prostitute was obligated to inform the police of her decision and the police would arrange for her to live with a guardian.[559]

Although prostitutes were denied freedom of movement and were essentially inmates of licensed houses, Lebanon's brothels were owned and operated by female *patronas* who created a space for female economics.[560] Some of the most well-known prostitutes and *patronas* of Beirut's red-light district managed such successful businesses that they eventually became household names; their brothels were frequented by political, social, economic, and educational elites.

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[558] Samir Kassir, *Beirut*, Translated by M.B. DeBevoise (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 392-93. See also Samir Khalaf, *Prostitution in a Changing Society: A Sociological Survey of Legal Prostitution in Beirut* (Beirut: Khayat, 1965); Liat Kozma, *Global Women, Colonial Ports: Prostitution in the Interwar Middle East* (Syrcause: SUNY Press, 2017); Ghassan Tueni and Faris Sassine, *Sahat al-burj: sahat al-hurriya wa bawabat al-Mashriq* (Beirut: Dar Aannahar, 2000); Camila Pastor, "Suspect Service: Prostitution and the Public in the Mandate Mediterranean," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates*, eds. Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan (New York: Routledge, 2015), 183-97.

[559] Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 87.

[560] Tueni and Sassine, 114.

In 1953, a student named Suad Frangoul wrote her thesis on "The Problem of Legalized Prostitution."[561] Frangoul set out to "analyze scientifically" legal prostitution in Lebanon "and to find out whether it has had any positive results" in terms of controlling the spread of venereal diseases and preventing clandestine prostitution.[562] Frangoul agreed with the ideals of the Lebanese women's movement, explaining that prostitution was a serious issue plaguing Lebanon, and that many women's groups and associations were trying to bring an end to it:

> Legalized prostitution is among the social problems to which Lebanese reformers in general and women's associations in particular, directed their attention years ago and started to rouse public opinions against it. People began to wonder about the effectiveness of the regulations in force for facing this social-moral problem and realized that these regulations are rather a stumbling-block [sic] in the way of their nations' progress.[563]

Frangoul collected statistics from various police departments on the number of brothels and prostitutes in Beirut, Tripoli, Zahle, and Baalbeck from 1925 to 1951. She also gathered information on the nationality of prostitutes working in Lebanon, most of whom turned out to be Lebanese,[564] as well as statistics on the prevalence of venereal diseases. Frangoul concluded that the mandatory bi-weekly exams that prostitutes were subjected to were not particularly productive and actually led men to erroneously believe that they were safe from venereal diseases, which increased the frequency of their visits to brothels and correspondingly increased the spread of disease. Frangoul did not clarify if she meant the spread of disease to married women or the spread of disease in society in general. She posited that if these men did not

[561] Suad Fuad Frangoul, "The Problem of Legalized Prostitution," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1953. LAU, RNL.

[562] Ibid., 1.

[563] Ibid.

[564] Ibid., 29-30.

have the false security of the medical exams, they would not visit brothels as frequently out of concern for their health.

Furthermore, Frangoul postulated that these health exams were pointless because a doctor could clear a prostitute, and then she could contract a disease a few hours upon leaving the clinic if she met with a new client. Additionally, she highlighted the futility of these obligatory health check ups by raising the point that men who visited prostitutes were not subjected to medical exams. The most productive solution would be for a prostitute to undergo a medical exam every time she had intercourse, which Frangoul acknowledged would be impossible, and therefore argued that prostitution should simply be outlawed. Frangoul believed this was of vital importance because venereal diseases had the potential to "destroy family unity, and weaken society and community morally and socially."[565]

Frangoul condemned the legislation concerning prostitution at the time, citing that "instead of helping a wronged or fallen girl in regaining her lost path of righteousness, [the legislation] gives her a second path into the ways of sin" and had no regard for the prostitute's physical or mental well being.[566] She concluded that prostitution offered no benefits to society and recommended that the Lebanese government enact her plan to gradually abolish it. Frangoul proposed that brothels in downtown Beirut be removed immediately and that distribution of permits cease once and for all; this would limit the number of brothels. She additionally called for the implementation of new laws that guaranteed a gradual elimination of prostitution. Even more importantly, remedial work with prostitutes needed to be carried out, she

[565] Ibid., 39.

[566] Ibid., 34.

contended.[567] Frangoul proposed that the Lebanese government provide free hospitals and clinics for prostitutes and their clients, and create special institutions that would offer vocational training for repentant prostitutes. Finally, she advocated preventive work that would enlighten the public on the dangers of prostitution, alleviate women's unemployment so that they could "support themselves by decent means," and championed the cause of "early marriage built upon mutual understanding."[568] Curiously, Frangoul did not propose reforming men, at least not to the effect of dissuading them from soliciting prostitutes in the first place.

I understand this student to have had a strategic feminist agenda; her choice of topic alone was radical and progressive. Other senior thesis projects written during this period that were concerned with social problems were not nearly as radical – they primarily focused on children's issues, ranging from child psychology to elementary education.[569] Frangoul was criticizing the practice of legalized prostitution because it clashed with her moral upbringing; her privileged background viewed prostitution as a vice that generated social decay, and that it was up to elite women to unite to abolish it. Such calls had already been made by the Lebanese women's movement, which sent delegates to attend the All Arab Women's Conference in Cairo in 1944 where a

[567] Ibid., 35-38.

[568] Ibid., 40. Frangoul did not explain what she meant by "early marriage".

[569] For example, but not limited to: Lina Jules Gress, "The Adjustment Problems of Gifted Children in Relation to Personality and Education," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1960; Elsie Farid Hakim, "Child Psychotherapy Facilities in Lebanon," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1963; Nuhad Jumblat, "The Criteria for Evaluating and Measuring Pupils' Achievements in Selected Elementary Schools in Beirut and Sidon," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1960; Marie Therese Daniel Karam, "Child Rearing Practices in Certain Localities in Lebanon," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1955; Mary Messerlian, "Emotional and Other Disturbances of Transfer Students in Elementary Schools," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1959; Gisele Sambar, "Adoption Practices in Lebanon," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1963; Malak Shamma'a, "Counseling and Guidance in the Elementary School," B.A. thesis, Beirut College for Women, 1958. LAU, RNL.

resolution calling for the abolition of legalized prostitution was passed.[570] What Frangoul did not realize was that she was investigating a form of class and gender exploitation.

Frangoul seemed aware that women who worked as prostitutes were viewed as disease carriers who needed to be controlled while men were not subjected to similar measures. She outwardly condemned the government for not doing enough to help these women – an intrepid feminist criticism. Frangoul's work also reproduced the discourse of the Lebanese women's movement regarding prostitution. Prostitution revealed a class conflict within Lebanese feminism – the Lebanese women's movement regularly undertook campaigns to bring an end to legalized prostitution. The movement wished to "save" and rehabilitate prostitutes and end a practice that they felt was immoral and dangerous to society.

E. Conclusion

This chapter is not merely a report on students' homework assignments, but a construction of the students as historical subjects who documented their experiences and concerns. These thesis projects shaped the students' analyses of women's everyday lives; they reflect a general struggle by students at the Beirut College for Women to change and improve their status in Lebanese society. The same concerns that the BCW students expressed in their senior theses – love, dating, family tensions, marrying within one's age range, companionate marriage, how to maintain a happy marriage, social issues, etc. – materialized in women's magazines of the same period such *Sawt al-mar'a* and *Dunya al-mar'a*.[571] These journals were owned and read by

[570] Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 244.

[571] *Sawt al-mar'a*, (1943-1958); *Dunya al-mar'a*, (1960-1966). AUB Jafet Library.

elite women, many of whom were graduates of the BCW, such as Eva Badre Malik and Edvick Shayboub. We can assume, therefore, that the women's concerns did not radically change once they left college, since older women of their class were deliberating the same problems in the press. They were not profoundly questioning the crucial roles of women in reproducing and strengthening the "family", which remained the patriarchal institution upholding the "nation". Elite women seemed to be comfortably at ease within the framework of the "patriarchal bargain".

The fact that the BCW women were questioning certain gendered practices through their academic work was a subversive critique hidden within a scholarly assignment. These young women had begun to feel a feminist consciousness without explicitly utilizing this term. The students were not passive subjects of historical forces – they tackled changing definitions of sex roles that were being debated in their everyday lives through their educational curricula, socialization, contact with American educators at the BCW, and their own expanding experiences within their families. Young women questioned the boundaries they were confined to in terms of marriage, courtship, employment, education, and socialization; they calibrated their own responses to practices they were dissatisfied with. These students lived under patriarchal cultural and social norms that varied according to their individual circumstances such as class and religion. Their class background and educational experiences allowed them to question and rethink the subjects that they did. They questioned hierarchies that were prevalent in the family and society that resulted in women's inequality in domestic and social spaces, and wished to shape women's roles accordingly. Through their senior thesis projects, they used marriage, family, the home, work, and legislation to critically assess and evaluate gender relations and social problems in Lebanon. By probing these issues, they raised fundamental

questions about their relationships to their families and the state. This was crucial in an era where their position in the family was being redefined, Lebanon was still forging itself as a nation, and women had not yet gained equal rights with men.

Some students were slowly starting to have a different conception of womanhood and wanted to change the status quo, while other students upheld it, reflecting internal social tensions in Lebanon at the time. There was a certain framework that they could be feminists in and could not step out of. This phenomenon illustrates how complex the BCW students were and how variegated their "educational encounters" were. They were struggling to develop new paradigms but still stayed within a certain patriarchal framework. Despite the constraints that they had to deal with, the elite women of the College formed an educated female intelligentsia that had higher status, greater autonomy, and more influence than did elite women of previous generations.

CHAPTER V

ALUMNAE PIONEERS

What happened to the graduates of the first and only women's college in Lebanon? A longitudinal case study of the American Junior College for Women, which became the Beirut College for Women, would be incomplete without studying the life paths and narratives of some of the most notable alumnae, particularly the early pioneers. This chapter humanizes the AJC and BCW by investigating the lives of some of the Lebanese female educational elite who pioneered in both their professional and personal lives. I regard these individuals as pioneers because they achieved many milestones for women in Lebanon. For instance, among the sample of alumnae in this chapter are Nejla Abu Izzeddin, the first female Ph.D. recipient in the Arab world; Salwa Nassar, the first nuclear physicist in the Arab world (among both men and women); and Angela Jurdak, the first Lebanese and Arab female diplomat. These and other alumnae confirmed that women could excel at any occupation they chose.

What did these women do with their education? How did they navigate the tensions of domesticity and careers that were promoted by their alma mater and wider society? How did they conceive of rights for women and what did they do with these rights? How much credit did they attribute to the College for their professional success? The multi-layered relationship between student experiences and the resulting life trajectories of the alumnae are discussed in this chapter, arguing that this particular university education played a significant role in these women's political socialization and that the educational experiences of these women were formative. Therefore, the time spent at the AJC, later the BCW, influenced their social and

political perspectives, which in turn impacted their life choices. Many of the alumnae in this chapter deemed their higher education at the College to be pivotal. Framing the words and behaviors of the alumnae in the time and place in which they were produced allows for a deeper understanding of changing gender discourses in the half century of the AJC and BCW's existence. Examining their personal histories suggests wider cultural, economic, political, and social trends and allows historians to comprehend how individual women related these changes to their everyday life. Such trends include women's social and political activism as well as the entry of women into public space, higher education, and the work force.

The College alumnae upheld Deniz Kandiyoti's "patriarchal bargain"[572] by championing educational, social, and economic rights for women, but did not advocate any of these advancements at the expense of domesticity and family. This was the case regardless of how much educational and professional success they achieved. After all, this was the framework through which the College had modernized them via home economics and social service. Additionally, many alumnae were ambivalent about women's political participation due to its potential negative outcome on family life and only desired a limited amount of freedom for women. The supposed "excessive freedom", found in the West, was viewed as nefarious by these alumnae. They did not envy Western women's freedoms nor did they wish to alter the patriarchal structure of Lebanese society, but to improve women's conditions within it, thereby upholding the "patriarchal bargain". Although they did not wish for the freedoms of Western women, these women did value a certain type of Americanized domesticity that was specific to their class background. This bourgeois domesticity was a symptom of a very Americanized worldview which

[572] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender and Society* 2 (1988): 274-90.

shaped their aspirations, and may have possibly been due to their education at the College.

A. Historicizing These Ideas

These ideas were hardly novel or original, however; Lebanese women in previous generations advocated similar views that enforced the "patriarchal bargain". Some of the earliest women's magazines published in Lebanon and Syria such as Julia Dimashqiya's *The New Woman* (*Al-Mar'a al-jadida*),[573] Mary Ajami's *The Bride* (*Al-'Arus*),[574] and Salima Abu Rashid's *Girl of Lebanon* (*Fatat Lubnan*)[575] regularly printed articles proclaiming that proficient motherhood was essential to the advancement of the nation. There is no evidence that any of these women changed their minds on women's core roles in society and the family. In 1944, one year after Lebanon gained its independence from the French, Dimashqiya highlighted "the seriousness of embarking upon the establishment of a home" in a letter to her son and warned him that the home was "one of the units of life that are most essential for the preservation and survival of society."[576] The idea that women could efficiently serve their country from within their domiciles by scientifically managing their households and properly raising their children still had currency for Dimashqiya two decades after her magazine had stopped being published. This trope straddled countless time periods and cultures because the task of bringing up future citizens implicated women

[573] Julia Dimashqiya, *Al-Mar'a al-jadida*, Beirut, 1921-1925. AUB Jafet Library. See also Hala Ramez Dimechkie, "Julia Tu'mi Dimashqiyi and *al-Mar'a al-Jadida*, 1883-1954," M.A. thesis, American University of Beirut, 1998.

[574] Mary Ajami, *Al-'Arus*, Damascus, 1910-1912. AUB Jafet Library.

[575] Salima Abu Rashid, *Fatat Lubnan*, Beirut, 1914. AUB Jafet Library.

[576] Julia Dimashqiya, letter to Nadim Dimashqiya, 1944 (translated from Arabic to English). Dimashqiya Family Archives, Beirut.

in the civic order. These ideas also echoed the tenets of Republican Motherhood put forth during the American Revolution, where a mother could serve a political purpose by breeding a strong family, which would in turn fortify the nation.[577] College alumnae expounded upon these ideas put forth by pioneering women in previous generations.

These women regularly articulated the tenets of relational or Global South feminism, without explicitly labeling it so since this term did not exist in their time.[578] While the ideological spectrum of feminist thought seeks to improve the status of women in general terms, it has been well established by myriad scholars that Global South feminisms and Western feminisms are differentiated by several key characteristics.[579] For example, Global South feminisms emphasize the family as the fundamental unit of society, underscore women's special roles within the family and the household, and embrace certain aspects of their cultural heritage, such as religion, as a form of female empowerment rather than a handicap.[580] Western feminisms, on the other hand, consider the individual to be the basic unit of society, seek to

[577] Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 283-84.

[578] For more on relational feminism, see Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach," *Signs* 14, no. 1 (Autumn, 1988): 119-57.

[579] See Ellen Fleischmann, "Nation, Tradition and Rights: The Indigenous Feminism of the Palestinian Women's Movement, 1929-1948," in *Women's Suffrage in the British Empire: Citizenship, Nation, and Race*, eds. Ian Christopher Fletcher, Laura E. Nym Mayhall, and Philippa Levine (London: Routledge, 2000), 138-54; Fleischmann, "The Other 'Awakening': The Emergence of Women's Movements in the Modern Middle East, c. 1900-1940," in *A Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East*, eds. Margaret Meriweather and Judith Tucker (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 89-138.

[580] See Lila Abu-Lughod, "Feminist Longings and Postcolonial Conditions," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 3-30. Not all women of the Global South shared the same feminist outlooks – there were some different, more radical views on women's roles in various countries such as Indonesia, China, Vietnam, and Algeria, for instance. See Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 154-76.

empower women in domains other than the family and domestic sphere, and are secular in nature.[581]

It is important to note that the women featured in this chapter generally wrote about one another in books, newsletters, articles, and alumnae bulletins, and that most of them were very close friends. The alumnae themselves shaped the way they were represented; they developed a sense of community and identity as graduates of the College. Most authors of texts on these women were connected to the AJC and BCW somehow, either former students or faculty members. The most comprehensive text written about the institution and the alumnae is *Pioneering Profiles: Beirut College for Women* by Marie Sabri, published in 1967.[582] Sabri was a former student, teacher, administrator, and public relations officer at the institution. Her main reason for writing *Pioneering Profiles* was that she believed that the College was *the* primary source of female pioneers in the Arab world. This chapter relies on Sabri's text for much of its information, keeping in mind that this source lionizes the College, its alumnae, and their impact on Lebanese society. I view this book as a secular hagiography of sorts because of the way it idealizes its subjects. An interesting aspect of Sabri's work is that most of the women she features in her book graduated in the early 1930s. This may be because alumnae from this time period would have been among the first graduates and therefore the first Lebanese women to reach certain milestones. These early pioneers were outliers among the College alumnae – they used the College curricula for something beyond homemaking.

[581] See Nova Robinson, "Arab Internationalism and Gender: Perspectives from the Third Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 1949," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 48 (2016): 578-83; Mary Dietz, "Context Is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship." *Daedalus* 116, no. 4 (1987): 1-24; Elizabeth Fernea,"Family Feminism or Individual Feminism? Different Histories, Different Paths to Gender Equity," *Hawwa* 1, no. 2 (2003): 131-51.

[582] Marie Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles: Beirut College for Women* (Beirut: Khayat, 1967).

This chapter discusses some alumnae briefly while others are examined in much more detail. This variance is merely due to the amount of information available on each woman. We can see the impact of the College by looking at the prominent individuals profiled in this chapter through mini biographies. Many of the graduates went on to accomplish feats that would not have been possible for women in previous generations, and in so doing, opened many doors for professional women in fields where they were underrepresented or non-existent. The rest of this chapter presents profiles of alumnae that are organized around their education and professional accomplishments, and their conceptions of freedom, domesticity, women's rights, and views of the College. The alumnae are profiled in chronological order based on their year of graduation.

B. Saniyya Habboub: The First Lebanese Muslim Woman Doctor

Saniyya Habboub hailed from a family that was determined to give her an education. She was one of three people in the first graduating class of the AJC in 1926. Afterwards, Habboub matriculated in AUB as a sophomore, "running from class to class with my three-layer veil on",[583] and never interacted with any of her classmates. She only spoke to her professors and made sure to arrive at her courses before any other student did, and was always the last person to leave.[584] The fact that she was studying in a co-educational university caused people to spit at her in public and curse her parents for raising their daughter in such a supposedly disgraceful

[583] Saniyya Habboub, interview with *Monday Morning*, 1973. Quoted in "When the Lebanese Woman Shed the Veil," http://mideastposts.com/middle-east-society/middle-east-life/when-the-lebanese-woman-shed-the-veil/ [last accessed November 8, 2018].

[584] Ibid.

manner.[585] This negative experience led her to leave AUB and continue her medical education in the United States.[586] She valued her education and believed that women could not advance without it.[587] Habboub once declared that women in universities were "preparing, arming and training" themselves "for the battle of life exactly like a young man…"[588] In fact, Habboub saw "no reason for any conflict between a woman's home life and her career."[589]

Habboub pioneered by being the first Lebanese woman to travel abroad to study medicine[590] and was the first Lebanese Muslim female physician.[591] Upon returning to Lebanon after completing her medical training, she opened a gynecology clinic in the Bab Idriss neighborhood in Beirut.[592] The fact that she specifically opened a clinic dealing with women's reproductive health was a feminist endeavor, even if Habboub did not use this term to describe her actions. Like other College alumnae, she was active in social service organizations; she co-founded the Lebanese Red Cross and was a member of the "Moslem Orphanage" and the "Young Women's Moslem Association."[593]

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[585] Ibid.

[586] Mirna Lattouf, "The History of Women's Higher Education in Modern Lebanon and its Social Implications," Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1999, 155-56.

[587] Saniyya Habboub, *Monday Morning*, 1973.

[588] W. Stephan, "Dr. Saniyya Habboub: Death of a Pioneer," *Al-Raida* (November 1983): 5.

[589] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 40.

[590] "Dr. Saniyya Habboub: Fifty Years of Devoted Medical Service," *Al-Raida* (November 1, 1982): 2.

[591] Mirna Lattouf, "The History of Women's Higher Education in Modern Lebanon and Its Social Implications," 155-56.

[592] "Dr. Saniyya Habboub: Fifty Years of Devoted Medical Service."

[593] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 40.

C. Nejla Abu Izzeddin: The First Female Ph.D. Recipient

Born into a family that valued education,[594] Nejla Abu Izzeddin (class of 1927) was the first Druze woman to graduate from the American Junior College for Women.[595] Her milestone achievement was that she was the first female Ph.D. recipient in the entire Arab world. Abu Izzeddin obtained her Doctorate in Oriental Languages and Literature from the University of Chicago in 1934.[596] Similar to other alumnae, she returned to the College for employment in 1934 and taught at a school in Iraq in 1940.[597]

According to her niece, Abu Izzeddin never wed because she felt that marriage would prevent her from writing books.[598] Her niece claimed that Abu Izzeddin once said: "I have a choice. I either get married or I create. Because the two together are not possible. Why did I get all this education if I am just going to get married and cook?"[599] Abu Izzeddin never regretted her decision to stay single.[600] Such statements are a stark contrast from those made by the other alumnae in this chapter, as will become clear. None of the women in this chapter made such blunt or negative statements regarding marriage, even Salwa Nassar, the only other woman who remained single. However, Abu Izzeddin and Nassar seemed to have a choice in the matter. Other women may not have had the option to remain single due to family

[594] Nadia al-Jurdi Nuwayhid, *Nisa' min biladi* (Beirut: Al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiya li al-dirasat wa al-nashir, 1986), 291.

[595] "Complete List of Beirut College for Women Graduates According to Year of Graduation," unpublished manuscript, LAU Alumni Office.

[596] University of Chicago, Office of the Recorder, official transcript of Nejla Mustapha Izzeddin, November 3, 2015 (certified).

[597] Aqrawi, *Qutuf al-ayyam*, 26.

[598] Nada Abu Izzeddin, interview with the author, February 9, 2016, Beirut.

[599] Nada Abu Izzeddin, interview with the author, April 24, 2016, Beirut.

[600] Ibid.

circumstances, social pressure, and economic stability. Abu Izzeddin evidently did not want to become mired in the very discourse that had made higher education available to women in the first place.

Possibly the most elusive of all the alumnae, Abu Izzeddin hardly appears in the alumnae bulletins or at women's conferences, nor can she be found publicly extolling the virtues of the College or commenting on women's roles as mothers and wives. In fact, Abu Izzeddin once expressed the view that women were not capable of starting their own liberation movement: "It was natural that men took the lead in calling for the emancipation of women, since women were on the whole too ignorant and subdued to initiate a movement."[601] This quote was published in Marie Sabri's book on the alumnae, mentioned in Chapter One. Despite Abu Izzeddin's impressive accomplishments, she is mostly invisible Sabri's monograph. Sabri even incorrectly named the first Druze woman to study at the AJC as Zahia Macksad Salman, rather than Nejla Abu Izzeddin.[602]

D. Nahil Habboub Dajany and Veronica Bakamjian: Two Physicians

Nahil Habboub Dajany (class of 1927) and Veronica Bakamjian (class of 1930) became prominent female physicians. Yet Dajany felt that the primary reason that women should receive a higher education was because they were mothers of upcoming generations,[603] even though she herself used her higher education to become a doctor. Bakamjian was employed as a Professor of Anesthesia and the Director of the Department of Anesthesia at the AUB hospital. Comparable to her

[601] Quoted in Marie Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 21.

[602] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 42.

[603] "Meet the Alumnae: Dr. Nahil Habboub Dajany," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 4, no. 3 (May 1953): 3. LAU, RNL.

fellow alumna, Bakamjian supported women's higher education but insisted that women should never forget that their primary concerns are their households and their children. The fact that she had a M.D. among her achievements did not alter her views on the primacy of the home, but actually reinforced her outlook. Like other graduates, Bakamjian was active in social service; she served on the committee of one of the local Child Welfare Society organizations and advocated for more girls to study Child Development.[604]

Women's higher education at the College appeared to reinforce and strengthen their views on their traditional domestic and social roles. It is highly unlikely that any of the graduates advocated abandoning one's domestic or family duties as had happened among some American women during this period.[605] The classic restlessness and boredom of the American housewife[606] did not transpire in Lebanon, at least not publicly, regardless of the fact that the College students received an American education from American professors. Even the atmosphere at the AJC and BCW was comparable to a small liberal arts college in the United States, as Ellen Fleischmann has observed.[607]

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[604] "Meet the Alumnae: Veronica Bakamjian," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 2, no. 2 (February 1950): 1. LAU, RNL.

[605] Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2000); Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979); William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920—1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

[606] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001). The introduction to Friedan's book begins with a "problem that has no name", describing the unhappiness, restlessness, and boredom of American women who felt confined to their households and lacking in feminine fulfillment. Friedan cited research indicating that boredom was the cause of women's fatigue. *The Feminine Mystique* is widely associated with the onset of second-wave feminism.

[607] Ellen Fleischmann, "Under an American Roof: The Beginnings of the American Junior College for Women in Beirut," *Arab Studies Journal* (Spring 2009): 76-77.

Given the preeminence of the family in the patriarchal organization of Lebanese society, both men and women prioritized women's familial roles regardless of their educational and professional milestones. The family was both at the heart of women's own selfhood and men's perception of women. Changes in women's behavior directly impacted the life of the family, and hence the lives of men and children who were members of the family. The prevailing political imaginaries of women influenced political imaginaries of the broader civic order and the shape that the nation-state would take. In order to understand why women did not want to tamper with the importance of the family, one must ask: what did the family mean to women? The creation of a family via marriage was a source of economic security, social stability, and upward social mobility. If women were stripped of their primary functions in the family, then their futures would not be secured.

E. Salwa Nassar: The First Nuclear Physicist

One of the most renowned alumnae of the College was Salwa Nassar, the first nuclear physicist in the Middle East among both men and women.[608] After she obtained her Associate's degree from the College in 1934, she transferred to AUB to complete a Bachelor's degree in Physics. Afterwards, she taught in a girls' school in Iraq for one year, then registered in a Master of Arts program at Smith College in the United States. Nassar received her Ph.D. in Nuclear Physics from the University of California at Berkeley, and became the first nuclear physicist in the Arab world.[609] In 1945, she returned to Lebanon to found the Science Department at the College, and in 1950 she became the Chairwoman of the Physics Department at AUB. As discussed

[608] "Meet the Alumnae: Salwa Nassar," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (December 1950): 3. LAU, RNL.

[609] Ibid.

in Chapter Four, Nassar became the first native President of the Beirut College for Women in 1965; she passed away in 1967 after a short battle with cancer. Nassar was so inspirational that one of her friends wrote a book about her three decades after her death.[610]

In December 1950, Nassar was interviewed in the BCW's alumnae bulletin. When asked if single women should work outside of their home, Nassar answered in the affirmative, but explained that married women's primary concern should be their home and children. This was particularly important when the children were still young, she declared. However, Nassar elucidated, it would be a practical idea for women to have some sort of training or preparation for employment in case of financial strains or when their children have grown up and left home, in which case a more productive use of time would be for women to work outside the home. It is intriguing that even a woman who received her Ph.D. in Nuclear Physics, a predominantly male field at the time, still embraced the discourse of a woman's centrality to her home. The interesting irony here is that Nassar never married nor had children. Had she become a wife and mother, she would have had less time to focus on nuclear physics. She championed maternalist politics for other women, but opted not to wed or produce offspring herself. A culture of singlehood never took hold in Lebanon, and prevailing social attitudes expected most women to marry.

When asked her opinion about women's political rights, she insisted that women were ready to participate in politics but that it would be futile unless they could exceed the current performance of male politicians. Nassar argued that it would be useful to have women present in ministries that were more relevant to women's issues, such as having a woman serve as the Minister of Labor or the Minister of

[610] Najla Aqrawi, *Salwa Nassar kama 'araftuha* (Beirut: Lebanese American University, Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, 1997).

Social Affairs. Women interested in politics should focus on one or two areas and not overextend themselves, she maintained.[611]

Furthermore, Nassar believed that the question of women's suffrage was not consequential for women – rather, civil and economic rights were more relevant to women and would be more difficult to obtain.[612] This discourse of "patriotic motherhood" was a philosophy that helped women achieve their more immediate needs, specifically economic and social rights, and increased the appeal of the women's movement in order to help recruit more members by confirming that motherhood was the most important job for women. Elizabeth Thompson speculates that this ethos involved "domestic political calculation" in the twentieth century, as patriotic motherhood portrayed women's domestic roles as noble national service, and calls for women's civil and social rights would develop this valuable service even further.[613] As evidenced by the highly educated women who were ambivalent towards political participation, through their calls for the right to vote, these women were actually playing to a script that proclaimed that political rights would lead to social and economic rights.

Nassar did not wish to radically change women's position in society, but to alleviate their conditions while maintaining "traditional" gender roles. The College women played an important role in creating the definitions of "traditional" roles that drew upon existing patterns, but seemed to erase gendered practices that did not fit their perceptions. They created the "history" of "tradition", even though their

[611] "Meet the Alumnae: Salwa Nassar," 3.

[612] Ibid. In hindsight, it is clear that Nassar was wrong about this. As of 2019, Lebanese women have political rights but have made the least amount of progress in the political sphere.

[613] Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 142.

educational and professional successes were quite radical and progressive. However, they may have found it necessary to create a conservative gendered binary, one that they selectively evoked but essentially broke.

In her commencement speech to the class of 1951, Nassar warned the students to beware of desiring too much freedom. She asked the graduating students to assess whether they really wanted freedom, and if the freedom they desired would bring "liberty" or "slavery" to the people around them.[614] Nassar was warning the graduates of 1951 not to achieve too much freedom, without explicitly articulating that this kind of freedom resembled the kind that women in Europe and the United States had, and that it would wreak havoc in Lebanon. Other alumnae, as we shall see, expressed this central theme of exerting caution in practicing freedom as non-Western women. This particular school of thought argued that women could not advance without freedom, but that freedom was a double-edged sword. Freedoms for women such as education, companionate marriage, economic rights, and political rights were highly sought after and would not corrupt their cultural heritage. Other freedoms, such as sexual promiscuity and lack of sufficient attention to children and husbands would contaminate their culture. This distinction between various forms of freedom could be understood as an exercise of national identity and pride, although the alumnae did not differentiate if the above were freedoms, rights, or privileges.

Although Nassar felt that men and women had different roles, she did not believe that men and women should be judged by different legal, economic, social, or moral standards and that doing so would propel society backward.[615] She raised the issue of women's status in Lebanon and questioned legal and social practices as they

[614] Salwa Nassar, "Salwa C. Nassar at B.C.W. Commencement," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 2, no. 4 (June 1951): 1.

[615] Ibid.

pertained to women. In May 1953, Nassar criticized the legal status of women in Lebanon, who had been enfranchised just three months earlier. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Lebanese legal system had two subsets of laws: civil laws, and personal status codes dependent on one's religious sect.[616] As a result, the Lebanese legal system was a combination of Eastern Christian religious laws, Islamic law, Ottoman law, and French law.[617] Each religious sect had the right to create its own legislation involving family affairs such as marriage, divorce, guardianship, adoption, child custody, and inheritance. Scholars generally agree that personal status laws discriminate against Lebanese women in every possible dimension.[618] Nassar condemned the fact that some women, depending on their sect, were only entitled to one-fourth of their husband's estate upon his death, and only one-eighth should she have children. This economic marginalization of wives was highly ironic and nonsensical because, according to Nassar, "the wife is responsible, in many a way, for her husband's financial or social success."[619] Lebanese women were deprived of most of their civil rights upon marriage and became officially subordinate to their

[616] Lamia Rustum Shehadeh, "Gender-Relevant Legal Change in Lebanon," *Feminist Formations* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 211-12.

[617] Mirna Lattouf, *Women, Education, and Socialization in Modern Lebanon: 19th and 20th Centuries Social History* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004), 30.

[618] See for example, Maya Mikdashi, "Sex and Sectarianism: The Legal Architecture of Lebanese Citizenship," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34, no. 2 (2014); Shehadeh, "Gender-Relevant Legal Change in Lebanon"; Suad Joseph, "Civic Myths, Citizenship, and Gender in Lebanon," in *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*, ed. Suad Joseph (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 107-36; Ilham Mansur, *Nahwa tahrir al-mar'a fi Lubnan: Nazra shamila wa ru'ya mustaqbiliya* (Beirut: Dar mukhtarat, 1996); Najla Bashur, *Al-Mar'a al-Lubnaniya: Waqi'ha wa qadayaha* (Beirut, Dar al-tli'a, 1975); Azza Charara Baydun, *Nisa' wa jam'iyat: Bayn insaf athat wa khidmat al-ghayr* (Beirut: Dar annahar, 2002).

[619] Salwa Nassar, "Women As They Stand in Lebanon," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 4, no. 3 (May 1953): 1. LAU, RNL.

husbands, legally under their guardianship and control.[620] Nassar believed that this was the root cause of much of their weakness.

The fact that women were not the legal guardians of their own children at the death of their husbands dismayed Nassar, as did the need for a woman "to have a guardian herself even if the guardian happens to be an unreasonable man."[621] This was (and is still) the case for Christian and Muslim sects.[622] Nassar lamented that even in the case of divorce, a father received full custody of the children; it is unclear if she was attuned to the painful irony of this situation, that women were trained to scientifically rear children but could not raise them without a husband no matter how many diplomas or certificates they had acquired. Their legal rights in the family were practically nonexistent. Nassar rejected the argument that a woman was legally entitled to half of the man's share regardless of how many daughters a man had – if a man did not have a son to inherit his fortunes then part of his inheritance would be given to the next of kin.[623] Nassar's criticisms of Lebanese personal status laws were quite radical for her time because these laws formed the core of the social and political order in Lebanon. Most of these laws have remained unchanged many decades after her death in 1967 and still constitute the very configuration of Lebanese society.[624]

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[620] Shehadeh, "Gender-Relevant Legal Change in Lebanon," 213.

[621] Nassar, "Women As They Stand in Lebanon," 1.

[622] KAFA – Enough Violence and Exploitation, "Zalfa's Questions on Personal Status Laws," Available at: http://www.kafa.org.lb/studies-publications/59/6/zalfas-questions-on-the-personal-status-laws-in-le [last accessed March 12, 2019].

[623] Salwa Nassar, "Women As They Stand in Lebanon," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 4, no. 3 (May 1953): 1. Nassar did not specify which sect(s) this law applied to at the time, but most Lebanese inheritance laws are patriarchal and do not prioritize wives or daughters.

[624] Not only are Lebanese women subordinate to men, they are also unequal amongst each other as women from different sects do not share the same rights in personal status laws. Other laws that harm Lebanese women are the nationality law that prevent them from granting citizenship to their spouses and children, as well as criminal laws that deal with gender-based violence. See Maya

Nassar was unable to comprehend why men also had the right to kill women in their family if they perceived that their female relatives had violated the family's honor through sexual activity, while women had no legal course of action in the case of a husband's adultery unless they specifically caught their husbands in the act of adultery inside the family home.[625] According to Article 562 of the Lebanese penal code, a man could unintentionally kill a female relative due to the surprise and shock of witnessing her in an act of adultery or pre-marital sexual intercourse.[626] In fact, Lebanese women did not have sexual freedom in their marriages; they could be murdered for adulterous affairs, marital rape was legal, and a woman could not undergo an abortion without her husband's permission.[627] Although every religious sect had its own legal autonomy, one commonality shared by all eighteen legally recognized sects was that the husband had the right to return the bride to her family without her dowry should she prove not to be a virgin on their wedding night, as compensation for having deliberately deceived her husband. In most sects, a husband could also return his wife back to her parents' home if she refused to have sexual intercourse with him whenever he requested.[628]

Mikdashi, "Sex and Sectarianism: The Legal Architecture of Lebanese Citizenship," 281; Shehadeh, "Gender-Relevant Legal Change in Lebanon," 210-28.

[625] Lattouf, *Women, Education, and Socialization*, 26. See also Articles 487-488 of the Lebanese Penal Code.

[626] Lattouf, *Women, Education, and Socialization*, 22. See also Azza Charara Baydun, *Jara'im qatl al-nisa' amam al-qada' al-Lubnani* (Beirut: KAFA, 2008). This article was not amended by the Lebanese government until 1999 or 2011, according to conflicting sources. It is not clear whether it was amended due to popular protests or the government's own volition. See Chloé Domat, "Campaign Grows in Lebanon to Abolish Law Enabling Rapist to Marry Victim," December 29, 2016. http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/lebanon-about-abolish-law-protecting-rapists-and-kidnappers-who-marry-their-victims-66355672 [last accessed 5 July 2018]; Mahmoud Kaaki, "Lebanon Abolishes a Law that Allowed Rapists to Escape Conviction," *Rabwah Times*, August 16, 2017, *https://www.rabwah.net/lebanon-abolishes-laws-allowed-rapists-escape-conviction/* [last accessed July 5, 2018].

[627] Shehadeh, "Gender-Relevant Legal Change in Lebanon," 218.

[628] Ibid., 214.

Nassar was also infuriated by the fact that Lebanese women could not legally travel without permission from their husbands. She pointed out that this type of logic meant that female physicians who were responsible for saving human lives, as well as female professors who were responsible for influencing the futures of young students, could not travel without their husbands' signatures on their passports.[629] Nassar was incredulous that two female witnesses were considered the equivalent of one male witness in Islamic law. She highlighted the dissonance of this law by pointing out that a female physician's judgment was respected in matters of life and death, yet in court she was only considered half a witness.

Her criticism of these various forms of repression appeared to change her previous stance on women's participation in politics. Now that women had political rights, claimed Nassar in 1953, they could fight against these injustices from inside the Lebanese Parliament, though she assumed that it would probably take a long time for any real change to transpire. This would mitigate many of the limitations women faced in Lebanese society while simultaneously advancing the nation's character: "The issue is a very fundamental one. I believe that many of the defects and weaknesses in the character of our citizens are to be attributed to the double moral and economical standards practiced in Lebanon."[630] Nassar was the most outspoken among the sample of alumnae in this chapter in terms of criticizing various injustices against women, while others resorted to calling for rights in a less bold manner. This may have been because Nassar, being single, was not financially dependent on a husband; therefore she would not have feared for her economic stability.

[629] Nassar, "Women As They Stand in Lebanon," 1.

[630] Ibid., 3.

F. Eva Badre Malik: Wife of a Diplomat

Eva Badre Malik was another notable alumna. She graduated from the College in 1934, and received a Master of Arts degree from AUB in 1937. At AUB she had been elected Class President during her senior year, a rare position for women at the time; Malik had been one of approximately thirty women in a sea of about 2000 male students.[631] After her graduation from AUB, Malik returned to the College in 1937 to teach Arabic and Near East History. In 1941 she married Charles Malik, who was then Professor of Philosophy at AUB. Eva Malik had served as the Secretary of the Lebanese Women's Union since its foundation in 1943, and was one of the co-founders of *Sawt al-mar'a*, which was the only women's periodical published in Lebanon throughout the 1940s.[632] She also co-founded a kindergarten through the Lebanese Women's Union on the eve of Lebanese independence with her sister, Lily Badre. In 1945, Charles Malik was appointed Lebanese Plenipotentiary to the United States. Eva Malik then had a new role to take on – representing Lebanon as a diplomat's wife – which she felt was a job in itself, and was proud and delighted to undertake.[633]

In 1946, Eva Malik attributed the transformations that Lebanon was undergoing to the influence of the West. She argued that most of the organizers of the women's movement were educated in American or European schools and credited the uplifting and advancement of Lebanese women to the Euro-American schools[634]

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[631] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 136.

[632] Eva Malik, "The Women of Lebanon," *The Arab World* 2, no. 11 (1946): 20.

[633] "Eva Badre Malik Prefers to be Wife of a Professor in a University," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 2, no. 4 (June 1951): 3. LAU, RNL.

[634] There was no clear leader of the women's movement in Lebanon, therefore it is difficult to determine the accuracy of this statement. A significant number of participants in the women's movement were indeed education in foreign schools, but certainly not all.

present in Lebanon: "Just as in the Middle Ages Europe awoke from its dark slumber by contact with us in the East, so we in modern times owe our general awakening to the contact, stimulus and challenge of the West and particularly of Western educational institutions."[635] There was no risk of Lebanon losing its cultural authenticity by adopting Western traditions, as the East and West had a reciprocal relationship – the East had helped rejuvenate the West in the past and now they were switching roles. What Malik did not clarify was that Lebanese women were selectively adopting Western traditions – embracing the ones they perceived to be beneficial while forgoing others that were potentially detrimental. Throughout the region, women had to demonstrate to the larger Arab world that they could adapt to new ideas brought by the West while simultaneously preserving cultural traditions at home.[636]

In an interview with *The Christian Science Monitor* in 1946, Malik informed the reporter that Lebanese women have "had to overcome the general Eastern idea about women," which was why they had not yet attained suffrage despite much noteworthy progress in other areas.[637] What did Malik mean by the "Eastern" conceptualization of women that had obstructed them from gaining the franchise? In most cases of Lebanese laws, women's fundamental rights were effectuated through their roles as wives and mothers; the family as the basic unit of society justified this limited view of women's functions.[638] Malik implied that the "Eastern" perception of

[635] Malik, "The Women of Lebanon," 18.

[636] Sandrine Mansour, "La naissance des mouvements de femmes au Levant," *Nouvelles Questions Féministes* 35, no. 2 (2016): 21.

[637] Frances Whitelock, "Mme. Malik Says Understanding Among Women Step Toward World Peace," *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 3, 1946.

[638] Suad Joseph, "Gender and Citizenship in Middle Eastern States," *Middle East Report* 198 (January-March 1996): 8.

women maintained that they were only exclusively capable of wifehood and motherhood, while she and other active women viewed themselves as competent wives and mothers who also deserved the right to vote and run for public office.

The Lebanese state imposed these definitions of sex roles on its constituents, but women demanded their rights through these imposed definitions of wife and mother that they actually agreed with and championed. They did not aim to reject these roles but to redefine them instead by modernizing motherhood and wifehood. The basic reason that women put forth as to why they should be accorded full citizenship rights with men also functioned as the counterargument against their inclusion in civil society – that they were wives and mothers.[639] The paradigm of wife and mother was saturated with competing visions from both sexes and within both sexes. Women could scarcely afford to alienate men's attitudes; this explains their claims of domesticity being the most important facet of a woman's life and personal identity. Whenever Lebanese women attained specific rights, these rights were linked to a well-defined gender role. They advanced their claims to citizenship through these traditional roles within a framework of appropriate female behavior that did not digress from time-honored norms.

Malik was conscious of the perpetually changing state of women in Lebanon and the rest of the world in the 1950s. In 1951, Malik authored an article in *Sawt al-mar'a* entitled "Lessons from the Life of the American Woman" *(Durus min hayat al-mar'a al-Amirkiya*), arguing that there was a general equality between American men and women in most aspects of life, whether political, economic, social, or cultural. American women had reached full equality in terms of rights and dignity, Malik

[639] Elizabeth Thompson, "Gender, War, and the Birth of States: Syria and Lebanon in World War II," in *Women and War in the 20th Century*, ed. Nicole Ann Dombrowski (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 266-87.

asserted, pointing out that some American women even worked in traditionally male occupations, such as mechanics.[640]

Several years later, in 1958, Malik was aware that Lebanese women were being liberated, meaning that their conditions were rapidly changing, but she had reservations about how liberated Lebanese women should become in comparison to the American women she had praised several years earlier in *Sawt al-mar'a*:

> There is so much for us to catch up with. There is perhaps a lesson we can learn from emancipated women who have over-reached themselves and are beginning now all over again to consider as grave problems what they had created by their own mistakes – problems such as the home, the family, the femininy (femininity) [sic] that is lost in many cases and that is so essential to the woman.[641]

Malik was referring to American and European women who she believed had distanced themselves from their homes and families and had therefore become too masculine. Malik advocated a form of emancipation for Lebanese women that would not result in distraction from or negligence of essential feminine duties, i.e., the home and the family. Her statement implies that Western women had achieved the highest level of emancipation, but that it was preferable for Lebanese women to remain within the boundaries of emancipation that were culturally appropriate, lest they destroy their nation.

This discourse closely mirrors Salwa Nassar's commencement speech in 1951 warning young women to beware of the potential dangers associated with overindulging in freedom as Western women had done.[642] The way that the issue of

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[640] Eva Malik, "Durus min hayat al-mar'a al-Amirkiya," *Sawt al-mar'a* (1951). AUB Jafet Library.

[641] Eva Malik, "Mrs. Charles Malik, '34 for the Alumnae Association," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Newsletter* (November 1958): n.p. LAU, RNL.

[642] Avoiding a blind imitation of the West had been expressed by women activists long before the creation of the College. The first Lebanese women's magazines that appeared in Egypt called for women to be educated like Western women but without taking on Western traditions. See Nahwand al-Qadiri, "Sahafat al-Lubnaniyat wa jam'iyatuhun fi al-'ashrinat: Wajhan li-'amla wahida," In *al-Nisa'*

adopting Western practices was dealt with depended on which Western traditions were in question. The alumnae were receptive to the practices of Western education, technological prowess, and economic development, and wanted Lebanon to catch up with the West in these respects. They were adamantly against Western "freedoms" that were morally questionable, such as straying away from family life, renouncing the home, spending too much time in bars and nightclubs, and sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Other segments of Lebanese society may have considered these College women to be "Westernized", but they regularly articulated that they were "Eastern" women. Alumnae rhetoric often wavered between praising and condemning the West. Their depictions of Western women played an integral part in the construction of their own identities.

Other students and alumnae perceived the dangers of imitating the West to lie in the act of indulging in "superficial habits."[643] This phrase likely referred to Western-style dating practices and forms of entertainment. Superficial habits depreciated the sanctity and centrality of the family, the basic unit of Lebanese society. Among the sample of College alumnae, it is difficult to locate any women who advocated adopting all that the West had to offer; generally, we see women selectively accommodating and adapting Western traditions they deemed beneficial, particularly Western educational values.

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al-'Arabiyat fi al-'ashrinat: Huduran wa hawiya, eds. Jean Said Makdisi, Nadia El Cheikh, Nazik Saba Yared, Noha Bayoumi and Tafa Hamadi (Beirut: Tajamu' al-bahithaat al-Lubnaniyaat, 2001), 73-75. Julia Dimashqiyya's monthly women's periodical, *Al-Mar'a al-jadida*, addressed this issue in June 1925, asserting that not everything Western women did was positive. See *Al-Mar'a al-jadida*, June 1925. AUB Jafet Library.

[643] Letter to Mrs. Walter Fox from Katherine Hoffman, September 10, 1947. PHS, RG 492-6-17.

G. Edvick Jureidini Shayboub: Home Economics on the Radio

Edvick Jureidini Shayboub graduated from the AJC in 1933; she married in 1941 and became a widow in 1944. Although she had received several marriage proposals, she resolved to raise her children on her own and began a career in journalism out of economic necessity.[644] Shayboub became the editor of *Sawt al-mar'a*, the mouthpiece of the Lebanese Women's Union. *Sawt al-mar'a* stopped being published in 1958 – when it was reincarnated in 1960 as the new women's periodical, *Dunya al-mar'a*, Shayboub resumed her previous role as editor. Furthermore, she pioneered by being one of the first Lebanese women to work in radio programming. From the 1940s to the late 1970s, Shayboub hosted *Dunya al-bayt* ("World of the Home"), a fifteen-minute quotidian program for women on Radio Lebanon that broadcast all over the Arab world, offering advice on childcare and social problems.[645] She regularly received mail from female listeners seeking her input on matters such as social life, education, beauty, health, love, and marriage.

In March 1961, Shayboub authored an editorial in the BCW alumnae bulletin asking what role higher education played in giving women freedom, and claimed that higher education was the sole panacea to liberate women. Higher education would relieve women from the traditional customs that repressed them, such as arranged marriage.[646] Shayboub insisted that the creation of the AJC and BCW solved this problem, and that this institution served as *the* source of women pioneers in the Arab world that became liberated via their education. However, like Salwa Nassar and Eva

[644] Marie Sabri, "The Beirut College for Women and Ten of its Pioneering Alumnae," Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1965, 215.

[645] Ibid., 217-18.

[646] Edvick Jureidini Shayboub, "Women Pioneers Formed at College: Role of Higher Education in Achieving Freedom," *Winter-Spring Edition Alumnae Bulletin Beirut College For Women* 10, no. 2 (March 1961): 1. LAU, RNL.

Badre Malik, Edvick Shayboub was of the opinion that there was such a thing as superfluous freedom that could be detrimental to cultural values. Lebanese women who mimicked Western women's freedoms could generate sinister effects in Lebanese society:

> Can her life be the life of an American or European college girl? We cannot sever all links of the past; we cannot lose the stability that our roots give us; our inbred personality and character as Arab women necessarily impose a conduct somewhat different than that of the Western college girl. Again a wisdom of control and selection is the path to a proud freedom.[647]

Shayboub and other College women perceived an ideological conflict between East and West. The East was both a source of backwardness and a bastion of morality; the West was at once a source of inspiration and a site of depravity. Freedom was a double-sided coin for Shayboub and other alumnae – it had the potential to liberate and uplift women as well as the potential to sabotage families and societies. The educated women of Lebanon understood the real meaning of freedom that was lost on European and American women, according to Shayboub, Nassar, and Malik. A homegrown concept of freedom or liberation was more apposite for Lebanese women's objectives, and would be more likely to find acceptance amongst men and women who questioned their behavior. East and West coexisted in an uneasy dichotomy. Lebanese women would have to situate themselves strategically between the ideas of East and West envisaged by their society, just as they strategically maneuvered their calls for political rights by articulating their rights to citizenship through their bonds to their husbands, sons, fathers, and brothers.

Shayboub spent the rest of the 1960s lecturing publicly and studying at the American University of Beirut in order to complete a Ph.D. in Arabic Literature; Shayboub matriculated at AUB at the same time that her two children were

[647] Ibid., 7.

undergraduates there. She gave a speech on "Home Economics on Radio and Television" at the Home Economics Conference held at the Beirut College for Women in 1963.[648] In 1967 she traveled throughout the United States for seventy days on a tour sponsored by the Educational Foundation of American Women in Radio and Television. Shayboub delivered lectures in many different American cities, such as "Women's Role in the Arab Countries" in March 1967 in Minneapolis.[649]

In April 1967 she visited Lubbock, Texas and conveyed a mostly Westernized image of Lebanon and Lebanese women to the local press – she claimed that Lebanese women were fashionable, active in associational work, ambitious career women, and dedicated wives and mothers.[650] She may have purposely omitted key information on Lebanese women's equality at the dawn of Lebanese independence when she stated to the reporter: "'Since 1943, when Lebanon gained her independence, Lebanese women have had their full political rights… The men are still very bossy though, and as of yet, no women have entered politics.'"[651] Shayboub explained that many Lebanese women were currently obtaining a higher education and were beginning to expand their horizons beyond teaching as an occupation and were venturing into medicine, law, the media, and secretarial work. Most of these women did not pursue careers until after their children had grown up, Shayboub explained, because "'The family tradition is very strong in Lebanon… and we try to preserve family unity'" and that "the first role of a woman is motherhood…I have to

[648] Sabri, "The Beirut College for Women and Ten of its Pioneering Alumnae," 231. The details of this speech are unknown.

[649] "Lectures," *The Minneapolis Star*, March 27, 1967.

[650] Mary Alice Nabors, "'Family Tradition Very Strong:' Visiting Writer Describes People of Lebanon," *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal* (Lubbock, Texas), April 20, 1967.

[651] Ibid. Lebanese women were not enfranchised until 1953. Edvick Shayboub may have wanted to present a certain image of Lebanon irrespective of historical accuracy.

be a real woman, so I am a mother before anything else… If I fail as a mother, no matter how much success I obtain in my career, I will be a failure.'"[652]

Shayboub highlighted Lebanese women's modernity to the local press in Lubbock, Texas by referencing sartorial advances. She explained that the French colonial presence had resulted in Beirut's transformation into a cosmopolitan shopping center, and asserted that the widespread presence of miniskirts in her home country was a sign of Lebanese women's advancement. Shayboub may not have actually been in favor of women wearing miniskirts, which she and other College alumnae would have associated with the "depravity" of the West, but likely offered this example to improve Lebanon's image amongst her audience. On the final day of her seventy-day tour, Shayboub revealed her lack of understanding of American women by expressing surprise that family life in the United States did not resemble its depiction in various American television series that she had watched in Lebanon. She stated that Lebanese women had formed an impression that American women were "bossy", which her trip to the U.S. had disproved.[653] She explained that Lebanese men were "bossy" and that this pleased her: "We feel more secure under the protection of a husband. He's stronger physically and we like to make him feel it, somehow."[654] This statement confirmed that most elite women did not wish to overthrow the patriarchy but to bargain within its boundaries.

[652] Ibid.

[653] Joy Miller, "Touring Foreign Radio Women Say American TV Life 'Unreal,'" *Asbury Park Press* (Asbury Park, New Jersey), May 3, 1967.

[654] Ibid.

H. Angela Jurdak: Lebanon's First Female Diplomat

Angela Jurdak (class of 1935) was able to attend the AJC thanks to the support of her parents, who believed that women should receive as much education as they desired.[655] She transferred to AUB after her graduation and completed her Bachelor's degree in Social Studies. Even though female students were an anomaly at AUB at the time, Jurdak established her presence on campus by organizing social service projects, co-founding the Civic Welfare League, planning women's sports activities, and creating a women's basketball team. Jurdak explained her involvement in social service at AUB as having stemmed from a sense of civic responsibility that was instilled in her at the AJC.[656] After receiving her B.A. in 1937, Jurdak spent the summer completing a certification program in the School of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. She returned to AUB and earned her Master of Arts in Sociology in 1938; her M.A. thesis was published in a journal entitled, *Science of Sociology*. Her contributions to the American University of Beirut continued after her graduation, as she became its first female faculty member in June 1938. She held various administrative posts such as Secretary to the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Secretary to the Registrar, and taught courses in Sociology and Psychology to mostly male students.[657]

During World War II, Jurdak was discreetly appointed to the position of Assistant Director of the Allied Powers Radio Poll for Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine. Her primary duty was to record the number of people in the aforementioned countries who tuned in to broadcasts by the Axis powers. She additionally handled record

[655] Sabri, "The Beirut College for Women and Ten of its Pioneering Alumnae," 273.

[656] Ibid., 275.

[657] Ibid., 278-79.

keeping and the recruitment of employees. Soon enough, Jurdak eventually became Lebanon's first female diplomat as well as the first Arab female diplomat. In 1945 Jurdak was appointed as Secretary General to the Lebanese delegation to the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco, and was assigned to the newly established Legation of Lebanon in Washington D.C. as an attaché.[658]

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Jurdak was the Consul of Lebanon in New York City as well as Lebanon's representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW), which elected her as its rapporteur in 1951. In May 1946 the UNCSW unanimously adopted a resolution on marriage that stipulated that a husband should only have one wife at a time, and that wives should have the right to choose and divorce their husbands.[659] The UNCSW also recommended that women and men should have equal political rights, including suffrage and the right to hold public office, and denounced prostitution.[660] According to one report, Jurdak was the most "outspoken" critic of polygamy and insisted that ignoring it would violate women's self-worth.[661] A French member of the UNCSW, known as Madame Lefaucheux, argued that polygamy was none of the commission's business and pointed out that it was common practice in many territories of the French empire. Jurdak opposed her, and Lefaucheux withdrew her complaint. Jurdak was a Christian opposing a Muslim practice, but this demand was put forth by Muslim women at

[658] Jane Eads, *Associated Press*, "Lebanese Girl Gets UNO Post," printed in *Abilene Reporter News* (Abilene, Texas) March 30, 1946. The choice of "girl" in the headline rather than "woman" is striking. It highlights the relative novelty worldwide of women working in the diplomatic corps at the time.

[659] "UNO Body Adopts Platform on Women's Rights," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 9, 1946.

[660] "Two Old Issues Start a Debate! U.N. Women Argue About Polygamy, Prostitution," *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1946.

[661] "UNO Body Adopts Platform on Women's Rights."

various Arab women's conferences throughout the era.[662] Lebanese women publicly called for this right as early as 1928 at a Lebanese and Syrian women's conference in Beirut, as well as at the pan-Arab women's conference in Cairo in 1944.

In 1949, Jurdak attended the Third UNCSW that was being held in Beirut. She informed an American reporter that Lebanese women had made much progress in a short period of time thanks to American educational influences.[663] Furthermore, she falsely declared that Lebanon did not have any criminals, and that child delinquency was due to "disrupted homes, and frequently stepmothers."[664] Only a mother could properly raise her own children in Jurdak's worldview – an intruder such as a stepmother would apparently produce petty criminals. Jurdak's comment on stepmothers being the source of child delinquency indicates that she agreed with her former classmates that women's roles in the family were of the utmost importance. A child's biological mother was irreplaceable, in her opinion. Jurdak herself was married and had two sons. She told the reporter that Lebanese women managed to simultaneously be politically free and steadfast wives and mothers who made "a career, sometimes almost a fetish, of their homes" and that the women who had "comfortable homes and leisure" typically spent time doing village welfare work with less fortunate women, highlighting the notion that elite women were responsible for social service.[665] This rhetoric closely mirrored that of her former classmates, as did Jurdak's whitewashing of Lebanese women's political status when she claimed that

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[662] See for example, *Al-mu'tamar al-nisa'i fi Bayrut sanat 1928: Mu'tamar 'am fi Surya wa Lubnan.* **(**Beirut: Matba'at sadir, 1928). See also, *Al-mu'tamar al-nisa'i al-'arabi.* (Cairo: Dar al-m'arif, 1944).

[663] Ann Foster, "Women's Rapid Progress in Lebanon Spurred by American Contacts, Says Angela Jurdak," *The Christian Science Monitor* July 11, 1946.

[664] Foster, "Women's Rapid Progress in Lebanon Spurred by American Contacts."

[665] Ibid.

they were "politically free".[666] Whose version of Lebanon was she promoting? Jurdak gave this interview in 1949, approximately four years before Lebanese women were granted the franchise and the right to run for public office.

Jurdak was awarded Lebanon's Order of the Cedar by the Lebanese government in 1959 in recognition of her national service. She resigned from the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1966 after having represented Lebanon in the United States for twenty-one years, and obtained her Ph.D. in International Relations from American University in Washington D.C. in 1968. Her Ph.D. dissertation, "The Foreign Policy of Lebanon", argued that Lebanon's specific location and diverse population were the most important factors in the evolution of the country's foreign policy from 1943 to 1963.[667] She taught at George Mason University in Virginia as a professor of government until she retired in 1982.

Jurdak credited her success in academia to her experience at the AJC: "'The solid foundation I gained…during my two years at College gave me adequate preparation for advanced academic training.'"[668] She stated in an interview: "Were it not for… the College…my education would have been limited to the high school level. Therefore, it would not have been possible for me to serve my people at the national or international level except in a minor role."[669] Jurdak contended that her coursework in languages, religion, sciences, social service, mathematics, history, and physical education were all integral components of the knowledge she gained that allowed her to have a successful career. Therefore, it was her educational training at

[666] Foster, "Women's Rapid Progress in Lebanon Spurred by American Contacts."

[667] Angela Jurdak, "The Foreign Policy of Lebanon," Ph.D. diss., American University, 1968.

[668] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 195.

[669] Quoted in Sabri, "The Beirut College for Women and Ten of its Pioneering Alumnae," 294.

the College that allowed her to become Lebanon's first female diplomat. Jurdak did not convey her opinion on women's roles in public politics as other alumnae had, in all likelihood due to her employment in Lebanon's diplomatic corps and her pioneering achievement as the first Lebanese female diplomat. To my knowledge, she did not publicly denounce limitless liberation for women, though this is not an indication that she was in favor of it. Unlike some of her cohort, she was strongly in favor of women working in public politics, as demonstrated by her career choice. Jurdak apparently understood that Lebanese women could perform political and domestic duties simultaneously.

I. Jamal Karam Harfouche: Medicine, Public Health, and Children's Needs

One prominent alumna, Jamal Karam Harfouche, graduated from the AJC in 1935. She was elected president of the Student Council during her sophomore year at the College,[670] which would have given her a formative experience in a position of leadership. After she graduated, Harfouche wanted to become a physician, but faced resistance, discouragement, and disrespect throughout her journey to complete her medical degree. She matriculated in the School of Medicine at the American University of Beirut in 1937, and was the only female student in her class. The female principal[671] of the AJC at the time discouraged her from entering medical school, arguing that it was expensive and took up a lot of time.[672] Her decision to enter the medical field was neither supported by men nor women. Harfouche felt that male colleagues and instructors "did not have much confidence" in female medical

[670] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 174.

[671] Only when a man (William Stoltzfus) became head of the College was the position entitled "president". The women who preceded him were "principals".

[672] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 174.

students, who referred to her as "Miss Karam" instead of by her first name, to keep an acceptable social distance from her. Harfouche felt that she had no supportive allies that she could depend on and was forced to learn how to rely only on herself.[673] Nevertheless, medicine was attractive to women because it was considered acceptable for female practitioners to treat female patients. In 1941, she successfully completed her medical degree; she worked as an intern at the AUB hospital for two years and then became a clinical assistant from 1943-1946.[674]

Harfouche was quite active throughout the 1940s. Only two years after her graduation from medical school, she presented a program for maternal and child health in Lebanon at the United Nations Social Welfare Seminar for the Arab States in 1943.[675] In 1946, Harfouche spent one year in the United States to learn how to create a "well baby clinic" for the AUB hospital upon her return to Lebanon.[676] She explained to an American reporter that in Lebanese society, "the home is the noblest and the highest thing… No matter what career a woman takes, if she violates the traditions of the home – then she has failed."[677] Harfouche explained that she was lucky because her husband was supportive of her trip to the U.S. Though she never vocalized the fact that she was childless, it was evident through her statement that if she had left her children behind in Lebanon, she would have been perceived as a "failed" woman. Did Harfouche really believe that nothing was nobler than the home? It is impossible to answer conclusively, but the fact that she persevered through

[673] Ibid., 175.

[674] "Meet the Alumnae: Jamal Karam Harfouche," *American College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 1, no. 2 (February 1950): 1. LAU, RNL.

[675] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 179.

[676] "First Married Woman to Study: Woman Doctor from Lebanon Comes to Work in U.S." *The Decatur Daily Review* (Decatur, Illinois), July 22, 1946.

[677] Ibid.

medical school, as described above, suggests otherwise. Class mores and bourgeois norms at the time would have expected her to value her domestic duties before her career. She may have truly felt that way, or she could have been merely pretending to support the idea in order to continue working in her field without any opposition. However, her focus on children's health resonated with certain aspects of domesticity.

Harfouche was also politically active and concerned about the status of women in her country. In the fall of 1949, the United Nations held the Third Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in Beirut and Harfouche was asked by the Lebanese government to undertake much of the necessary preparatory work in arranging to host the conference. She participated in another United Nations conference in 1949, the Social Welfare Seminar for Arab States, where she delivered a talk describing a plan for maternal and child healthcare in the different regions of Lebanon.[678] After the conference, Harfouche gave a public lecture in Beirut calling for education rights for women. She argued that this would give women opportunities to fulfill the needs of the nation – women's supplementary work was necessary for Lebanon's production, manufacturing, output, and growth.[679] Harfouche additionally made the case for women's work to be accepted under what she referred to as "normal" circumstances, and not just during "exceptional" situations such as World War I and World War II. She urged the audience to understand that real cooperation between men and women in formal labor could bring about moral refinement, but did not mention potential economic growth. Finally, she assured the audience that women were not in danger of losing their femininity by working or receiving an education, as

[678] "Meet the Alumnae: Jamal Karam Harfouche," 1.

[679] Jamal Karam Harfouche, "Shahada fi al-mar'a," public lecture delivered at *Al-Nadwa al-Lubnaniya*, April 27, 1949. Reprinted in *Muhadarat al-nadwa* (1949). AUB Jafet Library.

long as they still had a female biological makeup.[680] Such remarks on fears of women becoming unfeminine were typical of the discourse on gender in the 1940s and 1950s, reflecting social anxieties that clearly defined boundaries between the sexes would be blurred if women gained more rights or became more visible in the public sphere.

Harfouche's speech was presented at the *Cénacle Libanais*, an institution founded after Lebanese independence that held weekly meetings where public lectures were delivered. The *Cénacle* "tried to gather thinkers of the time to give their opinion on problems of the day and help formulate a vision of what the new republic could achieve."[681] The vast majority of "thinkers" who orated at these meetings were men; they primarily deliberated myriad national or political issues. Whenever women declaimed their views at the *Cénacle*, their speeches addressed women's functions in the new state and attempted to assuage society's gender anxieties, as exemplified above by Harfouche's reassurances to the audience that there was no risk of women losing their femininity while they still had biologically female anatomies. This was probably a euphemism intended to assuage men's anxieties regarding women's advancement. Harfouche believed that every time women's status improved, whether via education or employment, men's anxieties would increase as they worried about competition from women.[682]

Regarding women's suffrage, Harfouche felt that women had proved themselves equal to men in terms of mental capacity, and that women were certainly able to take part in the betterment of human society. While she was of the opinion that

[680] Ibid.

[681] Nadim Shehadi, *The Idea of Lebanon: Economy and State in the Cénacle Libanais 1946-54* (Oxford: Centre For Lebanese Studies, 1987), 3.

[682] Emily Nasrallah, *Nisa' min al-Sharq*, volume 3 (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-haditha, 2001), 121.

women should be granted suffrage rights, Harfouche felt that women should not participate in politics unless they could outperform men in that domain.[683] Lebanese women understood "politics" at this time as electoral politics. It appears as though Harfouche was keenly aware that women's education up until this point had not prepared them for public politics – the College curriculum discussed in previous chapters clearly illustrates that women had been aggressively prepared for home life and shaping society from within their households, until the June 1967 war shattered this narrative. The best approach for introducing women to politics, according to Harfouche, would be to implement a five-year plan allowing women to convene and strategize how to achieve free and compulsory education as well as opportunities for women to enter government and municipal work, particularly in women's domains such as the Ministries of Education, Social Welfare, and Health.[684] During this hypothetical five-year period all schools and colleges in Lebanon would teach civics classes that would prepare youths to create political committees, teach them how to vote, and to how to be upstanding citizens.

Despite her carefully constructed plan, Harfouche insisted that one must not forget that the family is the basic unit of human society and women must ensure that the family does not lose its place by being replaced by other institutions.[685] Harfouche's emphasis on the family may seem somewhat unusual since she and her husband never had children, but most bourgeois women of this period were troubled by the possibility of the family losing its importance regardless of whether they were single or childless. Other influential women who had advocated for women's suffrage

[683] "Meet the Alumnae: Jamal Karam Harfouche," 1.

[684] Ibid.

[685] Ibid.

were calling for women to be educated on how to use this new right wisely.[686] Harfouche's own views on women's supposedly deficient training for public politics did not stop her from running for a seat in the Lebanese Parliament in 1957 along with three other women, none of whom were elected.[687] Indeed, Lebanese women found the least degree of success in the political sphere; from 1953 to 1972, a total of seven women ran for parliament, and only one was elected.[688]

Even though Harfouche never had children of her own, this did not prevent her from establishing the Lebanese Union of Child Welfare or becoming Vice-President of the International Union for Child Welfare in 1954.[689] All women were supposed to care about children, regardless of whether they had any of their own. As was the general trend among College alumnae, Harfouche was active in several organizations, including the Lebanese Medical Syndicate, Lebanese Public Health Association, Lebanese Pediatrics Society, Middle East Medical Assembly, National Committee for UNESCO, the AUB Medical Association, and the AUB Committee of Women's Education.[690] Another common factor she shared with many alumnae was that she

[686] Ruth Woodsmall, *Study of the Role of Women: Their Activities and Organizations, in Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria, October 1954-August 1955* (New York: International Federation of Business and Professional Women, 1956), 6-7.

[687] Another alumna, Mounira El Solh (class of 1933), was also among the first Lebanese women to run for parliament. Solh ran in 1960, 1964, and 1968. In 1960 she "stood her candidacy till the end." See Nicola A. Ziadeh, "The Lebanese Elections, 1960" *Middle East Journal* 14, no. 4 (Autumn, 1960): 377. See also Mounira El Solh's obituary in *Al-Mustaqbal*, November 20, 2010.

[688] Myrna Bustani was the first Lebanese woman to enter parliament in 1963; however, this did not transpire through traditional campaigning and voting. She was unanimously appointed by the Lebanese Parliament to complete the remaining one-year term of her father, an MP who had died in an airplane crash.

[689] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 178; Nasrallah, *Nisa' min al-Sharq*, volume 3, 118.

[690] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 178.

eventually returned to work at the College; in fact, she was one of the very few alumnae to be appointed to the College Board of Management.[691]

Harfouche believed that the establishment of the AJC and BCW was "a turning point in the life history of women in Lebanon and the Middle East… College education was a step toward economic independence, for mature and independent thinking which has made it possible for women to enjoy economic rights."[692] She did not make any comments about the College and women's political rights. Without the College, Harfouche was certain she never would have been able to enter medical school or any co-educational institution. It is clear from her comments that her years as a student at the College played a fundamental role in both her identity formation and career path.

In 1967, Harfouche believed that the primary issues College alumnae were dealing with were "a breakdown in family life, political instability, a conflict between material and moral values, disruption of socio-economic patterns, employment, [and] opportunity for creative work"[693] but that the College had helped solve some of these difficulties by emphasizing moral values via religion coursework and home economics education. The added value of these courses was that the family would not lose its importance, argued Harfouche. College alumnae and other elite Lebanese women were constantly apprehensive about the effects of socioeconomic and technological changes on the structure of the family – home economics education was regularly touted as the universal cure for all of society's ills, until 1970 when this field would become obsolete.

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[691] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 179; Nasrallah, *Nisa' min al-Sharq*, volume 3, 118.

[692] Quoted in Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 190. This comment is unlikely to be an exaggeration, given that many other alumnae expressed similar sentiments.

[693] Quoted in Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 191.

J. Zahia Macksad Salman: Child Welfare

Zahia Macksad Salman (class of 1936) created the Child Welfare Society for Lebanon in 1936 with the objective of establishing free daycare centers for poor children in every neighborhood in Beirut. She pioneered as the first Lebanese woman to open free nurseries for the offspring of working mothers.[694] The first daycare was opened in March 1940 and remained opened for the duration of World War II. This was a revolutionary innovation, according to Salman, because it did not cultivate a culture of "dependency" among the poor, which she had insisted had been the case with the distribution of monetary donations, milk, and clothes.[695] There was a certain element of noblesse oblige among students and alumnae, who often criticized the poor and felt it was their duty to help them. Salman was also responsible for "Baby Day", an annual celebration for the benefit of underprivileged children.[696]

Not only was she concerned with the lives of children, Salman was also socially and politically active on the board of the Lebanese Arab Women Federation and several other women's organizations. She participated in a number of women's congresses including the first Congress of All Arab Women in Cairo in 1944, the Educational Congress for the Arab Countries, and the United Nations Social Welfare Seminar for Arab States. Akin to fellow alumna Jamal Karam Harfouche, Salman was convinced that women and men should have equal political rights, but that caution needed to be exercised to guarantee that women would not abandon their family responsibilities. According to these alumnae, the home and family were women's first

[694] Sabri, *Pioneering Profiles*, 42.

[695] Zahia Salman, "The Story of the Lebanese Child Welfare Society" (English), *Sawt al-mar'a* (1949). AUB Jafet Library.

[696] "Meet the Alumnae: Zahia Macksad Salman," *American College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 1, no. 3 (April 1950): 1. LAU, RNL.

and foremost priority above all else. The fact that they had formal schooling did not change this belief – their education reinforced the notion of women's centrality to the home. Salman noted that some women maintained an "exaggerated enthusiasm"[697] when it came to advocating for the right to vote, which she claimed could never surpass the home in its importance for Lebanese women. This is surprising given Salman's active participation in congresses that demanded political rights for women, including the franchise. Salman was married and had children - was she trying to pander to potential critics, or did she truly desire the right to vote as long as it would not come at the expense of her family?

In 1968, Salman reflected on her time at the College as a period that instilled the highest virtues and noblest goals in her, molded her personality, and prepared her for civic and motherly duties:

> Two years in this College have inspired me with the noblest of ideas and have shown me the patterns I must follow – to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield; to be true, to be strong for there is much to suffer and much to dare. The College has developed my personality, widened my horizon and prepared me to be a conscientious and responsible citizen, wife and mother.[698]

Most alumnae described their time at their alma mater in similar terms, as an extremely valuable and life-changing experience. The fact that alumnae made these statements decades after graduating underscores the profound and lasting impact that this educational experience had on the students.

K. Emily Nasrallah: Not a Feminist

Emily Nasrallah (class of 1956) grew up in a remote village in southern Lebanon. Highly ambitious and eager to learn, she felt that the opportunity she was

[697] Ibid.

[698] "Two Generations of BCW Alumnae," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1968): 7. LAU, RNL.

given to study at the BCW rendered her "a special person, privileged to be in this college and obtain a university education instead of… someone destined to end her education in a third class elementary school."[699] Nasrallah married while she was still a student and went on to become one of the most successful writers and novelists in the Arab world.

Most of Nasrallah's writings dealt with themes of war, emigration, and gender, and were rooted in her own personal experiences in "a traditional society, and my rebellion against prevalent traditions that keep women where they have been for too many generations."[700] Even though she felt that traditional society had inhibited women's potential, unlimited freedom for women would be problematic. The notion of women's liberation may have originated from abroad, but was reshaped by College women according to culturally relevant norms, regardless of their American education at their beloved alma mater. These women were to be simultaneously modern and traditional – they would become modern through their education and remain traditional by upholding indigenous cultural, family, and religious practices. Lebanese women did not become "new women" but "redefined women" instead – they were the same women from previous generations who had merely become modernized. The paradigm of the redefined Lebanese woman emerged from the nexus between cultural encounters, socioeconomic changes, gender discourses, and educational advances.

The recurrent theme among alumnae of how much freedom was appropriate was addressed by Nasrallah in 1961, who felt that Lebanese women were living in a very complex epoch and that they should not abuse their freedom. Nasrallah agreed with her fellow alumnae that women needed freedom to be able to work alongside

[699] Emily Nasrallah, "The Role of the Lebanese American University in the Empowerment of Women," *Al-Raida* 23-24, no. 114-115 (Summer/Fall 2006): 71.

[700] Ibid., 72.

men, but that freedom was not the final objective. Rather, freedom was a means towards greater causes.[701] In 1982, Nasrallah raised the subject of women's freedom once again in an interview. When asked if she was a "feminist," Nasrallah avoided directly employing the term, but stated that women needed freedom for their mental and physical health just like men did. She was no longer anxious about excess freedom "because of the moderating influences which continue to surround us, there is no danger that our girls will be attracted by extreme forms of freedom."[702]

Akin to many other alumnae, Nasrallah returned to her alma mater for employment; she became the Public Information Consultant in 1974. She was responsible for editing all of the Arabic publications of Beirut University College and helped promote and organize cultural activities for students.[703] Nasrallah came to BUC to help the College restore its reputation, which had been maligned in a newspaper article claiming that the female students were not virgins.[704] This libelous article created a social scandal that temporarily damaged the reputation of her beloved College, and Nasrallah wanted to repair it. One could infer from this anecdote that if BUC female students were not virgins, then they would become associated with Western women's superfluous freedoms.

In an interview with Nasrallah aged eighty-six years old in October 2017, I asked if she recalled previously expressing the views on women's freedoms discussed above. She answered that she both remembered doing so and still maintained the same

[701] Emily Nasrallah, "Lebanese Women Are Facing Complex Age," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 10, no. 3 (June 1961): 1, 9. LAU, RNL.

[702] "Emily Nasrallah, A Pioneer Journalist and Novelist," *Al-Raida* 21 (August 1982): 2.

[703] "Mrs. Emily Nasrallah is the New BUC Public Information Consultant," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1974): 12. LAU, RNL.

[704] Emily Nasrallah, interview with the author, Beirut, October 20, 2017. Nasrallah could not remember which newspaper had published this article. I was not able to independently verify this claim.

opinions.[705] Nasrallah claimed that she has never been a feminist and that she often emphasizes this fact in interviews: "I go for the respect of women so this is why I like women and men to be equal in their rights and in everything in life." When I asked her if she would qualify this statement as "feminist" in nature, she politely declined. The mere mention of the word led her to relate an account of having met Betty Friedan in a conference in the United States, where Friedan had asked Nasrallah to establish a network of feminists in Lebanon. Nasrallah's response to Friedan was: "I am not a feminist."[706]

I asked Nasrallah if she thought any of the AJC and BCW alumnae would have classified themselves as feminists; she believed it was highly unlikely, explaining that the alumnae were more "humanist" in their struggle for equality. They wanted women to be equal with men, not subordinate or superior to men, and they did not want women to abandon their families, as they felt that Betty Friedan and her ilk had done. It is important to note that Nasrallah had written six biographical dictionaries on pioneering women, Eastern and Western, yet still did not consider herself a feminist.[707] To Nasrallah, the term "feminism" implied the dangerous liberation achieved by Western women that could ruin Lebanese society. Therefore her perspective was in line with that of the other alumnae discussed thus far. However, not all American women were in favor of the liberation that Nasrallah and other alumnae disapproved of.

Similar to other alumnae, Nasrallah held the AJC and BCW in high regard and believed that the earliest graduates had functioned as pioneers in women's

[705] Emily Nasrallah, interview with the author.

[706] Ibid.

[707] Emily Nasrallah, *Nisa' min al-Sharq*, volumes. 1-6 (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-haditha, 2001).

advancement, "carrying all their knowledge of the modern fields of teaching, education, and enlightenment, with an emphasis on the role of women in the family as well as society."[708] When asked why most alumnae had a nostalgic and affectionate relationship with the College many years after their graduation, Nasrallah conjectured: "probably because it was *our* College."[709] The students relished living in their own happily isolated world for two to four years. This is a logical explanation for why the majority of recollections of the College amongst alumnae are overwhelmingly rosy and laudatory. The women also seemed aware of how lucky they were to receive a higher education.

L. Conclusion

Focusing on several alumnae's individual biographies brings the College to life and provides juxtaposition between the generalized accounts of the American missionaries that claimed the institution had liberated and awakened Lebanese women. The biographies discussed above did not examine any alumnae who did not work outside of the home; these women were not profiled in newspapers, missionary reports, alumnae bulletins, or books on female pioneers. Although women's domestic work had been redefined and revalued, the literature on Lebanese women does not cover professional housewives. They would not have been visible to the public eye or the media. Much of the College alumnae's feminism reflected Lila Abu-Lughod's "process of entanglement",[710] an adaptation of certain practices that was the outcome of their cultural encounter with American education. They defined themselves to those they opposed – Eastern in lieu of Western, or appropriately liberated instead of

[708] Nasrallah, "The Role of the Lebanese American University," 70.

[709] Emily Nasrallah, interview with the author.

[710] Lila Abu-Lughod, "Feminist Longings and Postcolonial Conditions," 16.

excessively liberated. Some of these women gave lip service to motherhood while it was clear from the choices they made that they were equally or more interested in careers, such as Nejla Abu Izzeddin, Salwa Nassar, Jamal Karam Harfouche, Veronica Bakamjian, and Angela Jurdak. Their professional identities overlapped with their domestic identities.

This chapter has called attention to Lebanese women's framing of their identities through the notion of freedom. The way that freedom was framed by these alumnae suggests much about the complex process of identity formation of women who received a foreign education in a double colonial context. With the exception of Emily Nasrallah, all of the women in this chapter matriculated at the College during the French Mandate period. This means they received an American education under French rule in an Arab country. Their identities continued to evolve as Lebanon moved from independence to a postcolonial state. These identities were gendered and classed; women of rural and working classes would not have had the advantage of choosing a career or domesticity. College education provided the alumnae with choices for what they might do with their lives.

The pioneers discussed above were among the first Lebanese women to receive a higher education and to engage in demanding careers in various fields. They also strengthened their family ties and forged intimate friendships with other women from the AJC/BCW. The families of these women provided them rare educational opportunities without demanding that domesticity or social obligations take precedence over their intellectual pursuits. In trying to understand what factors created this exceptional group of women, we must look beyond family circumstances and the women's own personalities to take into account changes in the region such as the ubiquitous debates about sex roles, remaking women, social development, and

political turmoil. Finally, we must take into account the influence of the American Junior College for Women and the Beirut College for Women, which produced the first female Ph.D. recipient in the Arab world, the first nuclear physicist in the Arab world, the first Lebanese and Arab female diplomat, and others who opened many professional doors for women. The College had a profound impact on women's self image and personal and professional goals. Each student adapted and internalized the education she received differently, from a complex institution that was simultaneously American, Presbyterian, Lebanese, Western, Arab, and female in character. It is clear that the College made a significant impact on women's lives, though it would not have been the sole factor.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL TURMOIL AND THE END OF A WOMEN'S COLLEGE, 1960-1973

A. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the multiple factors that led to the end of the Beirut College for Women and the beginnings of the coeducational Beirut University College in 1973. Specifically, I consider the role played by the short-lived presidency of Salwa Nassar from 1965-1967, changes in social behavior between men and women, the Intra Bank crash of 1966, and the Six Day War of June 1967 between Israel and various Arab countries. All of these factors contributed to the transformation of the College and the eventual obsolescence of home economics. Another contributing factor in the disappearance of domestic training on campus was the realization amongst women of an older generation that home economics could not be a lifelong career. The BCW experienced its golden age of domesticity in the 1950s, when home economics reached its apotheosis with the inauguration of the Home Management House. This was the same decade that the cult of domesticity in American households reached its nadir.[711] This narrative of modernized domesticity would be shattered in the 1960s in both Lebanon and the U.S. with the onset of political upheaval and student movements. The mixed messages promoting careers and domesticity faded with onset of political and economic upheaval in 1966-1967. The BCW, later the BUC, was shaped by the political culture, social landscape, and economic circumstances of the 1960s and 70s which reformulated women's roles, altered the nature and goals of women's education, and ultimately led to the death of

[711] Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 3-37.

the women's college. I consider the change from BCW to BUC to be more than a transformation – rather, I view it as the defeat of a uniquely women's college. The mere fact that some of the same buildings from the AJC and BCW still exist today is insignificant; the College in its current state is unrecognizable from its ancestral foundations because it is no longer a women's college nor is it a small liberal arts college.

B. The Structure of the College

At the beginning of the 1960s, the general structure of the College remained the same as it had been in previous decades; even the conflicting messages between home and careers were still institutionalized. In 1960 the Dean of Students, Elva C. Wells,[712] wrote a letter to the graduates in the yearbook: "As an educated woman there is much each of you can do to start the lamps of enlightenment glowing in your immediate environment. Some of you may spread your influence far and wide, others may inspire only their children."[713] Wells seemed open to the idea each student would make the right choice for herself, while other educators at the College presented conflicting messages by openly urging the young women to focus on their households after their graduation.

For instance, in January 1962, a visiting professor from AUB named Theodore Greene delivered the Founder's Day speech. Greene presented an opposing view to the letter written by Wells. He articulated an opinion on the relations between the sexes that his audience was rather receptive to – he declared that women's roles in the

[712] Elva C. Wells was an American high school teacher who retired in 1958, then traveled to Lebanon to serve as the Dean of Students of the Beirut College for Women for three years. See Jean R. Hailey, "Elva Coughlin Wells Dies, Principal of City's Roosevelt High School," *Washington Post*, May 24, 1977.

[713] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1960 Yearbook*, n.p. LAU, RNL.

modern world should be increasingly complementary to men's roles.[714] He believed that some individuals had gone too far in the struggle for women's rights and had forgotten their rightful place in society. This speech went over so well with the BCW community that the alumnae insisted on reprinting it in full in one of their newsletters.[715]

Greene insisted that women were the guardians of a society's culture and that children were more attached to their mothers than their fathers. While speaking in an American institution, he argued that American women had achieved excess liberation and forgotten about their biological responsibilities to their families, accusing them of abandoning their households. Greene exhorted the students to remember what women's "true" roles were.[716] Such a speech contributed to the tension of home and careers at the BCW, but many audience members apparently embraced his message, given that the speech was reprinted in an alumnae bulletin and was not challenged within the publication.

Conflicting messages on what the nature and objectives of women's education should be were standard fare at the College. Later that year, College President Frances Gray[717] delivered the commencement address in the summer of 1962. Gray's address was similar in tone to Greene's Founders' Day speech. First, she justified the reasons that some non-distaff subjects were taught in the curricula. Gray conveyed to the graduating class that their education at the BCW had emphasized a mastery of

[714] "B.C.W. Celebrates Founders' Day: Dr. Greene Delivers Speech on Role of Women," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 11, no. 1 (January 1962): 1, 7. LAU, RNL.

[715] Ibid.

[716] Ibid.

[717] Frances Gray was an American educator and Presbyterian missionary who served in Lebanon and Iran. She was the President of the Beirut College for Women from 1959 to 1965. See "Gentle Southern Resolve: Frances Gray, a Portrait of Courage," January 9, 2002. https://www.lau.edu.lb/news-events/news/archive/gentle_southern_resolve_france/ [last accessed February 26, 2019].

language in order to communicate with others, and an understanding of science to be able to understand the world around them.[718] Additionally, Gray continued, the faculty had devised the curriculum "to develop in you a sensitive love and appreciation of your own rich cultural heritage."[719]

Gray explained that the required courses in home economics, psychology, child development, applied art, and nutrition were intended to improve the physical and mental health of the graduates as well as that of their families and communities. These classes had been structured for the students "to enter the high vocations of teaching, of social work, and perhaps the highest of all, that of motherhood."[720] Gray warned the students not to neglect their most sacred duty, stating that it would be "tragic" if the graduates mimicked "many educated women in our time who abandon the definitive task of the character formation of their children to illiterate housemaids and servants!"[721] Neither Gray nor Greene wanted women to venture too far away from domesticity. However, there was a certain irony in this situation given Gray's background; she had three Master's degrees from Columbia University, the University of Chicago, and the Biblical Seminary of New York.[722] Gray's career belied her speech to the students and thereby presented yet another contradictory message. One alumna even described Gray in 1965 as being concerned with "the development of women leaders for the whole of the Middle East."[723] Nevertheless,

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[718] *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* 12, no. 1 (November 1962): 1, 4. LAU, RNL.

[719] Ibid., 4.

[720] Ibid.

[721] Ibid.

[722] "Gentle Southern Resolve: Frances Gray, a Portrait of Courage."

[723] Ibid.

this discourse of prioritizing domesticity would only survive for a few more years. Salwa Nassar would become President of the BCW in 1965 and would start to shift this narrative in a different direction.

Salwa Nassar was the first native President of the Beirut College for Women, and was also an alumna of the institution.[724] Nassar had pioneered by becoming the first nuclear physicist in the Arab world among both men and women. She had an ambitious new vision for the BCW in the mid-1960s that would modify its very traditional culture. She claimed that her alma mater was not in competition with any other institution in Lebanon, and that she would execute a large-scale plan to enhance the College. One of Nassar's objectives was to broaden the science curricula by including a pre-medical course, a major in Mathematics, and a competitive program in Nutrition and Child Development. Nassar additionally planned to create courses in Lebanese History, Islamic History, and Armenian History, which the Beirut College for Women had been lacking.[725] She had no plans to expand the Home Economics major and never even mentioned it, nor did she ever raise the issues of domesticity and family life the way that the Founders' Day and commencement speakers discussed above had done. This signaled the first step towards a new direction for the College; Nassar's novel ideas diverged from those of the preceding decades that had come to define the AJC and BCW.

Furthermore, behavior that was previously considered socially questionable, such as dancing with the opposite sex, began to appear on campus in 1966 under Nassar's period in office. The boarding students were allowed to host dance parties at

[724] Najla Akrawi, "Dr. Salwa Nassar, New President of the College," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1965): 5. LAU, RNL. In other texts, this author's name has been spelled "Aqrawi".

[725] Salwa Nassar, "President's Policy Speech at Faculty Retreat," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1965): 7. LAU, RNL.

the College that young men could also participate in. Only BCW students could purchase tickets and had to submit both their names and the names of the partner who they would invite to the party. The justification given for these measures were that "party crushers"[726] would be deterred, and that this would enable the women to have fun in a supervised environment. The presence of men on campus was a rare sight, unless they were relatives of the students and had obtained permission to visit from the faculty. The standards of acceptability for social behavior had evolved substantially from the days of the two-year Junior College, where dancing with men would have been unthinkable and a grounds for expulsion from the institution. Now young women could interact with men in a controlled and chaperoned setting. Not only had the BCW become more modern in its curricula, its standards for social behavior between men and women had also progressed with the passing of time. Even the Student Affairs Committee voted in 1966 to permit women who lived in the dormitories to wear trousers, a subject that had been controversial.[727] However, Nassar's tenure as President of the College was brief; she passed away in February 1967 and was temporarily replaced by Cornelius B. Houk[728] until Marie Sabri (1967-1969)[729] took his place. Soon enough, by early summer of 1967, consequential sociopolitical events would impact every aspect of life at the BCW, far more than any of the changes implemented by Salwa Nassar.

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[726] "What is 'New' at BCW," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Spring 1968): 17. LAU, RNL.

[727] Riyad Nassar, *A Dream, a Vision, a Reality: My Life Story with the Lebanese American University* (Beirut: Lebanese American University Press, 2007), 59.

[728] Cornelius Houk had been the Dean of the BCW under Salwa Nassar. After she passed away, Houk became the Acting President of the College. Houk and other Americans were evacuated from Lebanon after the Six Day War erupted in June 1967. He never came back to Beirut. See Riyad Nassar, *A Dream, a Vision, a Reality*, 61.

[729] Marie Sabri was a Lebanese alumna of the College, and had been working as the Registrar before she was appointed to replace Cornelius Houk.

C. The Arab-Israeli Six Day War of 1967

The transfiguration of the Beirut College for Women into the coeducational Beirut University College was catalyzed by the events of 1967-1974. Changes at the College had already been implemented during Salwa Nassar's presidency, but the Six Day War would color the transformations more dramatically. Farid el-Khazen designates the year 1967 as the starting point for the "breakdown" of the Lebanese state.[730] While Lebanon could generally be categorized as politically unstable throughout its modern history, no local or regional event brought nearly as much chaos and disarray to Lebanese society as the 1967 Arab-Israeli Six Day War, in which Lebanon was not even an active participant in. Gradually, the Lebanese state would lose power and become politically paralyzed through major disagreements over the nation's core identity – the collapse of state institutions and the proliferation of violence immediately followed, and foreign and domestic parties destabilized Lebanon internally and externally.

The enormity of the devastating defeat of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria by Israel within less than a week in June 1967 had earth-shattering consequences for Lebanon, as it became clear to the Palestinian community in exile throughout the Levant that Arab states would not be able to help them, and that they would need to take matters into their own hands if they ever wished to return home. Palestinian movements into refugee camps in southern Lebanon had already commenced in 1968, and Lebanon was utilized as a training camp for guerilla raids against Israel from that point onwards.

[730] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967-1976* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

In December 1968, Palestinian attacks from inside Lebanon into Israel provided Israel a pretext to strike in Lebanon. Israel's first retaliation into Lebanon came in late December 1968 when Israeli commandos blew up thirteen civilian airplanes at Beirut's airport and swiftly returned to Israel within forty minutes.[731] By the middle of 1969, mass Palestinian politics were omnipresent in every part of Lebanon. Armed clashes transpired between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Lebanese army in the fall of 1969.[732] In September 1970, the PLO's base moved to Lebanon from Jordan. The transfer of the PLO to Lebanon dramatically impacted Lebanese student movements – college campuses became a microcosm of the country's political situation. The contentious issue of the armed PLO presence in Lebanon polarized the government and society, and eventually resulted in an all-out civil war in 1975. The PLO maintained maximum autonomy in Lebanon that it did not find in any other Arab country, and the Lebanese government could neither control nor restrain the group.

The next major episode between the PLO and Israel came in April 1973 when Israeli commandos assassinated three prominent Palestinians in Beirut.[733] By the beginning of the 1973-1974 academic year, the Beirut College for Women had already become Beirut University College; the fourth Arab-Israeli war erupted simultaneously. It would be incorrect to assume that university life in Lebanon operated normally under these circumstances. As articulated by Makram Rabah, the "period between 1967 and 1974 [was] when campus politics became ancillary to the

[731] Ibid., 140.

[732] Ibid. See also Makram Rabah, *A Campus at War: Student Politics at the American University of Beirut 1967-1975* (Beirut: Dar Nelson, 2009), 53.

[733] el-Khazen, 205.

Palestinian Revolution at the American University of Beirut"[734] Rabah specifically refers to AUB, and other scholars have shown that the Palestinian Revolution also affected the Lebanese University and the Beirut Arab University.[735] This was the case at the Beirut College for Women as well. BCW students conducted first-aid and civil defense training seminars, raised money, donated blood, collected medical and food supplies, and made daily visits to hospitals to bring food to victims of the war.[736] Students at the American University of Beirut also mobilized to support the war effort via fundraising, blood drives, and the construction of shelters and trenches in Palestinian refugee camps.[737] The Beirut Arab University and the Lebanese University simultaneously witnessed political activism and strikes.[738] But let us first step back into the College in 1960 to gain a linear perspective of these changes and transitions.

D. The Road to a Coeducational College

From 1960 to 1969, students could opt to major in Arabic, Education, Fine Arts, History, History-Politics, Home Economics, Religion and Philosophy, Science-Mathematics, Social Studies, or Psychology.[739] Some of the preparation for these majors required fieldwork. For example, those who majored in Education were

[734] Rabah, 13.

[735] See Halim Barakat, *Lebanon in Strife: Student Preludes to the Civil War* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1977); Ra'uf Said Ghusayni, "Student Activism at Lebanon's Universities, 1951-1971," Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1974.

[736] Lily Badre, "Founders' Day Address," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1974): 8. LAU, RNL.

[737] Rabah, 92.

[738] Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," *MERIP Reports* 19 (August 1973): 3.

[739] *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Beirut College for Women: Changes in Program for 1962-1963*, 8-21, 23. NEST Special Collections.

required to teach in a classroom for a total of sixty hours as part of their degree.[740] Other majors were more theoretical in nature. For instance, students who majored in Religion and Philosophy were encouraged to contemplate the problems of existence that relate to religion: "What is man? What is the purpose of life? What is man's destiny?"[741] The coursework in Religion for this joint major was still Christian-centric[742] in order to "deepen the students' appreciation of Biblical answers to man's fate".[743] On the other hand, the purpose of the Philosophy coursework was to teach the students about the "ideas that men of many faiths have contributed."[744] By 1970, however, the BCW would enter the final phase of its mutable existence.

In the winter of 1970, the BCW curriculum was redesigned to a great extent. The justification given for this action was that the College had begun as a "pioneering institution" but in order to maintain its reputation as a pioneer in education, it needed to redefine both its goals and course offerings. The initiative to create a space for women's higher education in a sex-segregated setting no longer carried the same weight in 1970 that it had in 1924, the year that the AJC was founded. Being exclusively a women's college was not considered to be pioneering anymore. The need for change was explained in the alumnae bulletin of December 1970:

> The goal of yesterday which attributed a pioneering characteristic to the College will not be attributed the same characteristic today. For example, the goal and primary goal of yesterday was to provide education for women. Today the College can pioneer in providing specially designed education which will give the institution a distinguished characteristic in comparison with other institutions of higher learning in the area – a distinguished

[740] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1960 Yearbook*, n.p.

[741] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1961 Yearbook*, n.p. LAU, RNL.

[742] *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Beirut College for Women: Changes in Program for 1962-1963*, 28-29.

[743] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1964 Yearbook*, n.p. LAU, RNL.

[744] Ibid.

> characteristic due to the wisdom of this institution in collaborating in the process of social change in the area, and a distinguished position due to the fact that it reshapes bureaucratic trends and attributes into positivism and thus is stepping ahead with the few organizations in the world to lead the needed revolution in the sphere of education.[745]

Keeping up with social change meant that a uniquely distaff education designed for women's domestic needs was no longer pertinent for Lebanese society. The novelty of the Beirut College for Women had diminished and it needed to compete with other universities by refashioning its programs of study, including eventually welcoming men into its student body. The Six Day War had significant repercussions for social, political, and economic life in Lebanon – it would also redefine the nature of higher education for women. The development of the AJC and BCW had spanned colonial, nationalist, and postcolonial eras; it had even survived major political events. The women's college now found itself at another crossroads but would meet a different fate this time.

Virginia Fadil, Assistant Professor of English, served as Chairwoman of the Curriculum Council at the BCW in 1970-1971. To rationalize the new changes implemented into the curricula, Fadil selected various insights from the twentieth century philosopher, Alfred Whitehead. She argued that Whitehead had warned the previous generation that focusing on a certain educational trend for a long period of time would lead to isolation, and that Whitehead's argument was applicable to the BCW's current situation. Fadil implied that the specialized curricula for women at the College had come to have no apparent relation to the real world. Isolating other subjects by focusing on a single domain of study (i.e., home economics) would not

[745] Angelina Helou, "Curriculum Redesign: A Spark in the Revolution," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (December 1970): 4. LAU, RNL.

help educated people understand the world they live in.[746] She agreed with Whitehead's claim that small liberal arts colleges were responsible for educational revolutions, and that a university should be locally, nationally, and universally relevant in order to maintain its significance to the daily life of its students. Fadil implicitly suggested that the BCW's curriculum was not pertinent any longer.[747]

The Curriculum Council had determined that the needs of students in both the Middle East and the world as a whole had changed substantially from prior decades. Therefore, some majors such as Home Economics were removed and new majors such as Computer Science and Human Development were introduced. Interdisciplinary majors were created in order "to fulfill the need to relate separate areas of knowledge for greater understanding."[748] For all the aforementioned reasons, the metamorphosis of the BCW was crucial, the Council argued. The Curriculum Council additionally decided that the academic year needed to be redesigned. Instead of two semesters, the academic year would consist of two twelve-week terms and two three-week terms. This new system would be implemented during the 1972-1973 academic year. The three-week terms would include one class and an internship program where students would have the opportunity to "relate their major to life around them."[749] This was one attempt by the BCW to pioneer by making its curriculum more practical.

[746] Virginia Fadil, "The Philosophy of Curriculum Redesign at BCW," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (August 1971): 4. LAU, RNL.

[747] Ibid., 5.

[748] Ibid., 6.

[749] Ibid., 7.

The first blow to the women's college came in 1969 when the BCW opened a co-educational community college.[750] This was the beginning of the end of the Beirut College for Women – its defeat was underway and would be complete four years later. The faculty's rationale for the new community college was that there was simply a need for community colleges to exist in Lebanon and the rest of the world.[751] Courses offered at the BCW community college could lead to an Associate's degree, or could be taken as electives for general education. Men comprised a quarter of the students at the community college by 1970.[752]

In 1970, the Beirut College for Women condensed itself into only four divisions: the Division of Education, the Division of Social Studies, the Division of Languages and Literature, and the Division of Natural and Allied Sciences. Some of the courses offered in 1970 included Arabic, Advertising, Fashion, Business Management, Radio, Television, Economics, Interior Design, Ceramics, and Library Science. With the exception of Arabic, these courses were offered through the Division of Social Studies. During the 1970-1971 academic year, the Division of Natural and Allied Sciences had six areas of study: Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, Computer Science, and, curiously, "Home Science",[753] a field primarily comprised of Nutrition courses.

Alumna Zahia Kaddoura[754] (class of 1938) weighed in on the new presence of men on campus in 1972. Kaddoura acknowledged that the BCW had played an

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[750] *Beirut University College General Information Catalogue 1974-75*, 2. LAU, RNL.

[751] "To Keep Pace With Progress BCW Opens Community College on Educational Lines," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Spring 1970): 16. LAU, RNL.

[752] Nassar, *A Dream, a Vision, a Reality*, 67.

[753] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1971 Yearbook*, n.p. LAU, RNL.

[754] For more information on Zahia Kaddoura, see the *Zahia Kaddoura Collection 1944-2014*, a bound volume, in the AUB Jafet Library's Special Collections.

enormous role in uplifting Lebanese women and helping them become leaders in their communities. She expressed hope that the BCW would continue to play this role, because there was an expectation that college-educated women would participate "in all fields of life that concern our modern awakening."[755] Yet Kaddoura understood that the time was nigh for her alma mater "to play a more serious role, and carry a larger responsibility in these hard and decisive days."[756] The women's college had been in a moribund state since the late 1960s. It was no longer considered a necessity to educate women only, and the local political and economic situations engendered feelings of uncertainty regarding the future.

In January 1973 the Beirut College for Women was officially dead – it was now known as Beirut University College.[757] President William Schecter[758] explained that the new name was intended to clarify that the institution was a university and not a French *collège*, which would connote a secondary level of education. Schecter's transformation of the curricula can be interpreted as a continuation of Salwa Nassar's vision for the College. He contended that the new name did not "indicate a lessening of our concern for women's education at the Bachelor's degree level." [759]

In fact, the creation of a women's institute at BUC had been proposed and was under consideration. A women's institute would ostensibly function in helping Arab

[755] "Dr. Zahia Kaddoura Speaks on Founders' Day," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (January 1972): 5. LAU, RNL.

[756] Ibid.

[757] William H. Schecter, "Towards an International Culture," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Spring 1973): 5. LAU, RNL.

[758] William Schecter, an American, was instrumental in the transformation of the BCW into BUC. He was President of the College from 1969-1973. "Farewell to Former BCW President William H. Schecter," January 23, 2006. https://www.lau.edu.lb/news-events/news/archive/farewell_to_former_bcw_preside/ [last accessed February 16, 2019].

[759] William H. Schecter, "Towards an International Culture," 5.

women find equality and freedom. The proposed institute would include a library collection on women's studies, research on Arab women, programs to help strengthen the status of women, seminars in women's studies, lectures, discussion groups, and initiatives that would involve women in the administration of BUC.[760] In November 1973, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) opened on the BUC campus[761] with the help of $80,000 from the Ford Foundation.[762] The objectives of the IWSAW were many: to study the roles of Arab women and consider ways to increase and improve their roles, examine the socialization patterns of Arab children and discover new approaches, and to bring awareness to the general public on the changing roles of women and their effects on family and society. In 1976, the Institute created *Al-Raida* ("The [female] Pioneer"), an English-language periodical that is still being published today.[763]

Although the Beirut University College replaced the Beirut College for Women, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World partially reincarnated the BCW by ensuring that women would always have a special place on campus regardless of its many name changes, program overhauls, and inclusion of men into the student body. The IWSAW is still active today, and had been operating under the same name until recently. As of January 2019, it is known as the Arab Institute for Women.[764]

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[760] Ibid., 7.

[761] Rose Ghorayeb, "Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World," *Beirut University College Alumni Bulletin* (Spring 1978): 6. LAU, RNL.

[762] Nassar, *A Dream, a Vision, a Reality*, 69.

[763] http://www.alraidajournal.com/index.php/ALRJ [last accessed February 16, 2019].

[764] http://iwsaw.lau.edu.lb/ [last accessed February 3, 2019].

Some readers may interpret the change from the BCW to BUC as a mere transition; I understand this transformation as the downfall of a women's college. A college that was exclusively for women could no longer justify its existence. Joan Leavitt, a former faculty member from 1962 to 1982, underscored in an interview that the Beirut College for Women "wanted to become the Wellesley of the Middle East", and that this phrase was regularly articulated by many of her colleagues.[765] Leavitt, reflecting on what happened to her former place of employment, bemoaned the transformation into a coeducational institution: "It was a place where women had a voice,"[766] she wistfully sighed. During the final days of the BCW, Leavitt had suspected that as soon men were allowed in, "women students wouldn't run things anymore."[767] Leavitt confirmed that this is indeed what happened once men joined the student body, albeit not right away.[768]

Other changes during this period included the nature of the relationship between the College and the Presbyterian Church in the USA. In 1959, the United Presbyterian Church USA Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations decided to halt its "legal relationship" with the BCW as part of a wider decision to do the same with its universities in the United States.[769] It was decided that the Beirut College for Women would be "church-related" rather than church-operated.[770] The management of the College was handed over to the National Evangelical Synod of

[765] Joan Leavitt, interview with the author, Beirut, November 28, 2018.

[766] Ibid.

[767] Ibid.

[768] Ibid.

[769] Nassar, *A Vision, a Dream, a Reality*, 71.

[770] Ibid.

Syria and Lebanon.[771] The Board of Trustees would "continue their concern for and contribution to the program of the College."[772] It is unclear if this remained the primary source of the institution's funding. These changes would have had no visible effect on the transformation of the BCW into a co-educational college.

In 1974, Albert Badre, a prominent Lebanese economist and former AUB faculty member, became the new President of Beirut University College. Badre claimed that his presidency was plagued by two considerable problems facing BUC: identity and finances. Regarding BUC's identity, it was no longer a college for women. Instead it was *primarily* a college for women because its curricula were designed to fit the needs of female students, claimed Badre. The female students overwhelmingly outnumbered male students in 1974, and on-campus housing was only available to women.[773] Male students were initially only admitted into five majors: Computer-Mathematics, Communications (Radio-Television), Fine Arts, International Affairs, and Social Work. President Badre stressed that this decision was intended to provide highly qualified young men the opportunity to matriculate in courses of study that were not available at other educational institutions in Lebanon. It is striking that social work - once a hallmark of women's higher education at the College - had become available to men. This is possibly due to the civic involvement of students in the Palestinian cause, which significantly impacted the social and political climate during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Additionally, BUC needed to complement AUB's programs in order to survive.

[771] *Beirut College for Women Bulletin 1965-1966*, 5-6. LAU, RNL.

[772] Sabri, *Pioneerng Profiles*, 27.

[773] "Dr. Badre Shares Hopes, Problems of BUC," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1974-75): 19. LAU, RNL.

In 1974, BUC downgraded some of its majors to minors or elective courses because they were "unpopular", according to the memoir of Riyad Nassar, former Dean and President of the College.[774] These included History, Sociology, and Arabic. BUC focused on bolstering "applied programs" and majors such as Mass Communications, International Affairs, Computer Science, Social Work, Preschool Education, and Business. Nassar claimed that these changes resulted in an increase in the number of students per course as well as an increase in overall enrollment.[775] He contended that such alterations and revisions to the curricula aimed to "make these programs more career-oriented and thus more relevant to the future needs of the country."[776] It seems that Nassar would have agreed with Virginia Fadil, that home economics had come to have no apparent relation to the real world. He also appeared to endorse the idea that college diplomas should have cash value.

The new co-educational College soon faced another crisis: a drastic drop in enrollment. There were 1050 students enrolled at BUC during the 1974-1975 academic year. This number dropped to 397 students in 1975-1976, most likely due to the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War. Low enrollment also affected faculty and staff, as there were fewer funds available to draw their income from. Beirut University College implemented a financial policy that reduced expenses down by one-third by cutting out social events and stopping the purchase of school supplies and textbooks. President Badre's plan to guarantee the survival of BUC was to ensure that it was not competing with AUB. Rather, Beirut University College would offer

[774] Riyad Nassar began teaching at the BCW in 1965 as an Assistant Professor of Chemistry. He became the Dean of the BCW in 1971 and the President of BUC in 1982. This is recounted in more detail in his memoir: *A Vision, a Dream, a Reality*.

[775] Riyad Nassar, *A Vision, a Dream, a Reality*, 78.

[776] Ibid.

programs and majors that it considered to be in high demand from the community, such as Business, Communications, Fine Arts, International Affairs, Human Development, Computer Science, Teaching Science, and foreign languages.[777] Had BUC not done this, it may not have survived such a politically and economically turbulent era.

The transformation of the Beirut College for Women into the coeducational Beirut University College was not an isolated incident, but was part of a common pattern in both the Middle East and the West. The BCW officially stopped operating as a women's college in January 1973, approximately around the same time as other women's colleges in the Middle East, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In the Middle East, the American College for Girls in Constantinople merged with Robert College (a men's institution) in 1971 to become the University of the Bosporus.[778] Other Middle Eastern countries, such as Egypt, had fully opened their universities to women during the previous decade. Cairo University admitted women to all faculties by 1953, and Al-Azhar allowed women to enroll in 1962.[779]

From the period 1969-1974, the majority of elite American and British universities became coeducational.[780] In the United States, Vassar officially became coeducational in 1969.[781] In the United Kingdom, women were admitted to

[777] "Alumnae Association Meets," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1977-78): 21. LAU, RNL.

[778] John Freely, *A History of Robert College, the American College for Girls, and Bogazici Universiy (Bosphorus University)*, volume 2 (Istanbul: YKY, 2000), 12.

[779] Donald Malcolm Reid, *Cairo University and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 104. This move was largely the work of the Egyptian President at the time, Gamal Abdel Nasser.

[780] Nancy Weiss Malkiel, "'Keep the Damned Women Out': The Struggle for Coeducation in the Ivy League, the Seven Sisters, Oxford, and Cambridge," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 16, no. 1 (March 2017): 31.

[781] Carol Ann Radle, "Vassar College and the 1944 Servicemen's Readjustment Act: The Impact of the GI Bill on Women College Students," Ph.D. diss., Marywood University, 2008, 1.

Cambridge in 1972 and Oxford in 1974.[782] These decisions came about as a result of the various elite universities' desires to attract first-rate applicants, as they had been losing potential students to rival institutions. Therefore, the move to coeducation in the U.S. and U.K. was not the outcome of a sustained campaign for women's educational rights, but the consequence of the self-interest of male university administrators.[783] Akin to circumstances that impacted the BCW's change, it was no coincidence that the shift to coeducation in America and Britain happened during the late 1960s and early 1970s, in the context of the civil rights movement, antiwar movements, student movements, the women's movement, and the democratization of higher education.

E. Home Economics Education

The most dramatic and significant change at the Beirut College for Women during the 1960s was the gradual decline of the centrality of home economics, both in the academic curriculum and in the discourse among students and faculty. An interest in the field of education progressively took the coveted place of home economics. In 1965 only two Lebanese students majored in Home Economics, which had become a much more popular major amongst Jordanian and Bahraini students. Education was the most popular major for Lebanese graduates that year. One third of the graduating class obtained the teaching diploma in 1965 that would allow them to teach in elementary and secondary schools. These students had completed their majors in one field of teaching specialization, such as History, English, Home Economics, or

[782] Malkiel, 34.

[783] Ibid., 31-37.

Science.[784] Lebanese Home Economics majors in 1965 were outnumbered by Psychology, Sociology, Fine Arts, History, and English majors.[785] Among Lebanese graduates in 1966, an equal number majored in Home Economics and Education. The Home Economics major remained more popular among other Arab students, such as Jordanians, Bahrainis, and Kuwaitis, than it was amongst Lebanese women.[786]

Eventually, Education would overtake Home Economics as the most popular major at the BCW. Education's entrance into the limelight was partially caused by empty nests in the homes of women who had preached the virtues of a home economics education in previous decades. A significant number of married women had been matriculating at the BCW. Now that their children had grown up and left the home, many women found that they had much more free time on their hands. As articulated by Hoda Elsadda, "propagating domesticity… prove[d] to be a double-edged sword."[787] The College established a continuing education program for these women, under the pretenses that these potential adult students could sufficiently serve the community as teachers, social workers, librarians, and administrators, and that they were a "valuable source of woman power."[788] Extension courses in Ceramics and Library Science for teachers, alumnae, and other members of the community were added towards the end of 1968. Ceramics courses were intended as a hobby; Library

[784] Luella L. Loewen, "Teacher Training at BCW," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1966): 5. LAU, RNL.

[785] "1965 Graduates," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1965): 20-21. LAU, RNL.

[786] "1966 Graduates," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1966): 15-17. LAU, RNL.

[787] Hoda Elsadda, "Gendered Citizenship: Discourses on Domesticity in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Hawwa* 4, no. 1 (2006): 11-12.

[788] Salwa Nassar, "Inauguration Address," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Spring 1966): 10. LAU, RNL.

Science classes included practical work that could equip women with marketable skills to work in elementary school libraries.[789] Women were certainly in need of marketable skills after October 1966, when the Lebanese Intra Bank became insolvent and submerged the economy "into one of its most serious crises since independence and signaling the drying up of the prosperity the country had enjoyed during the previous two decades."[790] This catastrophic crash caused twenty other Lebanese banks to lose capital as well.[791] The remunerative value of a college diploma was becoming increasingly appealing.

Women who had embraced the scientific training required for professional housewifery and motherhood in previous generations had now found themselves with empty nests, and were in dire need of new hobbies and interests. One alumna, Guzine Rasheed, warned that women who elected to be professional homemakers would retire significantly earlier than men and women with careers. The typical age of retirement for remunerative labor was between sixty and sixty-five years old. A professional wife and mother would be forced to retire in her late thirties or early forties, and if her children had been sent to boarding school, then she might even be forced to retire in her twenties.[792] These early retirees would struggle with boredom and depression, according to Rasheed, regardless of the husband's presence. It appears that Rasheed did not believe that the husband needed to be taken care of by his wife.

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[789] "BCW Plans Two Extention [sic] Courses for the Second Sem.," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1968): 19. LAU, RNL.

[790] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 149.

[791] Ibid., 150.

[792] Guzine A.K. Rasheed, "Preparing for the Empty Nest Period," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (December 1970): 5. LAU, RNL.

What did Guzine Rasheed mean by retirement? Childcare was a woman's profession regardless of the fact that it was unpaid labor, but childcare could not be a *lifelong* career since children would eventually grow up and move out of their parents' home. Rasheed proposed a solution for women in this situation – they could participate in the upbringing of their grandchildren. She insisted that other women could enroll in classes and earn diplomas and degrees, adding: "nowadays the sight of a middle-aged person in the lecture room on campus of colleges is a natural thing."[793] Finally, there were always social service associations to keep women with empty nests occupied. Rasheed suggested that it would be best for women to plan early how they would spend their empty nest time. While professional homemaking was an honorable career, its short duration mandated the cultivation of other hobbies, pastimes, and interests. These new pursuits and distractions would guarantee that a woman "will have a fuller life, her husband will have an interesting companion and her children will feel happier when they know that their mother has other interests and will not cling to them."[794] Bourgeois domestic life had been politicized and interrogated at the academic level in the 1940s and 1950s; this new, abrupt rupture rendered certain concepts of the home and family relics of a bygone era.

The most remarkable aspect of the decline of home economics education and the prominence of domesticity on campus was that this phenomenon was concurrent with the Six Day War of 1967 and the following events leading up to the outbreak of civil war in 1975. Economic, political, and social turmoil contributed to the disappearance of home economics education by creating new realities where the cash value of a college diploma would take priority over domestic training. The notions of

[793] Rasheed, "Preparing for the Empty Nest Period," 6.

[794] Ibid.

womanhood that were negotiated and performed at the BCW in the early 1970s were dramatically different from those of the 1940s and 1950s. There was no place left in Lebanon for a home economics education, and eventually, there would be no place for a women's college.

As a result of these new sociopolitical realities, Home Economics was no longer offered as a major in 1970. Instead, it was incorporated into the Department of Natural and Allied Sciences, under the name Home Science.[795] This new development would be short-lived. Home Science was offered as a major during the 1971-1972 academic year, and a degree in Home Science Education was offered as a Normal Diploma.[796] Home Science Education became available at the Bachelor's level during the 1974-1975 academic year.[797] The classes that fell under the umbrella of Home Science were mainly in nutrition, although there were a couple of courses related to clothing and fabrics.[798] By the autumn of 1975 all traces of Home Science were removed from the BUC curriculum,[799] the same year that the Lebanese Civil War broke out.

Furthermore, the former Home Management apartment, once the pride of the College, had been transformed into the Office of Student Affairs.[800] Even the Home

[795] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1971 Yearbook*, n.p.

[796] *Beirut College for Women Academic Program 1971-1972*, 10. LAU, RNL.

[797] *Beirut University College General Information Catalogue 1974-75*, 75. LAU, RNL.

[798] Ibid.

[799] *Beirut University College: General Information Catalog 1975-76*. LAU, RNL.

[800] Wafa Sartan Khallouf, "BUC Student Government," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1974): 8. LAU, RNL.

Economics Club had vanished by 1971.[801] Riyad Nassar, former Dean and President, explained the change thus:

> As women became more aware of national issues, they became more career-oriented and started shifting from the traditional liberal arts majors to the more applied fields. They became a stronger factor in the development and change of their societies, not only through their influence on the new generations at home, but also in their increasing participation in the political and professional life of the nation.[802]

A student who had studied at the BCW in the 1950s would not have recognized the College's catalogues and bulletins in the 1970s. The alumnae bulletins only published one article about the home in the early 1970s, and it was merely about decorating the home rather than the fundamental importance of the home to the nation's progress, a drastic departure from an earlier epoch.[803] The rise and fall of the home at the College corresponded with political and economic developments in Lebanon – by the time the home declined, the independent state had taken shape, Beirut had emerged as the Paris of the East, and the nation had begun its collapse into civil war. The home could no longer anchor a prosperous society. Even though the BCW had perished, the alumnae bulletins of BUC still included advice on child rearing, a subject that would always be germane to women. A variety of articles addressed subjects such as giving children an allowance,[804] teaching children how to make arts and crafts,[805] preparing them for pre-school,[806] and how to deal with temper tantrums.[807]

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[801] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1971 Yearbook*, n.p.

[802] Nassar, *A Dream, a Vision, a Reality*, 59.

[803] Magdalene Katul Mroueh, "A House Can Become Your Home," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (September 1972): 14. LAU, RNL.

[804] "Pocket Money for Children," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Spring 1973): 11. LAU, RNL.

[805] Dalal Asfour Sawaya, "Crafts for Children," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Spring 1973): 16. LAU, RNL.

Why did home economics education – one of the most distinctive features of the Beirut College for Women in the 1940s, 1950s, and even up until the early 1960s – suddenly cease to exist? Home economics still channeled the "home." And despite having "economics" as part of its name, it was not economically useful – a degree in home economics did not generate financial resources. Nor did it prove to be capable of curing society of its ills, such as wars and conflicts. By the late 1960s, disastrous economic and political circumstances rendered this subject obsolete. This was not solely the case in Lebanon, but in the United States as well, where home economics departments in various universities began to shut down amidst the turmoil of the 1960s. For instance, the Department of Home Economics at the University of California at Berkeley ceased operating in 1962 and was reborn as the Department of Nutritional Science. Cornell University's College of Home Economics was reshuffled to become the College of Human Ecology in 1969. These departments seemed to be "prone to termination in times of crisis"[808] and repackaged into new departments that purposely excluded the word "home" from their new names to clarify to prospective applicants that these were not uniquely distaff fields of study.

F. Social Service

In the first half of the 1960s, coursework in social service continued to expand. The Social Studies major combined the fields of Psychology, Sociology, and

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[806] "Preparing Pre-Schoolers for School," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Summer 1973): 13. LAU, RNL.

[807] Wafa Sartan Khallouf, "Temper Tantrums," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1973): 17. LAU, RNL.

[808] Maresi Nerad, "Gender Stratification in Higher Education: The Department of Home Economics at the University of California, Berkeley 1916-1962," *Women's Studies International Forum* 10, no. 2 (1987): 157.

Social Work.[809] Students selected one of these subjects as their specialty within the major, which aimed to train women to "work creatively" on social issues through both classwork and fieldwork.[810] In 1961, the department integrated "pre-professional" Social Work training into its curricula and added other areas of specialization to the major such as Economics, Psychology, and Sociology.[811] By 1963 students were visiting social work agencies as part of their education.[812]

The Social Service Cabinet was an extracurricular club that carried out various social service projects and organized social events on campus whose proceeds would go to charity, such as the annual Christmas and Easter parties. During the 1963-1964 academic year, the Social Service Cabinet hosted Christmas parties to generate funds for two orphanages.[813] The club additionally started a campaign to install wastebaskets on Hamra Street, a major street in Beirut that was a couple of blocks away from the College.[814] The chairwoman of the Social Service Cabinet automatically became a member of the Student Council and helped organize social service events on campus, such as "Children's Welfare Day."[815]

The Neighborhood House, a classic feature of the Beirut College for Women, had managed to survive into the 1960s. The Neighborhood House became a training center for Social Work majors in the 1960s and aimed to prevent juvenile delinquency

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[809] *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Beirut College for Women: Changes in Program for 1962-1963*, 21.

[810] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1961 Yearbook*, n.p.

[811] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1960 Yearbook*, n.p.,

[812] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1963 Yearbook*, n.p. LAU, RNL.

[813] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1964 Yearbook*, n.p. LAU, RNL.

[814] Ibid.

[815] Ibid.

in Beirut. It also allowed the elite young women of the BCW to interact with families that they would likely never encounter in their lives outside of the College. By the 1960s, morning and afternoon classes were offered at the Neighborhood House for Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian children from low-income families between the ages of four and ten in Arabic, English, French, Arithmetic, and Social Studies.[816] Ninety percent of children's families lived in one-room houses, and the children typically worked to supplement the family income.[817] Most of the children's fathers were employed as porters or construction workers while most of the mothers worked as cleaning women. The students taught working class mothers and their children about health and hygiene,[818] similar to the summertime social service projects carried out by the College. The work of the Neighborhood House was primarily financed by College events such as the annual carnival and Christmas celebrations.[819]

The students who worked at the Neighborhood House in the 1960s were either volunteers or Social Work majors. They entertained the children with drama, arts and crafts, games, and folk dancing. A nurse instructed the mothers in important healthcare topics such as immunization and care of teeth.[820] All children were entitled to a free medical examination at the beginning of the school year, including smallpox and polio vaccinations. Special services were given to families who had medical and health issues, problems finding work, or trouble paying school fees.[821]

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[816] Aida G. Khoury, "The Neighborhood House – A Shelter Against Delinquency," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Spring 1966): 13. LAU, RNL.

[817] Ibid.

[818] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1961 Yearbook*, n.p.

[819] Ibid.

[820] Khoury, "The Neighborhood House," 15.

[821] Ibid.

However, the Neighborhood House would not survive into the 1970s; it disappeared for the same reasons that the Home Management House had. Riyad Nassar explained that:

> Social service was certainly a unique activity of the College from its early years onward, but unfortunately, student interest in such activities started to diminish, and by the early seventies the Neighborhood House project was discontinued as students became increasingly politically and career-oriented.[822]

Evidently, the Neighborhood House no longer had any relevance to the students. Nassar recalled that up until 1967, young women at the BCW were more likely to major in the liberal arts because they were more concerned with "social and cultural activities and family life than in professional careers or politics."[823] The Social Work major was removed from the curriculum in spring 1970, the same time as the Home Economics major, but could be studied as a component of the B.A. in Sociology degree.[824] It was reintroduced in 1974 and was open to male students when the College became coeducational.[825]

G. Extracurricular Activities

The nature of the extracurricular activities at the College significantly differed before and after the Six Day War of June 1967. Prior to June 1967, the student clubs were the same as those discussed in previous chapters, and students continued to participate in a wide range of activities. For instance, the International Relations Club

[822] Nassar, *A Dream, a Vision, a Reality*, 50.

[823] Ibid., 59.

[824] "BCW Distinguishes Itself With Model Administration," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Spring 1970): 7. LAU, RNL.

[825] "Dr. Badre Shares Hopes, Problems of BUC," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Winter 1974-75): 19. LAU, RNL. Social Work is still offered as a major today; see http://sas.lau.edu.lb/social-sciences/programs/ba-social-work.php [last accessed February 17, 2019]

sponsored a debate during the 1961-1962 academic year on "Capitalism versus Socialism."[826] The BCW team defended capitalism and debated students from AUB who argued for the merits of socialism. According to the yearbook of 1962, the BCW students won the debate.[827] During the 1963-1964 academic year, students acted in various stage productions. These included *Antigone*, a Greek tragedy by Sophocles; *The Mikado*, a comedic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan; and *The Glass Menagerie*, a tragedy by Tennessee Williams.[828] But immediately after June 1967, most students had one main priority: the Palestinian Revolution. Some non-political events would still be organized, but the question of Palestine quickly became all-consuming.

For example, in 1968, the BCW Student Council initiated a "Program of Constructive Action" to help the Palestinian guerrilla fighters and their kin. Apparently, this program was organized "with the full cooperation of the BCW administration, staff, faculty and students",[829] according to the AUB student newspaper. The Student Council's plan to help the Palestinians consisted of financial donations, leisure activities for the children of the fighters, blood drives, sewing clothes, and having BCW students skip lunch once a week to use the money that they would have spent on a meal to purchase canned food for the Palestinian fighters instead.[830]

The nature of the Student Council changed in the fall semester of 1970, when its responsibilities expanded beyond planning social activities. The Student Council

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[826] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1962 Yearbook*, n.p.

[827] Ibid.

[828] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1964 Yearbook*, n.p.

[829] "AUB, BCW Observe Balfour Day," *Outlook*, November 9, 1968. AUB Jafet Library.

[830] Ibid.

became self-governing and was permitted "to formulate and implement their own laws as they see fit and appropriate."[831] A student government was elected, and its President automatically became a member of the College's Executive Council and the Board of Overseers. Riyad Nassar regretted the decision to confer such a significant amount of power on students. According to him, "due to the political disturbances in the country and the Middle East as a whole, students became politicized and political activists were elected to office."[832] Apparently, these activists were more focused on the political events transpiring outside of the College than they were with the matters of the College at hand. This arrangement would not endure beyond the mid-1970s; in 1975 the Lebanese Civil War erupted, and the College decided to dissolve the student government.[833]

In 1970, the Student Council created a new event called Lebanese Independence Week;[834] it decided this event was necessary to "introduce both foreigners and nationals to the past culture and present potentialities of Lebanon."[835] Meanwhile, the International Club managed to be simultaneously traditional and Arab nationalist. It planned traditional College events such as Christmas gatherings and ski trips, while it also organized a debate entitled "The Price of Peace and War in the Palestine Question."[836] The College was now generating career women and leftist radicals instead of home managers.

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[831] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1971 Yearbook*, n.p.

[832] Nassar, *A Dream, a Vision, a Reality*, 69.

[833] Ibid., 71.

[834] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1970 Yearbook*, n.p.

[835] Ibid.

[836] Ibid.

By 1971, the only extracurricular activities that were available were Chorale, Ushers, Business Club, Order Committee, House Council, Social Service Cabinet, Student Council, International Club, Commerce Club, and a few student publications such as the long-running newspapers *College Tribune* and *Durub*.[837] Clubs that had been more distaff in nature, such as the Home Economics Club, Folk Dancing Club, and Gardening Club, had become extinct. The students were no longer interested in becoming perfect homemakers in 1971. This is evidenced by the fact that more and more women were joining the Commerce Club and the Business Club; these clubs took the initiative to push their members into the field by pursuing close relationships among Business majors, alumnae, and people currently employed in this sector.[838] The clubs promoted the idea of women working in traditionally male fields by having a professor deliver a lecture on "Career Possibilities for Women in the Fields of Public Relations and Advertising."[839]

However, a minority of non-political events transpired at the BCW during the 1970-1971 academic year, such as the May Queen Festival and Junior and Senior Ball.[840] In November 1970, the BCW students and residents of the men's dorms at AUB convened for an "acquaintance party" that entailed dancing, "young, excited couples", and "dim lighting".[841] The mixing of the sexes had become increasingly common and less socially scandalous. The faculty even approved of it, given that the acquaintance party was hosted at the BCW. The following year, in November 1971,

[837] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1971 Yearbook*, n.p.

[838] Ibid.

[839] Ibid.

[840] Ibid.

[841] "BCW Turned Into Bubbling Garage," *Outlook*, November 17, 1970. AUB Jafet Library.

BCW women met with men from the AUB Medical Students Society at a nightclub in Beirut called the Réverbère.[842]

The yearbook of 1972 indicates that events as diverse as a fashion show, Fine Arts Week, and Palestinian Week were organized on campus.[843] Palestinian Week was held at the College from May 15 to 21, and was sponsored by the Social Service Committee.[844] The purpose of the weeklong event was to promote Palestinian cultural, musical, and artistic heritage. Funds raised from Palestinian Week supposedly went to "the sponsors of the Martyrs' sons", and the reason that the event was hosted in the first place was "to propagate the Palestinian question" throughout the Beirut College for Women.[845]

H. Political Activism

The Beirut College for Women community mobilized in the aftermath of the 1967 war. "Refugee Week" was held on campus in the spring of 1968 to bring awareness to the plight of Palestinian refugees. Events included a film screening as well as a panel discussion entitled "The Role of Women after the 5th of June."[846] One of the speakers on this panel was alumna Wadad Cortas (class of 1927). The contents of this panel discussion are unknown, but one could speculate that the role of women after the war involved charitable works among displaced populations.

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[842] "MSS and BCW Hold Party," *Outlook*, November 30, 1971. AUB Jafet Library.

[843] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1972 Yearbook*, n.p. LAU, RNL.

[844] Ibid.

[845] Ibid.

[846] "'Refugee Week' at BCW," *Beirut College for Women Alumnae Bulletin* (Spring 1968): 17. LAU, RNL.

Richard Johnson, a former mathematics instructor at the BCW, recounted the reactions of students and faculty at the start of the war: "Everyone poured out of classes and didn't know what to do."[847] Johnson claimed that the Lebanese students went home, and the Jordanian students tried to make their way back to Jordan as quickly as they could. However, many Palestinian students from the West Bank were stuck and "had no place to go."[848] All but two American faculty members departed Lebanon and evacuated with their embassy. Richard Johnson and Edna Sture, a physical education teacher, stayed behind. Even their Lebanese colleagues had encouraged Johnson and Sture to leave, insisting that they would not be able to protect them should the situation deteriorate further. According to Johnson, the students felt abandoned and deserted by their teachers who had fled the campus. Only the administrators continued to come to the BCW that summer. Johnson comforted the students, and in retrospect, was "really glad after the fact" that he had decided to stay in Beirut.[849] After the summer ended and the following academic year began, American faculty were not as trusted by the students, according to Johnson. "And that sort of undercut some of the trust that is necessary for a viable academic institution," argued Johnson.[850]

The primary narrative of student life after the Six Day War of June 1967 was that of political action. The war impacted nearly every aspect of life at the BCW, including religious education and the quotidian chapel attendance. Riyad Nassar noted in his memoir that the young women swayed the faculty into transforming the daily

[847] Richard Johnson, interview with the author, Skype, April 7, 2018.

[848] Ibid.

[849] Ibid.

[850] Ibid.

chapel services into weekly assemblies that would feature lectures, plays, or speeches dealing with social, political, and cultural problems of the day,[851] i.e. the Palestinian issue.

Additionally, strikes and protests were frequently carried out on campus throughout the 1960s and 70s. Immediately after the 1967 war, Faysal Husseini, the son of an influential Palestinian leader, came to Beirut to recruit 400 university students for action.[852] Husseini recruited students from AUB, Université Saint Joseph, the Lebanese University, and the Beirut College for Women.[853] Hasna Reda Mekdashi (class of 1969) was one of the students recruited from the BCW. Mekdashi recounted in an interview that Husseini and the students spent six weeks together in a villa in Kayfoun, a village in Mount Lebanon. The villa served as their "training center."[854] What kind of "training" was carried out in this villa? "Militantly training [sic] and lectures," explained Mekdashi.[855] She also claimed that women constituted one-third of the group. At this point, it would be difficult to imagine women focusing on professional homemaking while they were occupied with becoming militants during the Palestinian Revolution.

The 1968-1969 academic year witnessed much "student unrest" at the Beirut College for Women.[856] Hasna Reda Mekdashi explained that all universities in Lebanon, including the Beirut College for Women, went on strike for two weeks in

[851] Nassar, *A Dream, a Vision, a Reality*, 59.

[852] Hasna Reda Mekdashi, interview with the author, Beirut, October 15, 2018.

[853] Ibid.

[854] Ibid.

[855] Ibid.

[856] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1969 Yearbook*, n.p. LAU, RNL.

January 1969 after Israeli jets hit the Lebanese airport.[857] Mekdashi explained that the students demanded that the BCW start "supporting the Palestinian issues."[858] When asked if there were people on campus who believed that protesting and striking were unladylike activities, Mekdashi proclaimed: "Oh no, no, no. We gave lectures, students from AUB came, we had discussions, women and men. We were as active as they [AUB students] were."[859] In fact, Mekdashi was the ringleader of the BCW strikes, along with five or six of her classmates.[860] She and her co-organizers were all majoring in different fields; Mekdashi was a Political Science major while the other young women were majoring in Psychology, Fine Arts, and Mathematics. Mekdashi remembered that they were influenced by the student revolutions in France and the anti-war protests in the United States. She and her cohort stopped attending their classes and started giving lectures on Palestine, similar to the "teach-ins" that were held in the United States during the war in Vietnam that galvanized student activism.[861]

Further evidence of student activism appears in the BCW yearbook of 1971, which features a page of photographs entitled: "Time out for a strike." An undated photograph has the caption: "Fight the population explosion. Join your local war."[862] Another undated photograph shows students standing and sitting on the stairs of one of the BCW buildings with a caption in Arabic that reads: "And we want to make it a

[857] Hasna Reda Mekdashi, interview with the author.

[858] Ibid.

[859] Ibid.

[860] Ibid.

[861] Ibid.

[862] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1971 Yearbook*, n.p.

democracy. Socialism. Communism. And freedom."[863] Joan Leavitt, a former faculty member, was asked in an interview if she recalled the student activism during this tumultuous period: "Oh, yes! Oh, my God!" she exclaimed upon remembering how intense, organized, and sustained the students' efforts were.[864] Strikes continued the following year. The yearbook of 1972 features a page titled "Student March" that is filled with photographs but lacks text explaining what the students are protesting. One photo shows a woman holding a sign that says "WRITTEN IN BLOOD" in capital letters, while another photo shows women and men holding signs with militaristic images.[865]

Not every strike was necessarily related to the Palestinian upheaval. In 1972, students set up camp in the College's offices for three weeks and destroyed property[866] to protest the dismissal of a faculty member, Thurayya Malhas, Associate Professor of Arabic and an alumna of the institution.[867] The BCW administration building was vandalized in November 1972; the assailants certainly pushed the social boundaries of traditionally distaff behavior that BCW students were once expected to uphold. Furniture and windows were smashed, garbage was dumped all over the floors, and the vandals scribbled explicit messages on the walls.[868] The fact that everything was politicized on the campus post 1967 resulted in open warfare. Strikes occurred again at the BCW at the end of November over "rotten cafeteria food and

[863] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1971 Yearbook*, n.p. Translation mine.

[864] Joan Leavitt, interview with the author.

[865] Beirut College for Women, *Trireme 1972 Yearbook*. Capitalization original.

[866] Nassar, *A Dream, a Vision, a Reality*, 71.

[867] "The BCW Strike: Aftermath," *Outlook*, November 17, 1972. AUB Jafet Library.

[868] "College Vandalism: Whodunnit?," *Outlook*, November 17, 1972. AUB Jafet Library.

poor medical care",[869] according to the AUB student newspaper. Other strikes broke out in 1973 and 1974 where students once again occupied College buildings, this time without causing damage.[870] In March 1974, students occupied buildings on the BUC campus for three weeks[871] after the administration refused to cancel a tuition increase of eight percent.[872] It is unclear if these students were men, women, or both. This type of political activity was certainly unprecedented the days of the women's college prior to 1967 when the notions of womanhood and the goals of women's education were significantly different. Political action amongst women at the College was not unheard of; recall the women who participated in the sympathy strikes for Palestine in 1936 and the protests for Lebanese independence in 1943. Political action after the summer of 1967 differed from these precedents in that it overhauled the goals of women's education by making it more career-oriented, redefined socially acceptable behavior for women, and turned public politics into a domain that welcomed women.

Universities across the globe became important sites of protests in the 1960s and 1970s as students became radicalized and politicized. Most universities in Lebanon eventually got caught up in the country's unstable political situation. For many students throughout Lebanon, "the [Palestinian] guerrillas represented an alternative for national recovery."[873] Through their protests and solidarity with other universities, Lebanese students, including the women of the BCW, demanded a

[869] Zahi Akra, "The B.C.W. Crisis – Mafia Style," *Outlook*, November 17, 1972. AUB Jafet Library.

[870] Nassar, *A Dream, a Vision, a Reality*, 71.

[871] Albert Badre, "President Badre's Message," *Beirut University College Alumnae Bulletin* (Spring-Summer 1974): 2-3. LAU, RNL.

[872] Rabah, *A Campus at War*, 96. Rabah cites the Arabic-language daily newspaper *Annahar* published March 19, 1974.

[873] Ghusayni, "Student Activism at Lebanon's Universities, 1951-1971," 74-75.

reconfiguration of the nation. The 1967 war represented a loss of innocence followed by defiance and resistance. Popular war and uprisings would become the youth's strategy of choice. Their postcolonial nationalism was not about the Lebanese state, it was pro-Arab and pro-Palestine. The channels of politicization were no different for women than they were for men, but women were pushing social boundaries and redefining their educational experiences by carrying out political action.

Ten years after the Six Day War, there were hardly any remnants of the women's college left at BUC. During the 1977-1978 academic year, the most popular major at BUC was Business. There were 276 students in the Business major, with approximately equal numbers of men and women.[874] No other major had nearly as many students registered. Interestingly, the Political Science major had twenty-five students, all women. By this time, the days of the American Junior College for Women and the Beirut College for Women had long been forgotten.

I. Conclusion

The cultural icons of homemaking and motherhood that had been a factor in the creation of the College and distinguished its educational programs abruptly became irrelevant in the aftermath of Salwa Nassar's presidency, changes in social behavior between the sexes, the Intra Bank crash, and, most of all, the Arab-Israeli Six Day War. The war brought about an abrupt end of innocence that accelerated the transformation of the institution into one that would offer more career-oriented programs of study. Additionally, older generations of women came to realize that home economics as a career was not sustainable in the long run. Home economists had regarded the home as a source of social change, but encountered a rude

[874] Beirut University College, *Trireme 1978 Yearbook*, n.p. LAU, RNL.

awakening in the summer of 1967. The conflicting messages of careers and domesticity disappeared immediately after the war, as the Palestinian Revolution penetrated all aspects of life in Lebanon, including higher education for women. The Beirut College for Women would be forever redefined after 1967. Domestic space once figured prominently at this institution; by 1970, the coursework and extracurricular activities at the BCW no longer prepared students for a domesticated future. The BCW adapted to its local environment, meeting women's needs to fulfill the demands of Lebanese society, until the political economy of the region destabilized the enrollment base and the *raisons d'être* of the College. In response, the Beirut College for Women revised its curricula, chose high-profile presidents, acquired new technology, ceased operating as a small liberal arts college, and allowed men into the student body. Although the women's college became extinct, the fact that the new curriculum at BUC became pre-professional meant that the institution was pioneering once more.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: THE RISE AND FALL OF A WOMEN'S COLLEGE

This dissertation has traced the rise and fall of a unique institution that played a fundamental role in Lebanese women's history. For forty-nine years (1924-1973), there existed only one women's college in Lebanon; never would another one be created. The American Junior College for Women was established in 1924 as a two-year institution offering an Associate's degree. In 1949 it became the Beirut College for Women, a four-year institution offering a Bachelor's degree. It became coeducational in 1973 with the advent of BUC and the downfall of the women's college. It also grappled with an identity crisis—it was at once American, Christian, Lebanese, and female. Founded by American Presbyterian missionaries who had a history of establishing girls' schools, the AJC and BCW attracted elite women from all over Lebanon and the Middle East who formed a multiethnic and multireligious student body. It was best known for its programs of study in two distinct fields: home economics and social service. This project has focused on the Lebanese women that studied at this institution, who comprised the majority of the students. It is highly unlikely that Lebanese women would have advanced without the creation of this College – many would not have never received a higher education elsewhere as there were no other women's colleges in the country and social attitudes viewed coeducation negatively.

The AJC and BCW represented something that was at once progressive and traditional – young women were simultaneously advanced and constrained at this institution. They were advanced through highly differentiated coursework that

encompassed a multitude of subjects, including those considered typically male. The College constrained the women by modernizing them through the frameworks of domesticity and social service, which restricted women to their traditional roles. Even if women pursued careers, they were still expected to prioritize domesticity and social service. This was unique to their class background – these bourgeois norms were not applicable to other segments of society.

The College evolved and adapted to the needs of Lebanese society as far as women were concerned, reaching its zenith in the 1950s and early 1960s via the glorification of home economics education, until its eventual decline into a coeducational institution in 1973. The opening of its doors to men signified that educating women only in a sex-segregated setting was no longer important. The BCW was profoundly impacted by the Arab-Israeli Six Day War of 1967, which redefined the objectives and purposes of higher education for women. The sudden disenchantment with domesticity was a result of changing political and economic circumstances in the region that necessitated equipping women with knowledge and skills outside of the family domicile. Additionally, women grew restless once their children left the home and discovered that they needed to find other productive uses of their time and abilities.

Even though the popularity of home economics education gradually dissolved among Lebanese women and eventually disappeared altogether, their conceptions of women's centrality to the home and family endured. This dissertation has shown how narratives of women's advancement can simultaneously resist and reinforce patriarchal practices. All throughout the College's history one can find women declaring that their fundamental roles were motherhood and wifehood, regardless of how much success they found in their careers or how much education they obtained.

Women who never married and had children also embraced this discourse, or at least paid lip service to it. The education at the College created complex identity narratives of educated, internationalized Lebanese women who pursued marriage, family, social service, and careers. Furthermore, the pedagogy the women received at this institution played a significant role in the trajectories of their lives, molded their interpretation of women's liberation, and shaped their gender and national identities. The College served as a catalyst for Lebanese women's social, political, economic, and cultural advancement.

Many of the alumnae became active in the Lebanese women's movement, marched and organized for Lebanese independence from the French Mandate, founded schools and charitable societies, and became professional career women. The College regularly supplied Lebanese society with female pioneers who were active participants in the shaping of new discourses on women. The students contemplated and debated women's conditions, in a setting that served as a site for feminist theoretical conversations. Studying the AJC and BCW has been informative in terms of understanding the constraints that these women had to deal with and the strategies they employed to either overcome these limitations or uphold the "patriarchal bargain". This was particularly the case from the 1950s until the mid-1960s, and is clearly demonstrated in student thesis projects written on various subjects such as courtship, marriage, generational differences, balancing home and work duties, and social problems. The College helped the practices and concepts related to women to evolve and expand while consistently providing Lebanon with pioneers who broke barriers and achieved milestones for women. The AJC and BCW women emerged as a transformative force in society.

Regardless of the fact that the students received an American education, they cultivated and developed an indigenous feminism that was more culturally appropriate for their context. Their feminism aligns with what Elizabeth Fernea labels as "family feminism" rather than individual feminism: "This is feminism based on the family group itself, with women seeking not to leave or destroy the group *per se*, but to equalize their own roles as wives and mothers and sisters within that group."[875] Fernea's point is best exemplified in the alumnae's views on what kind of liberation was befitting for Lebanese women. This was one of the most commonly articulated themes amongst the College graduates. Many women who were educated at the AJC and BCW did not find the freedoms existing in Western societies desirable, practical, or appropriate.

This observation on conceptions of freedom was even made by American visitors to the College. One American student, Phoebe Frew, spent her junior year of university abroad at the Beirut College for Women in 1958-1959. Upon her return to the U.S., she announced to her local newspaper that there was no disagreement amongst Arabs that women belong at home: "'Arabs think the western woman has gone too far in seeking independence, and frown on the idea of a mother leaving the children at home to go to work.'"[876] Frew clarified that Middle Eastern women were in favor of higher education and removing the Islamic veil, but that they still positioned women in the framework of the home. Similar comments were made in 1959 by the Dean of the College, an American woman named Helen Moreland. In an interview with *The Oakland Tribune* during her summer vacation, she explicated that

[875] Elizabeth Fernea, "Family Feminism or Individual Feminism? Different Histories, Different Paths to Gender Equity," *Hawwa* 1, no. 2 (2003): 131. Italics original.

[876] Joan Harrison, "Phoebe Frew Makes Study of Arab Attitudes: Mideast's Women Belong in Home, Student Finds," *The Marion Star* (Marion, Ohio), September 14, 1959.

her students in Beirut "'don't want as much freedom as American girls have… because they don't think it is good for their kind of culture, nor do they think it conducive to a stable family relationship.'"[877]

Throughout the College's existence, all women needed to be remade. Middle and upper class women needed to be molded into professional home managers, village and rural women needed to be modernized, and young girls needed to be educated. Eventually, remaking women lost its urgency, and equipping both men and women with practical and marketable skills became more pressing and relevant after the Six Day War of 1967. The home was no longer the most prominent icon of the social order, and studying home economics could no longer fix society's problems.

[877] Robin Orr, "Beirut College Girls: They Face East and West in an Uneasy World," *Oakland Tribune* (Oakland, California), August 1, 1958.

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