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view

Jihad Makhoul  
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**DEVELOPMENT FROM BELOW:**

**An exploratory study of the concept and process of development  
from lay people's point of view**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

from

**UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG**

by

**Jihad Makhoul, BS, MPH.**

**Graduate School of Public Health**

**1999**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Jihad Makhoul

## Abstract

This thesis introduces a new perspective on development in Lebanon, that of lay people in rural communities. Lay views have been missing from development literature and practice around the world. Development projects which emphasise economic development and infrastructure are often described by development professionals in terms of their achievements and tangible benefits. However, concerned researchers are dissatisfied with the outcomes of many development projects and their effects on people and their environments. The perspectives of the recipients of development projects is the topic of this research.

In Lebanon, funds for development projects during and after the recent war (1975-90) have stressed economic development and infrastructure. The governmental and non-governmental agencies carrying out these programs are driven by donor accountability and the need to apply for further funding. As a result, they have tended to overlook longer term social needs. A significant omission in official development reports are the views of project beneficiaries. It is this omission that this thesis seeks to remedy.

The study provides an ethnographic account of people's viewpoints on development in two typical rural villages in Lebanon. They are situated in Akkar which has received much development assistance over the past two decades. The ethnographic approach, similar to that used in anthropology, was used for its ability to uncover in-depth information using multi-methods of data collection. The thesis presents a detailed description of the layout and social organisation of the two villages. In many respects, these do not differ significantly from descriptions in the earlier literature which dates from the 19th century, although outside contacts, for employment, education and political activity are now more frequent.

Villagers were asked about their views of development, what they valued about their village and their experience of development projects. Their views were found to reflect their gender and position in the village hierarchy. The male leaders, who see themselves as initiators of development projects and use them to further their political ambitions, hold similar views to development professionals and use the same vocabulary. Other, less powerful men and the women hold different views, use different vocabulary and tend to talk more about the ill-effects of projects. The religious leaders espouse an

Islamic viewpoint which is similar in some ways to that of the women but their activities mirror those of the other male leaders.

No development project which has been undertaken in either village could be considered to have been successful. A detailed investigation of a water project in one of the villages shows why this is so. Lack of success has to do with factors internal to the village, as well as the project approach favoured by development agencies.

The findings indicate that there are gaps in development practice at both a state and development agency levels. Complex village social relationships, particularly internal and external power relationships, affect development projects and outcomes. These favour involvement of key male figures in development initiatives rather than all the community. Such issues point to the need for training in gender awareness and participatory approaches for the professionals as well as the need for equitable resource distribution at a country level. Although the research was limited to two villages in Akkar, the implications for practice and further research are nationwide.

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## List of Abbreviations

CDR	Council for Development and Reconstruction
CDS	Central Directorate of Statistics
DPT	Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GAD	Gender And Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IRFED	<i>Institut de Recherches et de Formations en vue du Developpement</i>
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NGO	Non governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
SCF	Save the Children Federation
TBA	Traditional birth attendant
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organisation
WID	Women In Development
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

## Glossary of Arabic Terms

<i>abu</i>	the father of
<i>addawleh</i>	the state
<i>aili</i>	extended family
<i>ain</i>	water spring
<i>Al hamdillah</i>	Praise God
<i>aqdiyah</i>	small provinces
<i>baal</i>	non irrigated crops
<i>bir</i>	well
<i>burghul</i>	crushed wheat
<i>day'a</i>	colloquial Arabic term to mean village
<i>dibs rimman</i>	pomegranate molasses
<i>fellah</i>	peasant
<i>Fitr</i>	Muslim religious feast
<i>furn</i>	village bakery
<i>ghorb</i>	strangers
<i>haj</i>	pilgrimage
<i>harat</i>	neighbourhoods
<i>illet maddiyeh</i>	lack of financial resources
<i>islah</i>	reform
<i>kibar</i>	the big, refers to powerful individuals
<i>kishk</i>	Lebanese food made of yoghurt and crushed wheat
<i>lijni mahaliyyeh</i>	local community committee
<i>mahroumeh</i>	deprived
<i>makbas</i>	olive press
<i>min al dakhel</i>	from within
<i>mit'admeh</i>	advanced
<i>mittawrah</i>	developed
<i>moallem</i>	foreman, tradesmaster
<i>modarabeh</i>	competition
<i>mokhtar</i>	village mayor
<i>mouni</i>	foods prepared in summer and stored for winter
<i>msha</i>	village land
<i>nayib</i>	member of parliament
<i>nohood</i>	uplifting

<i>qariyeh</i>	formal Arabic term for village
<i>sab bittankeh</i>	manual construction labour
<i>saha</i>	village square
<i>sahel</i>	coastal plain
<i>saj</i>	hot metallic sphere for baking bread
<i>shabab</i>	young men
<i>shari'a</i>	Islamic law
<i>sheikh</i>	Muslim religious leader
<i>sighar</i>	the small, refers to powerless individuals
<i>sobhiyyeh</i>	morning visit
<i>sor'a</i>	stealing
<i>succar abyad</i>	white sugar
<i>ta'addom</i>	advancement
<i>tanmiyeh</i>	development induced by an agent
<i>tanmiyeh mostadimeh</i>	sustainable development
<i>tatawwor</i>	progress
<i>tayyarat mouakisi</i>	opposing currents
<i>to'od</i>	to sit
<i>um</i>	the mother of
<i>Ummah</i>	Islamic Community
<i>wajih</i>	<i>aili</i> leader
<i>waseet</i>	intermediary person
<i>wasta</i>	mediation
<i>wilayat</i>	provinces
<i>wili</i>	Muslim holy figure
<i>wojaha</i>	<i>aili</i> leaders
<i>wosoul</i>	access
<i>ynammi</i>	to develop
<i>zaim</i>	political leader
<i>zu'ama</i>	political leaders

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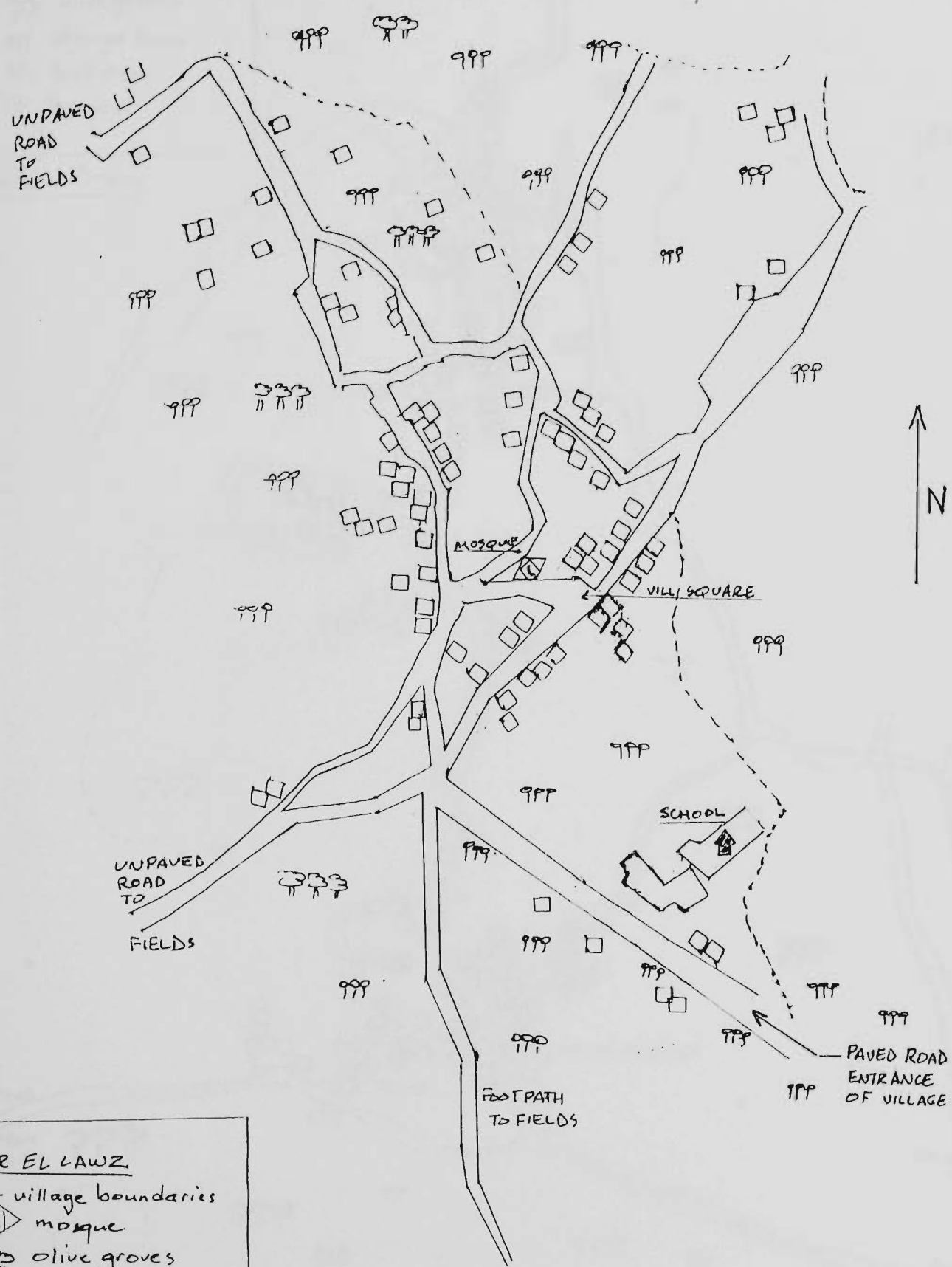
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please see print copy for image

Source : Salibi (1988)

Map 2



DAR EL LAWZ

- village boundaries
- ◻ mosque
- ⊙ olive groves
- 999 almond groves
- ◻ houses

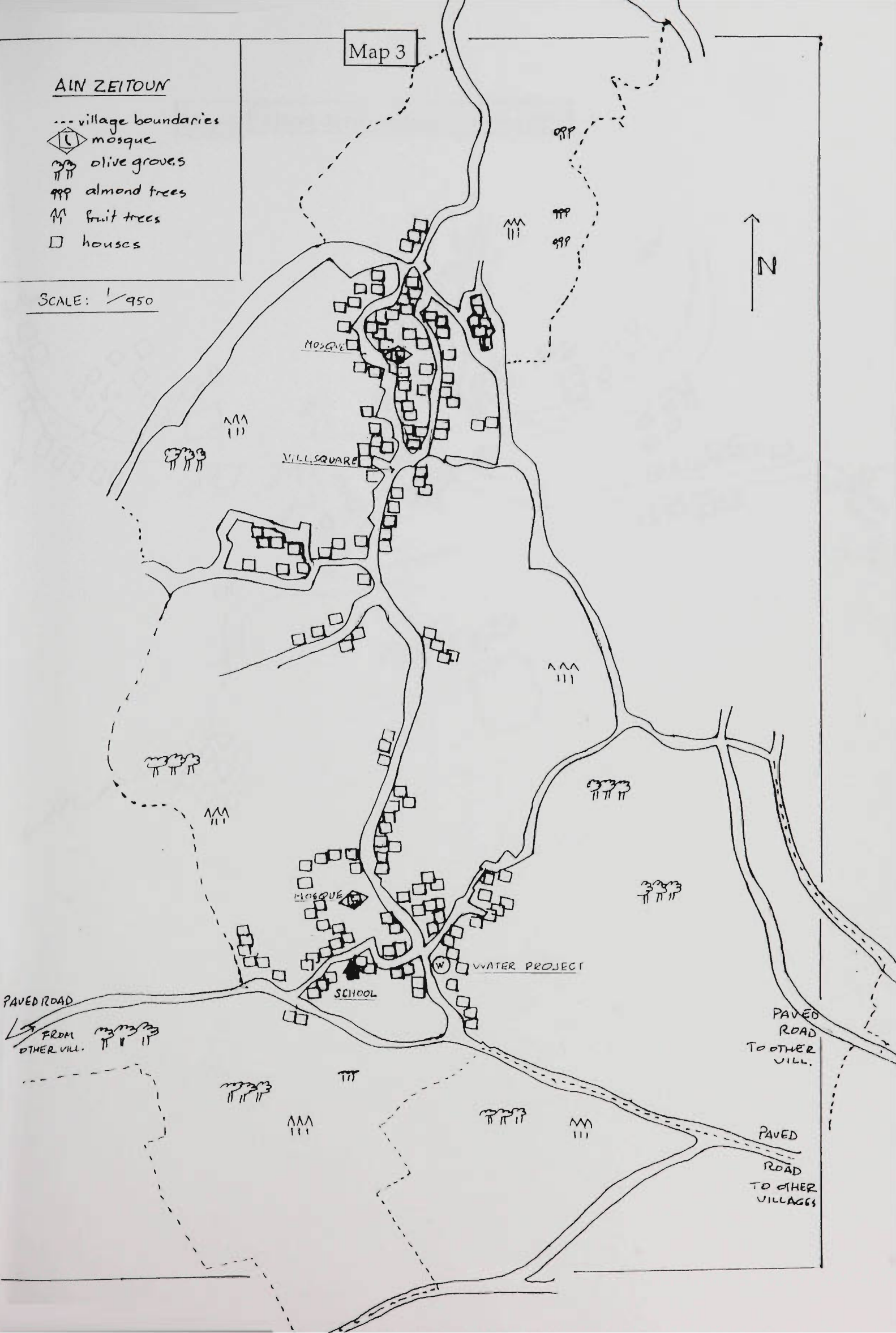
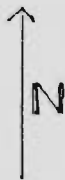
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Map 3

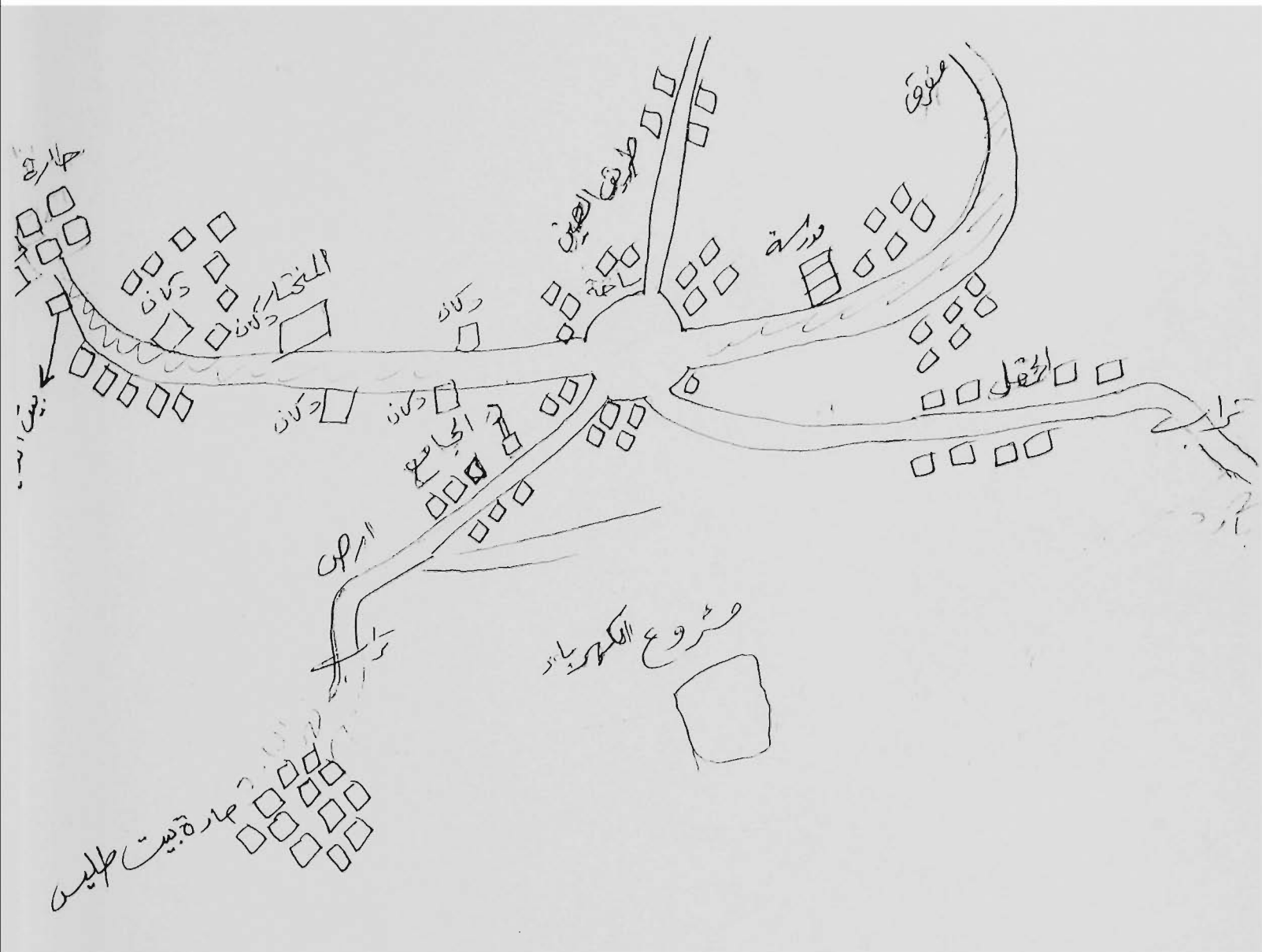
AIN ZEITOUN

- village boundaries
- ⬠ mosque
- 🌳 olive groves
- 🌰 almond trees
- 🌳 fruit trees
- houses

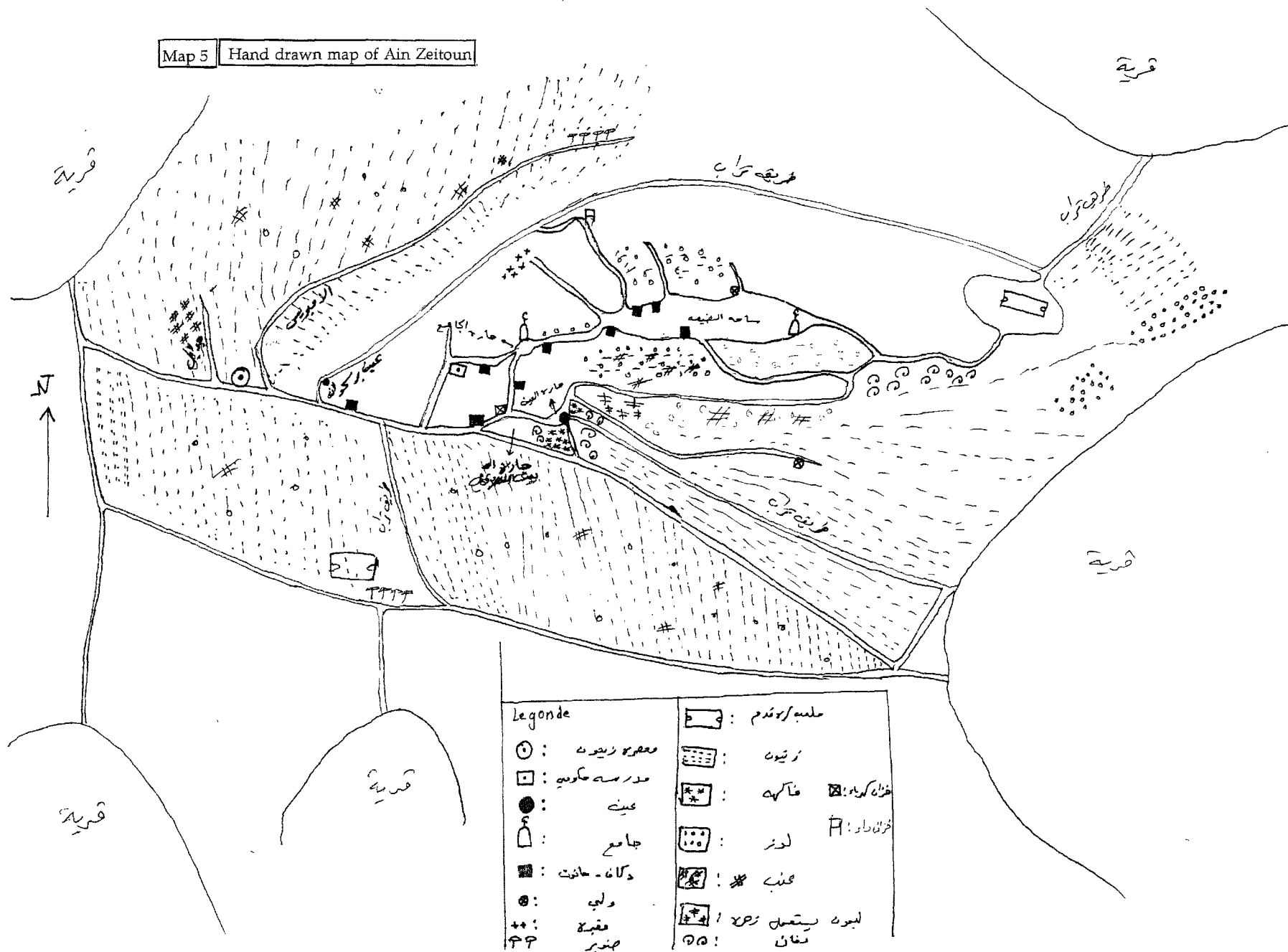
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Hand drawn map of Dar el Lawz



Map 5 Hand drawn map of Ain Zeitoun



## CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

In past decades, Lebanon has received substantial foreign aid assistance which has been spent on relief in the 1975-90 civil war as well as on development projects. The development initiatives mainly carried out by local and international non governmental organisations included sector development projects in agriculture, water, sanitation, infrastructure and health services. Since 1990, millions of dollars in loans and grants have been assigned to Lebanon to fund reconstruction and development after the war. Out of the US\$ 13 billion forecast for initial phases of reconstruction and development till the year 2000, \$231 million were disbursed in 1995. The development plan laid out by the government has been criticised for over emphasising infrastructure and economic development and overlooking poverty, health services and education. The available literature on development in Lebanon, both from governmental and non governmental sources describes infrastructure achievements but there are no published data on how lay people, the recipients of these projects, perceive them. This issue of people's views which is missing from current development literature in Lebanon is the topic of this thesis.

This study presents an ethnographic account of lay people's understanding of development and their experiences of development projects in two rural villages in Lebanon. An ethnographic approach for this research topic is appropriate as it is more capable of producing in-depth descriptions and uncovering complexities than typical surveys. Indeed, the findings point to several gaps in development practice which have major implications to how development is understood and carried out in Lebanon.

### 1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the research were to explore:

- i. how people in rural communities in Lebanon understand development
- ii. how people in rural communities in Lebanon view the effects of development on their lives as compared to development professionals' views.

The objectives of the research were to investigate how lay people in rural Lebanon:

1. define the concept of development and how these definitions compare with the concepts used in development discourse;
2. understand the development process: what happens at various stages-before, during and after project implementation; and
3. experience development projects (benefits, ill-effects).

### 1.3 Background to the problem

Development has become a common goal for all countries in the modern world. Although there are different strategies, the goal to develop remains similar. The term development implies positive change or a movement from one state to a better one of implicitly better conditions (Gardner and Lewis, 1996). It was first used in an international context in 1949 to mean a program aimed at making the technological advancements of the west available to underdeveloped nations through economic growth and industrialisation (Sachs, 1993). Subsequently, international development agencies of the west were established to provide aid to the less affluent countries of Africa, Asia and South America.

Despite the increase in development programs around the world and the rise in the number of development organisations, successful outcomes can be hard to find. Development critics are continuously questioning the claims that development agencies make. Over recent decades, development agencies have judged the benefits of development in terms of economic gain and meeting preset measurable objectives, but concerned researchers have been dissatisfied with the results, especially the effects of development projects on people and their environments. Also, despite general agreement in the

international development community that involving beneficiaries in the processes and activities of development projects is necessary for sustainable effects, there is still much to be improved in this area.

Lebanon is one of the countries which receives much development aid. Aid has flowed from donors such as the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and European countries as well as others. Recent figures point to a total outstanding external debt of US\$ 1,464 million in 1996 from official development assistance (UNDP, 1996). Historically, Lebanon has had contacts with the west, especially Europe, through trade links due to its strategic geographical location between the east and west. Since independence in 1943, the Lebanese state has relied on western assistance and expertise for its development attempts. Despite numerous attempts to develop its disadvantaged rural hinterland and set a clear development policy, the state has not been successful. Administrative obstacles, regional political instabilities and internal loyalty issues all played roles in hindering development. The state endorses an economic policy which allows the private sector to flourish while the rural areas lag behind.

Today, after the war, the state and non governmental organisations (NGOs) continue to emphasise economic development and large scale infrastructure projects. NGOs are accountable to their donors, the majority of which favour this approach. The emphasis on economic development and the project approach has led to a decrease in focus on people, training and meeting long term needs of the population. This present study points out that although the necessity of involving people in development practice is acknowledged, it is hard to achieve. More particularly, this study demonstrates the complexity of development practice.

#### 1.4 Methodology

An ethnographic design was appropriate for the aims of the study because ethnography allows the researcher to obtain an insider's view of the



topic in question through participatory methods of data collection. This design which is similar to that used in anthropology allows the researcher to study people as they go about their daily life and to understand their perceptions of development within that context. The two villages chosen are similar in demographic and geographic characteristics but differ in their experiences of development projects. The methods used included participant observation, together with formal and informal interviewing, some audio-taped, over a period of twelve months. Field notes were recorded daily. I also reviewed other available data from reports on development in the country and the area and spoke with a number of development professionals. The audio data and field notes were analysed using thematic analysis. The data sets from both villages were compared for similarities and differences. Themes on development were also compared with those of the professionals which were obtained from talks and documents. The details of these procedures can be found in chapter two.

### 1.5 Setting

To understand rural people's views on development, I chose two villages in Akkar in North Lebanon. Akkar is the least developed area in Lebanon and, as a consequence, has received many development projects. According to various studies and recent statistics, Akkar has been the most disadvantaged of the three rural regions of Lebanon: Beqa, South Lebanon and Akkar. Health statistics indicate that Akkar, combined with Beqa, produces sixty percent of all under five mortalities in Lebanon. Akkar also has the highest drop out rates in childhood vaccination coverage, which is reported by UNICEF (1993) to be approximately 24 per cent. This is twice the drop out rates seen in other parts of the country. The vaccination coverage in Akkar for the first dose of DPT and polio is less than the national 80 per cent (UNICEF, 1993).

A large number of women give birth at home (30.7 per cent) of whom 24.2 per cent are assisted by traditional birth attendants (UNICEF, 1993). As for water access, 20.9 per cent of the households in Akkar are not connected to a water network compared to the national average of 4.7 per cent (MOSA, 1998). In regards to educational status, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA, 1998) suggests that the highest illiteracy rates in the country for the ten year olds and above are in Akkar. For males, the illiteracy rate is 23.1 per cent and for females, it is 37.8 per cent compared to the national rates of 9.3 and 17.8 per cent respectively. Akkar also has the lowest school enrolment rate in the country for children less than fifteen, 87 per cent, compared to the country average of 93.7 per cent (MOSA, 1998). Most of the families are dependent on agriculture activities and are therefore among the country's poorest, according to a recent poverty study by Haddad (1996) which defines poverty in accordance with poverty lines based on income. This study shows that 75 per cent of agriculture dependent families are poor.

### 1.6 Structure of the thesis

Throughout the thesis, I have used the term 'west' to refer to the industrialised countries and 'Third World' to mean countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa. Both these terms are also used in the development literature. Where appropriate, I have used Arabic words in italics following their equivalents in English. These words appear in a glossary on page viii for easy reference. Another glossary of abbreviations and names of local and international organisations appears on page vii. The appendices contain copies of letters of introduction to village leaders as well as information sheets for participants, in Arabic and English.

Each chapter in this thesis commences with an introduction which provides an overview of its contents. Chapter two discusses the methodology used in the study and the steps taken in choosing the sites and entry to the field as well as the ethical issues involved at each step. The chapter gives

details of the data collection and simultaneous analysis which distinguish the ethnographic approach used. Important issues of adequacy and dependability as well as the strengths and limitations of the study conclude the chapter.

Chapter three presents a country profile of Lebanon where the emphasis is on historic events which have shaped the country's current conditions and its development attempts. It ends with an outline of the prevailing social and economic conditions in the 1990s.

Chapter four presents findings from talks with development professionals and the analysis of reports from three organisations on development practice in Lebanon. In the chapter, there is an overview of development theory and practice from the literature.

Chapter five provides a detailed description of the social and economic contexts of the two villages in the study. The available literature about the Lebanese village is discussed. The similarities and differences between the two study sites are pointed to at the end of the chapter.

Chapter six discusses the villagers' definitions of development, their understandings of the processes involved and their experiences of past development projects. The chapter highlights differences of views between the men and women.

Chapter seven analyses a case study of an incomplete water development project in one of the villages, involving NGOs. The literature on development projects and its limitations is used to discuss the findings.

The thesis concludes with chapter eight which is a discussion of the major findings of the study and their implications for development theory and development practice in Lebanon. The chapter ends with suggestions for further research.

The relevant literature is discussed throughout the thesis, rather than appearing in a separate review.

## CHAPTER TWO : METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used to collect and analyse the data. It describes how I accessed the village sites after I reviewed available reports and talked with development professionals. Since I was interested in people's in-depth experiences and their perceptions of development issues, an ethnographic design was appropriate. Ethnography involves participants in all stages of the data collection and analysis as equal partners to be able to obtain an emic or an insider's view. I collected and analysed data over a period of twelve months using a variety of methods such as participant observation, interviews and reviewing relevant documents. The collection of data and the analysis were concurrent. This led to further investigation and continued until saturation. The process was led by the development of explanations to the data I collected on the villagers' lives and their perceptions of development.

The chapter begins with a theoretical description of the research design. I discuss how I accessed the sites and the ethical issues involved. Then I discuss in detail the methods of data collection, and analysis. Issues of reliability and validity, referred to as dependability and adequacy in qualitative research, are also described. The chapter ends with a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the study.

### 2.2 Research design

The aim of the research was to investigate how rural people understand development compared to professional definitions and to describe their experiences of development projects. I used an ethnographic design, as used in anthropology. Ethnography is one of the many qualitative approaches used in social sciences to gather data through developing close and continuing contact with the people in the study. It requires the

investigator to rely on the informants for information about their lives: what goes on and what it all means to them (Gold, 1997). The use of ethnography allows the researcher to understand the everyday life of the people in the study and consequently enables him/her to interpret the data collected. Studying people in their natural settings includes not only studying their physical environment, but their culture of ideologies and values as well (Holloway, 1997; Neuman, 1994). Through this ethnographic approach, the researcher is able to collect enough data to make available to the reader a description of the perceptions of the people in the study from their view points, or from an emic point of view (Jansen and Roe Davis, 1998). To present this emic view, the researcher, while immersing him/herself in the field for a certain period of time, uses multi-methods such as participant observation and interviewing (Kellehear, 1993; Lengel, 1998). Immersion allows the researcher to focus on processes from the narratives of the participants and extract views of change over time (Holloway, 1997).

The assumption of an ethnographic approach about the nature of the world is that it is not pre-existing as an impartial reality, nor is it out there for investigators to study it objectively. On the contrary, the social world is a human creation and its meanings emerge from people's social realities (Mason, 1996). This means that people give meanings to events in their lives from their experiences (May, 1993). Therefore, these meanings can only be understood within their contextual framework. Only through a complete understanding of people's natural settings, can one attempt to fully understand the meanings behind the complexities of their descriptions (Hammersley, 1992). Neuman (1994) illustrates this point by saying that, for example, if an event, social act or conversation is removed from the social context within which it is produced, or the context is overlooked, its significance and social meaning may become distorted.

The researcher is a part of this process of creating meanings through interacting with the people in the study. The in-depth methods of data

collection used in ethnography stress interpersonal relationships between the researcher and the people. Ideally, both parties are involved as equal participants, as qualitative research in general should diminish the power relations inherent in positivist research. Through this active participation, meaning is not uncovered by asking questions, it is actively assembled in the interview interaction (Jansen and Roe Davis, 1998). Respondents are not keepers of knowledge, but are constructors of meaning in the collaboration with the researcher. Therefore, this kind of in-depth research involves meaning making and is interpretive in nature (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997). Jansen and Roe Davis (1998) argue that the extent to which the power is transferred to the respondent depends greatly upon the skills of the researcher who enhances the interaction.

### 2.3 Choice of research sites

The two villages I chose fit the research criteria set at the beginning of my study and are also typical of other villages in Akkar. They are similar in geographical characteristics, namely both villages are situated in a hilly region less than five hundred metres above sea level. Their agricultural activities which constitute major sources of income are similar, and both villages are fewer than five thousand in population. They are both accessible by paved roads, but they differ in their experience of development projects. One village, Dar el Lawz, has received only two development projects, electricity funded by the government which connected the village to the national grid and a water project funded by Lebanese private organisations. The other village, Ain Zeitoun, has also received electricity in a similar way and a sewer canal project from the government as well as a number of other projects including water, credit loans and food distributions from both governmental and non governmental organisations over the past two decades.

To choose suitable villages for the study, I reviewed documents and reports on projects in the area first and I met with representatives of governmental and non governmental organisations who have worked there. The development professionals were helpful and discussed their views on current development issues and offered their help in choosing villages for my study. I collected data on their views of development in Lebanon by speaking with them. I also reviewed published and unpublished reports from their respective organisations. The persons I spoke with were employees at various levels of the bureaucracy, either in administration or directly involved in development activities in the field. Everyone had a university degree in a variety of disciplines and had also received some on-the-job training. They had all been working in Lebanon during the war in relief and community based programs in different sectors.

Our talks were informal as my aim was to establish contacts with them, inform them of my research and to obtain information about suitable sites. All the people I spoke with were interested in my research and some offered me publications and reports, explaining that in them I would find the information I needed regarding the kinds and location of projects. I took notes to record our talks and wrote a full account immediately after the end of the meetings.

Their suggestions varied as to appropriate research sites, influenced by their experiences with these villages. Some villages were not viewed as suitable by officials because of the perceived characteristics of the inhabitants, which meant that they were seen as "unsociable", while others were put forward because the villages had cooperated with the agencies in the past. For example, a UNICEF staff member with decision making authority suggested a village in Akkar, where the local community members were very active in a water project funded by UNICEF. He explained that the local committee there was excellent to work with and would most likely cooperate with me. Two officials from another non governmental agency also

recommended a village which received many of the agency's development projects. Their contact person for the area was a native of that village. Both the villages were over five thousand in population which made them difficult to access by a lone researcher and so I did not choose them for my study.

I visited a number of villages in Akkar and spoke with some of the villagers, before choosing the most appropriate according to my study criteria. A drawback was that no literature on the two villages I chose was found in any development organisation or government representative body despite their having received development projects. This meant that I had no documentation to use at the beginning of my study. No specific health surveillance or immunisation coverage had been documented. Only surveys carried out on samples in different areas in Akkar could be used for an estimate of health indicators. These appear in various reports such as those on maternal and child health indicators and access to water and sanitation facilities (see UNICEF 1991 and 1993). Studying two villages which are similar but have experienced different types of development projects provided an opportunity for comparisons between the two.

The real village names do not appear in the thesis but have been replaced by pseudonyms to avoid identifying the villagers. There are some prominent people, such as the mayor (*mokhtar*), the political party representative, the traditional birth attendant and the religious leaders (*sheikhs*) who may be identifiable if the villages' names are used. For this reason, the village which has received fewer development projects has been given the name of *Dar el Lawz* which means the House of Almonds in relation to its local almond crop. The other village will be called *Ain Zeitoun* or Olive Spring, as the second term in this compound name refers to the olive crops that it produces and the first to the water spring in the village. I give detailed descriptions of the villages in chapter five.



## 2.4 Ethical considerations and entry issues

The research proposal was submitted to the University of Wollongong Research Ethics Committee and approved before the commencement of data collection. Introductory letters to village leaders (Appendix A) and information sheets for participants (Appendix B) were prepared and translated into Arabic to be presented to the villagers. To access the villages, I approached key persons such as the *mokhtar* and other village leaders. I presented them with the introductory note written in Arabic (Appendix C) describing the research and its procedures as well as how I planned to talk to participants in the villages. I also explained that this information about my research would be available for the participants in a written letter, also in Arabic (Appendix D). The key persons in both villages welcomed me and offered to provide any assistance.

In formal interviews and group discussions participants were given an information sheet written in Arabic informing them of the research and requesting their participation, but not requiring a signature. The information sheets replaced consent forms. In some Lebanese societies, a signature as an indicator of consent may be a cause for alarm or uneasiness because it may be considered as a way of officially holding a person accountable to a behaviour or a word. Moreover, some participants were illiterate and, therefore, not able to sign their names. Instead, they usually use thumb prints only in the rare situations of official transactions involving money or property. This was the case with many participants in both villages.

Before commencing the formal interviews and discussion groups, I read out the contents of the information sheet to them. I made sure that the informants fully understood the purpose, the nature of the study that they were involved in and how the findings would be used. I did this by reading the letter out to the participants as it was written in formal Arabic and then explained it in colloquial Arabic. I assured them that no one other than myself would listen or have access to the tapes I used to record the

interviews and that the respondents' names would not be mentioned anywhere when the research was written up. All of the villagers I approached agreed to take part in the study and took a copy of the information sheet to keep. The tapes I used to record the formal interviews with individuals and groups have been marked with codes only known to me.

Ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality stem from the medical sciences, where harm and exploitation of subjects under trial may occur. In ethnographic research however, although ethics committees have set general guidelines, each research will generate its own set of ethical issues (Minichello et al, 1995). This means that the researcher cannot anticipate everything, but must always be aware of possibilities of potential alarm from the research and plan ahead on how to avoid or face this in the field (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

For example, in Dar el Lawz, I was frequently invited to morning gatherings of women. Only in one occasion did I need to make a specific request to speak with a group of women gathered for prayers in one woman's house. I approached the leader of the group who was pointed out by a member of the group whom I met before. I did this because I was aware of the possibility that my presence among them at the time may disrupt their prayers and also that it may not be appropriate for a Christian to attend a Muslim ceremony. I waited till the end of the session when they were free to speak with me.

It was difficult to anticipate ethical issues in the field which may have led to alarm or disturbance to the villagers. This kept me alert and continuously attempting to empathise with the participants in the research to avoid any unethical behaviour. Kellehear (1993: 93) defines ethics as 'the most socially responsible way of doing research' which encompasses the responsibility toward the informants and the research itself from design to

field. Throughout all the research process, the researcher must constantly consider the welfare of the informants (Minichello et al, 1995).

## 2.5 Data collection

All communication was in local Arabic which I speak fluently. This eliminated the need for interpreters and ensured full understanding of spoken and written communication. The wording of the questions was adapted to the individual interviewee depending on the educational background of the informant but the meaning was unchanged. The interview schedule appears in Appendix E. Translating from one language into another involves difficulties, however, and care has been taken in translating the Arabic concepts into their equivalents in English so the thesis reader can appreciate their meaning. Where appropriate, the original Arabic is also given.

For my data collection in the villages, I used in-depth methods of participant observation and individual and group interviews, both formal and informal, to obtain views on participants' lives, traditions, social and economic conditions as well as changes they experienced over time. Other information such as quantitative data on crop production, yields and benefits, quality and quantity of consumer goods in the local shops and their turnover patterns contributed to general background information for the study. Food production, commodity sales and financial conditions were also discussed with the participants. Where applicable, information about development projects such as water and sanitation projects carried out in both villages constituted a part of the data collected.

Following the introductory meetings, I spent the next twelve months visiting the villages. I used maps of the village which the villagers drew themselves upon my request (see maps 4 and 5). The maps pointed out the village setting, namely, household distributions, major landmarks such as locations of mosques, village squares, shops and schools as well as project

sites. I took as many field notes as I could of everything I saw and participated in.

The informal interviews with individuals and groups consisted of casual unplanned conversations with villagers I met as I walked through the village in the early stages of the site visits. I also took mental notes, which were written up later, of what I observed as I walked and actively participated in some of their activities. During this process, a variety of general information arose about life in the village. For example, a group of ten to twelve year old boys who gathered around after school, invited me to watch their football match in a nearby field. When I went, we had a lively discussion.

Although the villagers knew what I was there for, they asked me questions about myself and that led to a variety of topics. During these informal interviews, I did not take notes on the spot, but recorded what was said in daily field notes as soon as I left the site. These sorts of interviews are described by de Laine (1997) as unstructured interviews in that the question categories are not predetermined and conversation relies on social interaction to generate knowledge. The format of the informal interviews is unorganised and the interviewees determine the subject of discussion and direct the free flow of conversation, which is of no fixed duration (Khan and Manderson, 1992). These informal methods of data collection were useful in establishing rapport with the villagers which assisted in further data collection.

I also used participant observation during all my site visits, by participating in some of the daily activities with the villagers. These were mainly group activities such as almond picking, spreading the *mouni* (summer foods prepared and dried in the sun for winter consumption), and meeting over coffee which is an important social activity. Spending time observing the villagers in their setting and taking part in as many activities as possible helped me gain an understanding of the social setting. Even during the formal interviews, participant observation played an important role in

aquainting me with the setting which often goes unspoken of in interviews. Observing people's actions is valuable as they are at times more expressive than people's verbal accounts (Kellehear, 1993). I also took photographs of daily village activities, such as bread making, water fetching, almond picking as well as of the water projects and busy village squares after requesting permission from the people concerned. The photographs I took provide a visual record of people's activities and help explain findings. I show some of them in chapter five in the village descriptions.

The emerging information from participant observation and the informal interviews helped me understand local preoccupations and vocabulary common to the villages, as well as what people do and where they gather. I used this understanding to access villagers for formal group discussions and individual interviews. All the groups I interviewed were pre-existing and consisted of villagers who meet regularly and hence were familiar with each other. This made interviewing them less intrusive than requiring them to meet. I also met with individuals in their natural settings, mostly in their homes as it was socially acceptable to visit them there. Visiting times were either pre-determined with the participants, especially the men who were not always at home, or they spontaneously occurred upon the request of the participants.

Before starting the more formal group and individual interviews, I requested the villagers' participation and offered them information sheets to keep. I also requested their permission to use a tape recorder during the interviews. No one refused permission for taping to occur. Recording the interviews for transcription allowed me to concentrate on the discussions and non verbal expressions of the interviewees rather than on notetaking.

I held group discussions with women who gather regularly in the village, mainly over morning visits in one of the women's houses in a neighbourhood. In Ain Zeitoun, unlike the women, no focus groups could be held with men because they were either working or in the city looking for

work. They came home for feasts and at unexpected times. So much of the data collected from men in Ain Zeitoun were from individual interviews.

The men in Dar el Lawz were also less often in pre-existing groups than the women. I learnt that they were either in the fields or involved in other activities, hence they did not gather regularly. However, it was common that when two people met in an open space, they were joined by passerbys who would participate in the discussion and leave at different times. This was the case with the ever changing group of men in Dar el Lawz constantly to be found in front of the *mokhtar's* shop. The size of this varied from four to eight according to the number of individuals joining and leaving at different times. I also met with some school teachers in Dar el Lawz at the recess break which according to the principal was the best time for interviewing them as a group. Kitzinger (1994: 106) argues that choosing pre-existing groups or 'natural clusterings' who share common characteristics enhances the flow of the discussion and more closely researches normal social life. Friends can relate to each others' comments and relate these to their own experiences, which provides a context for these ideas.

Both formal group discussions and individual interviews are methods of data collection where the researcher meets with participants at a preset time and place for discussions about questions of interest to the researcher and records the data after formally asking the participants for their consent (Khan and Manderson, 1992). Group discussions, often referred to in the literature as focus group discussions involve a small number of participants on topics of particular interest, with the help of a moderator or a facilitator (the researcher). Focus groups may be used to explore people's perceptions of services or their participation in projects (Kitzinger, 1994). Morgan (1996) argues that an advantage of focus groups is in their ability to allow marginalised groups to speak their opinions. Kitzinger (1994) illustrates this point by saying that less inhibited members of the group can facilitate the discussions of sensitive subjects by breaking the ice for shy members, thus

encouraging them to speak. Furthermore, focus groups provide the opportunity for members to mutually support each other in expressing feelings common to them which are otherwise unexpressed in other settings. The moderator of a focus group influences the group dynamics among the members. Sarantakos (1998) clarifies this point by saying that the moderator leads discussions towards focal issues through encouraging the participants to describe their experiences, in an unrestricted atmosphere. To be able to achieve this, the leader must have certain characteristics. Perez et al (1998) mention familiarity with the language spoken and local customs as important in helping the participants more openly discuss and debate. The use of focus groups allows the researcher to become acquainted with group norms and deviations from these norms (Kitzinger, 1994).

In-depth interviews are also analytical research tools used to obtain insight to perceptions and beliefs of interviewees about their daily lives. They are used to go deeply into the meanings that people give to their experiences and uncover their social worlds (Kellehear, 1993). Combining methods, as I did in the study, such as focus groups and individual interviews allows investigators to reach both depth, offered by the interview and breadth, achieved by focus groups. For example, using interviews following focus groups permits exploration of specific opinions and emerging concepts in more depth (Morgan, 1996). According to Khan and Manderson (1992), the use of more than one method decreases the possibility of shortfalls from relying solely on one technique, such as in the case of rapid assessments, where the aim is more to gain a general picture rather than to provide exhaustive information on one topic.

## 2.6 Sampling strategy

In ethnography, there is a link between the kinds of data collected and the method of data analysis used to develop explanations pertaining to the research questions (Mason, 1996). The researcher formulates his/ her own

theory after collecting sufficient data from the field and linking them together. The term 'theory' here refers to statements about necessary relationships among the categories of the phenomena researched (Hammersley, 1992). Unlike positivist research, there are no prior theories to prove or disprove. So selecting groups or categories for data collection in the research is based on the capability of these groups to provide relevant data. Therefore, decisions on sampling could only be fully realised in the field. This means that there are no predetermined sample size or characteristics.

The sampling strategy used in the research was 'theoretical sampling'. Theoretical sampling is sampling on the basis of concepts that are of theoretical relevance and contribute to the emerging categories and explanations. To guide theoretical sampling, concurrent data analysis is necessary. Questions and comparisons help the researcher discover and relate relevant categories. Therefore, sampling is cumulative because concepts and their relationships accumulate through simultaneous data collection and analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

At the beginning of the research, when I was moving around in the villages to get acquainted with the people and their settings, I accessed the groups and individuals I informally interviewed by meeting with them wherever I found them. My aim was to obtain a general understanding of village life including areas such as social organisation, traditions, land ownership, access to services to mention a few. I selected the informants based on their theoretical attributes, such as having a particular knowledge or being of a particular gender and later, having leadership roles or having participated in a development project. For example, I interviewed men for details on land and crops, women for information on household activities and social life, village leaders on their roles in the village and the elderly on changes they have experienced. I was able to accumulate a broad based picture of village dynamics by linking together different perspectives on particular concepts of research relevance.



This general picture was further refined with emerging details from subsequent data collection on development issues. For example, women's views in the neighbourhood of the spring, which had been the site of the project, were contrasted with information from women in another neighbourhood some distance away. Also, information from the men on village life was contrasted with those of the women. The interviews revealed names of key individuals with particular attributes, such as the *sheikhs* and other key people whom I later sought out for formal interviews. Information from the men who were involved in the water projects was contrasted and complemented by narratives from others who were not.

Guided by the missing links in the data obtained after simultaneous and at the end of the day analysis, I held further discussions and interviews. The concurrent analysis of data helped me identify categories of data (for example, villagers' social status) and so to decide on further data that should be collected to develop a comprehensive understanding of the relevant concepts (men's and women's status as a function of gender and power). Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Theoretical saturation occurs when the data being collected become adequate and stop adding new information (Mason, 1996) and the relationships between the categories are well established (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

In Dar el Lawz, there were six formal group discussions and six formal individual interviews as well seven informal unstructured group discussions and thirteen informal individual interviews. In Ain Zeitoun, there were two formal group discussions, eight formal individual interviews, seven informal group discussions and nine informal individual interviews. In both villages, there were countless small scale interactions which were recorded in my field notes.

## 2.7 Data analysis

Although much effort goes to analyse the data after its collection, much of the analysis occurs during the fieldwork. This is because theorising begins from the first day of fieldwork with concept formation beginning during data collection. Analysis occurred throughout the data collection to link, interpret and generate theory. Unlike positivist research, analysis in ethnography is done at all stages of the research. It is an ongoing, non linear process during which the researcher goes back and forth to check data links, pick out ambiguities to reach a comprehension of how parts fit (Mason, 1996).

I used thematic analysis to analyse the interview and field journal data. Analysis is guided by the richness of the data, rather than predetermined codes, and the researchers' interest. In this way, the researcher views the world from an insider's perspective rather than that of an objective outsider's (Kellehear, 1993). Minichello et al (1995: 248) describe thematic analysis as an ongoing process which requires that the researcher 'develops an eye for detecting issues' to give data direction. The data were sorted and organised into groups according to the emerging themes and sub themes. As new data came in, I continued to add them to the existing groups or created new ones. Then I analysed the data to understand relations and meanings as seen by the participants and to formulate explanations I saw myself emerging from the data. To check that I did not misunderstand these meanings, I checked my understanding by referring back to participants to clarify issues, by summarising points and affirming associations during the following interviews. Reviewing daily field notes and other data collected at the end of the day set the plan for the next.

At the end of daily fieldwork, all recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and rechecked against the recordings by listening to the interviews and comparing the transcriptions. Sets of data emerging from the transcriptions were grouped on spread sheets, as were other data sets, which

showed frequencies and categories according to areas of interest in village life and development experiences. For example, among the categories of interest were gender division of labour, social stratification and use of *wasta*. Further classifications led to tables of similarities and differences across gender which appeared to be emerging. I then searched for patterns, similarities and differences among the themes. I also used flow charts which helped in creating visual presentations of particular processes and events.

When new data became repetitive, themes were recurring and no new information was emerging, I had done an exhaustive exploration of the phenomena of interest. Detailed descriptions of my findings appear in chapters five, six and seven.

## 2.8 Adequacy and dependability

The question regarding the evaluation of the research findings varies in the literature as do the philosophical perspectives and terms used to evaluate qualitative research. The reader comes across processes and criteria for assessing the value of social research and the evaluation of ethnographic research in particular (Hammersley, 1992; Creswell, 1998); producing a convincing argument (Mason, 1996); judging grounded theory research (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) or raising the question of rigour (Seibold et al, 1994). The different philosophical perspectives used by qualitative researchers debate applying the same criteria used in quantitative research (validity and reliability) to qualitative research. Based on these, there are multiple views of verification which either seek equivalents to validity and reliability or employ distinct language (Creswell, 1998).

Hammersley (1992) contends that as ethnography, for example, which is the approach used in this study, is an alternative paradigm to positivist social research, evaluation should not be based on positivist concepts. Similarly, alternative terms must be used that adhere to naturalistic axioms (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Therefore, in non positivist research, truth and

relevance, adequacy, adequacy and dependability are among the criteria used to judge the research rigour. Hammersley (1992: 69) concludes that judging the validity of claims must be done 'on the basis of the adequacy of the evidence offered in support of them'. This depends on the plausibility and credibility of the claims. Creswell (1998) argues in favour of viewing verification as a process that occurs through data collection and analysis which I take up for this study.

In ethnography, as well as in other non positivist research approaches, the rigour of the research depends upon the quality of the data collected and the findings. So the concern of validity, referred to as adequacy, is better expressed in terms of ensuring data generation and analysis are appropriate to the research questions and are accurate. Adequacy asks whether the observations about a participant or an event are consistent and fit together in a coherent picture within the overall context. Mason (1996) stresses adequacy of data generation and of interpretation.

The adequacy of the data collected is assessed through the logic of the overall methodology and that of the methods used. First, the ethnographic approach used in this study was appropriate for the research question on people's perceptions and understanding of the development culture. People's village life is highlighted in the research and it resulted in a detailed description of villages and village dynamics. Second, the logic of the individual methods used within the research framework shows how well they produce relevant data. The methods of participant observation, interviewing, notetaking and photography were appropriately used. I had no reason to doubt the participants' truthfulness and honesty as I had already explained my aims and established rapport with them before engaging in formal data collection. I tried as best I could to control researcher's bias by disregarding prior assumptions I had of the culture of the villagers and by asking as many questions ethically suitable in all situations to ensure full understanding of the activities and lived experiences of the villagers. I

ensured that the informants whom I interviewed understood the questions and gave relevant feedback. As mentioned previously, I endeavoured to present the participants' views to the best of my capability by returning to them to check understanding as well as using direct quotes in the write up. This all enhanced access to information from the participants' views and experiences.

The adequacy of interpreting the data, or data analysis, is also assessed through the end product of the research. This depends on the adequacy of the methods, discussed above, which enabled me to obtain the raw data. The end product answers the research questions (see chapters five, six and seven). The findings were produced through analysing by themes relevant to the research questions based on participants' narratives and my observations. I also checked that exceptions to the major findings were discussed so as to present more than one dimension of views.

Seibold et al (1994) argue that dependability can be ascertained by examining the methodological and analytical trails created during the research to make sure that the interpretations and recommendations are supported by the data. This applies in the study, as the ethnographic procedures, which I have used, are all documented here so that the reader can follow the research process and my decision making.

## 2.9 Strengths and limitations of the study

The approach used in the study to obtain in-depth descriptions of the villagers' perceptions was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain an emic view without a priori theory. The value of the methods used in the study lies in their ability to uncover and interpret relationships among the emerging themes, thus facilitating theory generation or statements explaining categories of data. The study also describes in detail the differences between men's and women's views relevant to their village life and social relationships.

Although the views of everybody in the villages were not included in the study, it is possible to argue that the findings are broadly representative of the villagers' viewpoints. Concurrent data analysis led the way to further data collection and also pointed to saturation which meant that data was becoming repetitive. The findings were also situated within the literature on villages which present similar findings on village life.

The choice of the two villages for the study was done with sufficient certainty that they represent other villages in Akkar. However, care must be taken in generalising to all the population. The limited ability to generalise is made up for by the in-depth data collection and analysis obtained through the use of multi-methods. Also, the implications are useful for development practice in all Lebanon.

Finally, despite the continuous efforts of the researcher to be as empathetic as possible with the villagers and despite the time spent to establish rapport, there is always a possibility that the characteristics of the researcher, a Christian woman, may have affected how people in the villages related to her. This issue represents a limitation to the study, especially when interviewing male villagers.

## CHAPTER THREE : COUNTRY BACKGROUND

### 3.1 Introduction

To appreciate rural people's perceptions, it is necessary to have an understanding of their village conditions and how these relate to the overall conditions of the country. The current socioeconomic conditions in Lebanon point to disparities between rural and urban areas. These disparities are not a recent phenomenon, but are deeply rooted in the country's past. During the period of the Ottoman Empire, the coastal cities and Mount Lebanon, which runs east of Beirut, flourished and contacts with the west increased through trade. Incoming missionaries established their educational institutions in Beirut and the nearby mountains became summer resorts. Meanwhile, the hinterlands were neglected by the rulers- the Ottoman landlords. This situation continued during the French mandate (1919-1943) ensuring further prosperity for the cities while the remote rural areas lagged behind.

At independence in 1943, Lebanon faced the challenge to improve the conditions of underdeveloped areas, which were previously Ottoman provinces. Weak administration and the lack of reliable statistics made efforts towards a comprehensive state development policy ineffective. Other factors, such as the internal loyalties of kinship groups, religious groups and opposing political factions also played a role in weakening loyalty to the state and its development attempts. Today, after a recent civil war (1975-1990) and a post independence history of unstable regional conditions, internal disparities in resource allocation continue. Unemployment and poverty are widespread, especially among agricultural populations. Health services and education are provided by the private sector and the government faces destroyed infrastructure and debt.

In this chapter, I present a general background on Lebanon. The chapter begins with a description of the geography and climate and continues with a discussion of the main characteristics of the Lebanese

people and their various affiliations as well as their role in Lebanese society. An overview of historical events demonstrates the particular circumstances favouring urban over rural development. This brings the chapter to a discussion of attempts at development since independence and why these have failed. The chapter ends with an overview of the current socioeconomic conditions which demand the state's attention after the recent civil war. A table of significant dates is given on page 38.

### 3.2 Geography and climate

The word "Lebanon" is derived from the Arabic word 'liban' which is originally a Semitic word meaning milky white. This is a reference to Lebanon's white snow capped mountains that are apparent most of the year (Salibi, 1988). The country is located in the Levant in the centre of the old world connecting the cradles of ancient civilisations such as Mesopotamia and Egypt as well as the religions of Christianity and Islam. Its area is 10,400 square kilometres bound by Syria in the north and east and by Israel in the south. The Mediterranean Sea lies to its west (see map 1). Topographically, the country is divided into four distinct regions allowing a variety of climates suitable for a unique diversity of flora and fauna. These are from the west to the east: the coastal plain, the two mountain ranges and the Beqa valley in between (Sheehan, 1997).

The general climate in Lebanon is temperate Mediterranean characterised by a rainy season (October-March) and a dry warm season the rest of the year (Murr, 1987). The rainfall in some mountains reaches 1400 millimetres (Cobban, 1985). On the 225 kilometre coastal plain (*sahel*) lie most of the cities. The western mountain range rises a few kilometres from the coast and reaches 3300 metres above sea level. The eastern Anti-Lebanon range is arid, less productive and less populated due to harsher climatic conditions. In the north, the ranges rise from the plains of Akkar and run parallel to the coast to the south. The Beqa Valley is located at approximately



750 metres above sea level, between the two mountain ranges that run parallel to the sea (Sheehan, 1997).

### 3.3 Population

The only national census was in 1932 before independence in 1943. At that time the population was 793,426 (Salem, 1973; Goglio, 1997). Today, the population is estimated to be 3.11 million according to the recent Population and Housing survey carried out in 1997 by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA, 1998) with the financial assistance of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This estimate is based on extrapolations from a sample of households using stratified cluster sampling techniques. It excludes the foreign workers from the neighbouring Arab states of Syria and Egypt, foreign non-nationals from Asian countries and Palestinian refugees. However, the Central Directorate of Statistics (CDS), in a recent survey on living conditions of families, estimates there are approximately 4,005,000 people residing in Lebanon, 350,000 (7.5 per cent) of whom are Arabs and other foreigners. This estimate again excludes workers who enter the country for seasonal work (CDS, 1998). Their exact number is not certain as many go in and out of the country without being registered (Andrews, 1996).

The population is distributed unevenly between the rural and urban areas of the country. In 1932, the rural population constituted approximately 67 per cent of the population while 33 per cent lived in the cities. These figures had changed by 1975 to 30 per cent in rural areas and 68 per cent in urban areas (Baalbaki, 1994). Today, it is estimated that the capital Beirut, and its suburbs, hold 32.5 per cent of the Lebanese population (CDS, 1998). The change is explained by constant internal migration from the countryside to the city for work, which started towards the beginning of the French mandate in 1919 (Salibi, 1988).

The Lebanese population is composed of eighteen different religious denominations. Some are Christian (eg. Maronites, Greek Orthodox,

Catholic) and others are Muslim (eg. Sunni, Shiite, Druze). The Lebanese share an Arabic mother tongue and general traditions except for the Armenians, who differ in religious rites and faith. They came to Lebanon comparatively recently in the late 19th century and in another wave at the beginning of World War One (Salibi, 1988). Religious affiliation has been an important part of the lives of these various groups. Religion was a characteristic that the members of the sects, the ancestors of present-day Lebanese, shared when they first came to Lebanon at different times in history, fleeing from political and religious persecution in their original Arab homelands. They fled to the Lebanese mountains where they found a safe refuge in the rugged terrain. They also found agreeable natural resources, such as water, which was less abundant elsewhere in the region. This explains why so many different religious groups are found in Lebanon.

A variety of terms are used to describe these groups, such as 'sects', 'confessions' and 'religious communities'. Referring to the early works of F. Khuri, a Lebanese anthropologist, Cobban (1985) describes a sect as a geographically compact group of people, maintaining internal social control, outside the direct influence of central authority. Indeed, in Lebanon these religious communities have been, and continue to be, governed by their own authorities and are able to apply their laws and customs to their members (Goglio, 1997). This diminishes the need for secular citizenship. A main concern of the sect leaders has been maximising the advantages of the sect, even when these advantages conflict with the interests of the state, as they did, for example, in the recent civil war in 1975.

Because of the existence of a number of sects distributed in well defined geographical areas, a system of power sharing was adopted in the national constitution in 1926. This inter-sect power sharing came to be known as 'confessionalism', advocated in the constitution as a temporary measure until a non-sectarian formula for government could be reached (Cobban, 1985). However, the sects continue to dominate the state and its

institutions. The president of the Republic must be a Christian while the speaker of parliament and the prime minister are Muslim, an arrangement supported by the French before independence to balance the powers of confessional groups (Salibi, 1988). The sects also continue to regulate civil life for their followers, following their own laws for marriage, inheritance and divorce proceedings. Everyone has Lebanese nationality and the Lebanese are equal citizens in terms of their rights and obligations towards the state but are governed differently in regard to personal issues. A brief description of how kinship, sects and patron-client relations are connected is appropriate at this stage, because these issues appear in the village study and play important roles in people's lives and their views on development.

### 3.3.1 Kinship

Historically, family ties have been of prominent importance in Lebanon even before the formation of the independent state. When there was no state, people relied on family structures for economic support and security (Knight, 1992). The extended family, where members claimed a common descent, were more important than nuclear families and the individual (Murr, 1987).

Contemporary political leaders are still seen first and foremost as members of a family. When members of a family gain power in social, political and economic spheres, other family members expect a distribution of resources and benefits to them. Thus family ties move from the private to the public sphere and family relationships flow into state relationships (Joseph, 1997). In politics, this trickle down of benefits is apparent in parliamentary representation as well as positions in the government, which are passed down to sons and other relatives over the years. So the family becomes the avenue into political life. Even though the state allows for elections for political representation, elections also allow the local family leaders a chance to continue their power, because their family members and

loyal supporters elect them into position. Political beliefs are supported by the politician's family, and political rivalry becomes a battle between respective families (Knight, 1992).

A particular kinship structure, which is patriarchal, is recognised by the state which supports it in legal privileges. Although there are Lebanese feminist intellectuals and critics and women's rights have been acknowledged in recent years, the state favours men in its legal codes. For example, a woman cannot pass citizenship to her children or foreign husband except in limited circumstances. Also, it was not until 1993 that the Lebanese law allowed the testimony of one woman to equal the testimony of one man in court and not until 1994 that women were allowed to own businesses independently (Joseph, 1997).

In the Middle East, gender issues continue to be issues about power and subordination. In patriarchal societies such as these, Islam, the leading religion, not only presents religious values but regulates practices of daily life (Norton, 1997). In Muslim communities, such as the villages in the study, women are marginalised in areas of marriage, divorce and inheritance. Men are legally able to marry up to four women. This reflects negatively on women as they are dependent upon men for their economic security. In the case of divorce, the women must turn to their fathers who may have other families, or their brothers who may already have children of their own (Joseph, 1994). Even though women's share of any inheritance is upheld in Islam, there are variations in practice. Morris (1997) argues that women cannot take advantage of their rights because of a general ignorance of the law and the domination of tradition, which stresses a patriarchal view of femininity and restricts the roles available to women to motherhood and wifehood.

There is a lack of reliable information on women's status in the economy in general and their role in the private sector. This is partly due to the absence of studies on women and gender sensitive questions in existing

studies at a national level. Even the one hundred or more agencies which initiate programs in the interest of women and which are members of the Lebanese Women's Council, have not incorporated gender issues in their programs and have not inculcated gender awareness among their staff (Husseini, 1997).

### 3.3.2 Sectarianism

Kinship relations do not work in isolation from religious sects. The immigrating communities who initially came to Lebanon constituted closed sets of kinship and religious groups whose membership was acquired by birth (Salibi, 1988). Religious groups are still governed by their internal authorities, institutions and hierarchies which the Ottomans allowed and the Lebanese state continues to acknowledge. Although there has been discord among the sects, it has not involved debate about religious ideologies but has been concerned with the sharing of political power (Goglio, 1997). Since independence, the right wing political parties with an affiliation to the west and supporting the view of an independent Lebanon have been dominantly Christian, while the opposing left have been Muslims who support ties with Syria (Salibi, 1988).

After independence, in a political agreement called the National Pact, the top ranks in the Lebanese political bureaucracy were subdivided among the dominant Muslim and Christian sects, as mentioned earlier, to achieve equilibrium (Joseph, 1997). This political compromise is still effective today, although the sectarian distribution of the population has since changed with an increase in the Muslim population (Goglio, 1997). Political leaders have substantiated their positions on the basis of their being representatives of their religious communities. Their followers pledge their allegiance to the leader based on his religious and familial affinity rather than on his achievements (Joseph, 1997).

Lebanese civil, commercial and criminal law applies to all citizens, but matters of personal status involving marriage, divorce and inheritance are left to the religious courts of the eighteen recognised religious sects (Salibi, 1988). Therefore, the state has created unequal legal conditions for its citizens despite asserting their equality as Lebanese citizens. Religion has been able to permeate politics, since sectarian representation is legitimised by the state. This condition has obstructed a true national identity and the existence of a true national subject.

### 3.3.3 Patron-client relationships

Political elites who legitimise their role as representatives of their religious communities and their families frequently call for loyalty from their followers. Using their public authority, these leaders have subsidised personal followers in return for allegiance. This distribution of favours has created a client-patron relationship which has survived because citizens have expectations that their demands will be met through personal relationships with the leader (*zaim*), and more quickly than through civil procedures (Joseph, 1997). Knight (1992) explains that a *zaim* is a political leader who is supported by a local community of followers and retains this support through favours to as many of his clientele as possible. He tends to be wealthy as he is usually an heir of a prominent family which has had economic and political influence since the Ottomans (Salem, 1973). This means that the *zaim* system may threaten loyalty to the state.

The *zaim* becomes an intermediary when he uses his power to do favours for the people. He is then referred to as the intermediary person (*waseef*) in formal Arabic or, more commonly, is known as *wasta* in colloquial Arabic. So the term used for the act of *wasta* is used interchangeably with the intermediary himself (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993). A *zaim* can be a national or a local leader. A local leader would have more contact with his followers and can take advantage of the needs of those

around him to distribute jobs or to intervene as a mediator in transactions on their behalf. This process of mediation (*wasta*) can also occur between the *zaim* and people from outside his immediate community to gain more popularity (Gubser, 1974). At the same time, one *zaim* could be a client of another *zaim* and both could exchange support for services (Knight, 1992).

The *zaim* system, although another disruptive structure in establishing national loyalty, has been argued to be a positive influence. Knight (1992), for instance, argues that it represents a link between the people and the newly introduced bureaucracy which has accompanied the formation of the state, allowing it to be more personal and less alienating. However, the survival of the *zaim* system depends on the ability of the leader to meet the expectations of followers through favours which otherwise may not be met by the state.

In Lebanon, as in other places in the world, powerful community leaders are the gatekeepers and are capable of influencing decisions affecting the conditions of their communities. Salibi (1988) and Salem (1973) argue that not all political leaders have supported wide ranging bureaucratic innovations because of their vested interests and confessional traditions. Resistance from the leaders of confessional groups has played and continues to play a role in hindering the arrival at a common plan for development which threatens their client-patron relationships with the groups they control. The leaders show no interest in seeing their groups develop, in fear of being deprived of their power. They could always blame the government for neglect and thereby win more alliances as protectors of the people (Salibi, 1988). Goglio (1997) argues that despite the rise of a nation state after independence, the traditional structures which appeared to have been weakened by modernisation, reproduced themselves on the political stage. The leaders followed the same principles of confessionalism and balance of power, thus reinforcing patron-client relationships.

*Wasta* is not a new phenomenon in the Middle East. It has a long history in dealing with Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman bureaucracies. Although Middle Eastern nations have acquired modern laws and structures, traditional structures, such as *wasta*, continue to exist. *Wasta* now intercedes with government agencies (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993). In Lebanon, as in other areas in the region, *wasta* was first used in conflict resolution in the earlier village settlements before law and order was introduced by the state. The head of the family or village leader would be called to intervene among contesting members of the group. In return, he was praised for his efforts (Murr, 1987). As *wasta* later came to mean mediation to access material goods or access services, the patron would more likely be a political leader in a changing environment of economic affluence. In Lebanon, up until the beginning of the war in 1975, state reforms had not reached all and this explains the persistence of *wasta* in many areas (see Gubser, 1974). The two types of *wasta* are present in the villages of the study, although political *wasta*, referred to as intercessory *wasta*, is more common with increased contacts with the outside.

### 3.4 History

The regions that compose Lebanon today were historically parts of separate provinces of a succession of empires beginning with the Phoenicians in 2000 BC. Ever since the Phoenicians, the coastal city states of Sidon, Tyre and Byblos flourished in trade across the sea (2000 to 1000 BC). These cities maintained their trade throughout Greek and Roman times, while Beirut became a centre for the study of Roman law (Salibi, 1988). Owing to their geographical location, these cities prospered while the inner regions did not benefit as much from trade and were not as well developed, which was also the case during the Ottoman rule.

Lebanon was a state of the Ottoman Empire for four hundred years (1516-1919). During that time, Lebanon's territories were made up of separate



provinces controlled by Ottoman rulers who were responsible to Istanbul, the Ottoman capital. Although the provinces were all under Ottoman rule, the political administration of each was left up to the local ruler. This explains many of the differences in social and economic conditions prevailing between the provinces, such as those between Mount Lebanon and Akkar for example. Crops also varied with the terrain used for agriculture. Mount Lebanon has a cooler climate where mulberry trees used to grow, which were used for the silk trade, while Akkar supports a variety of fruit trees such as olives and grapevines (Hoblos, 1987). Christian sects dwelled in the northern part of Mount Lebanon and Muslim sects inhabited the southern part of Mount Lebanon and Akkar. The sects, as mentioned earlier, migrated to Lebanon from the surrounding regions at different times in history.

The Ottoman rule in rural areas left them the least developed regions of Lebanon. When the Ottomans came to Akkar in the 16th century, for example, it was ruled by rival clans of landlords, controlling the mountains and the coastal plain. With no interference from the Ottomans, Akkar experienced feuds between these local landlords and those in the neighbouring provinces such as Mount Lebanon. The aim was to further extend territorial control. This situation reflected negatively on the peasants who lived in the villages. At the end of the 17th century, the poor socio-economic conditions of the peasants who cultivated the landlords' crops led many of them to flee the land and their houses. Taxes on property, livestock and transactions were collected from them and spent on military expenses. Drought, snow and frost, in addition to the lack of planned irrigation, were among the factors that affected agriculture. The destruction of houses in the feuds and the neglect of the poor social conditions hindered the development of the area (Hoblos, 1987).

In the later decades of the 18th century, a privileged administrative entity named the *Mutasarifiyyeh* (privileged province) was formed in Mount

Lebanon. Mount Lebanon became ruled by a Christian Ottoman governor. This was based on a request from the European countries, after civil conflicts broke out between the Christian and Druze sects. Under this new regime, Mount Lebanon flourished (Salibi, 1988). New roads were built to connect the inland villages to the coast. Ports, modern telegraph systems and railway lines were established (Cobban, 1985). By the early 1900s, the provinces were linked to Europe through the silk trade and ties with the west grew. Schools, universities and printing presses flourished in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Encouraged by economic stability, the banking sector emerged and trade grew. With it emerged the merchant families from Mount Lebanon who took over trade in Beirut (Salibi, 1988). Baalbaki (1994) describes this process as peripherisation and centralisation which favoured the economic development of the central region of Mount Lebanon and Beirut and disadvantaged the remote rural areas of the south, the north and the hinterland of Beqa.

So during the Ottoman rule, the cities, especially those in Mount Lebanon flourished more than the rural areas of Mount Lebanon, and Akkar. Coastal cities prospered as they were the trade links between Europe, Egypt and Syria. Tripoli, for example, linked the Syrian coast and the countryside with Europe. Even though the villages were linked to the trade process, middlemen controlled the cash crop profits which were dependent on the demands of the European markets (Murr, 1987). The Europeans bought agricultural goods such as silk, cotton and other products from the rural areas and these were transited through Tripoli by local merchants. Sidon and Beirut provided outlets for Damascus, exporting silk and woven material from Mount Lebanon to Europe through Egypt. Prominent families from Mount Lebanon established themselves in Beirut during this time and continued to do well during the French mandate (1919-1943). They became active in the export trade maintaining commercial ties with Egypt, Italy and France. Beirut acquired a cosmopolitan character attracting merchant firms to

open up offices and then the city became the centre of European consular representation (Salibi, 1988). During this time, the European missionaries established educational institutions, libraries and printing presses that still thrive today in many of the cities. The French built the highway that connects Beirut to Damascus to facilitate trade. The coastal cities of Sidon and Beirut became trading outlets for traditional goods produced in the rural villages. Handcrafted pottery, baskets, silk and agricultural products were exchanged for clothing, furniture and utensils (Murr, 1987). Meanwhile, the outlying rural areas of Lebanon were witnessing hardships. Most of the villages in the Mount Lebanon area became summer resorts for the affluent while the villages in Beqa, the south and the north remained isolated.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War One, France annexed the provinces from Akkar to Tyre, the Beqa and the southern Houran Mountain to form the State of Greater Lebanon in 1920 (Salibi, 1988). The rural areas continued to lag behind in development in the first years of independence which was gained in 1943.

Table 1 : Important Dates

Ottoman rule	1516-1919
French mandate	1919-1943
Formation of Greater Lebanon	1920
Lebanese independence	1943
Civil war	1975-90

At independence, the state endorsed a complete laissez-faire economic system based on free enterprise and individual initiative, enabling the private sector to flourish. Economic progress was boosted by an influx of Arab investments encouraged by the liberal economy, freedom of trade, low taxes and the presence of educational initiatives (Salem, 1973). Despite the strong growth that the Lebanese economy exhibited, favouring Beirut and

Mount Lebanon, the state had no plan for a public development policy to achieve economic and social equilibrium. Public spending was no higher than twelve per cent of the national income (Goglio, 1997). People with high standards of living were bordered by unemployment and poverty.

These adverse conditions were caused by a number of factors. They were supported by the spread of larger private businesses in the urban areas which affected small peasant enterprises and forced many farmers to leave agriculture. Industrial projects aimed at export to the Arab states. The inability of the manufacturing sector to accommodate all the workforce from agriculture and the entry of foreign service companies, such as those in the banking sector, further contributed to the economic disparities which had begun with the Ottoman rule (Goglio, 1997). After independence in 1943, the disparities in distribution of services and inequitable economic gains continued to favour Mount Lebanon and Beirut.

Despite a rise of an urban middle class of educated individuals, political and communal loyalties remained strong. The middle class was unable to overcome communal and family ties and had no alternative plan for political and social reform (Goglio, 1997). These familial, sectarian and political loyalties, which sustained prosperity for particular groups, were the same forces which contributed to pulling society apart and to social disorder and civil tensions. Complicated by regional political problems, a civil war broke out in 1975. In 1990, an Arab intervention, the Taif Agreement, signed in Saudi Arabia stopped the war and Syria was called in to disarm the fighting militia and establish reconciliation (Abraham, 1994).

The political situation in Lebanon during the second half of the 20th century and indeed in the Middle East region in general has been characterised by intermittent periods of war and peace. This has not provided Lebanon with an appropriate environment for long term planning. Regional security situations also affected internal conditions. The first disruptive force was the Arab-Israeli conflict which began in 1948.

Thousands of Palestinian refugees entered Lebanon to seek refuge but they became part of the internal political conflicts. Subsequently, a succession of Arab-Israeli wars as well as conflicts of interest between the Arabs and the west affected internal stability in Lebanon (Salibi, 1988; Cobban, 1985; Abraham, 1994). Today, Israeli and Syrian troops are in Lebanon. Israel continues to occupy part of south Lebanon since its invasion in 1982. These conditions, which demanded short term management, together with the weakness of the state and its inability to take timely decisions, left little opportunity for development planning.

### 3.5 Development attempts

Many attempts at development and development planning at the country level have been documented for Lebanon but they have not been successful for both political and administrative reasons. The first attempt was in 1956 when the Council for General Planning submitted a plan for country development. It was not implemented due to the outbreak of a short civil war in 1958 (Bashir, 1994). Then in 1959, the government contracted a French agency, *Institut de Recherches et de Formations en vue du Developpement* (IRFED), to carry out a national survey of development needs in the country. The ensuing report included a detailed description of the regions in Lebanon pertaining to social, economic and administrative conditions. Among the striking features was the subdivision of the country into five regions according to levels of development, the least developed areas being the north and Beqa. The four volume document also presented suggestions on how to improve the situation (IRFED, 1960-61). Unfortunately, this plan was not considered seriously. Baalbaki (1994) claims that because the plan strongly suggested social reform which challenged the power of the political leaders, they would not agree to it.

Consequently, in 1962, the Ministry of Planning prepared a series of studies but they were not implemented due to a lack of expertise and

constant change in governments which resulted in a lack of continuity with the decisions of their predecessors. In 1967, the Arab Israeli war broke out leaving the state to deal with emergency needs. It was not until 1972 that the same ministry put together a six year plan for the country. The plan was not effective. Delays in implementation occurred and meanwhile, security conditions in the country again deteriorated. Israel attacked Lebanon in 1973, followed by the outbreak of the most recent civil war in 1975 (Bashir, 1994). During the war, governments continued to prepare plans for reconstruction in intermittent periods of calm, but they were constantly cancelled because of renewed fighting.

Efforts to establish an administrative body, whose main function would be to lay down plans for country development, were not successful mainly because of administrative delays and the lack of useful statistics. In 1977, the Ministry of Planning was dissolved and replaced by the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) whose tasks and internal organisation took time to clarify. The 1975-90 war disrupted this process and the task was only resumed in 1992. CDR had not been able to secure funding and implement its plans for reconstruction in the 1970s mainly due to the lack of supporting statistics (Bashir, 1994). The Central Directorate of Statistics (CDS) was founded in 1979 to prepare national statistics, train government employees to carry out surveys to service the needs of the various ministries and coordinate local studies. Its position and function within the political hierarchy generated much controversy and it was continually shifted around among ministries which delayed its work. It did not function during the 1975-90 war but regained its function in 1994 (Kasparian, 1997).

During the 1975-90 war, international and non governmental organisations (NGOs) such as UNICEF, Save the Children, Pontifical Mission, YMCA and *Terres des Hommes*, to name a few, provided a variety of services in the absence of an effective state. Their work depended upon

local surveys and extrapolations at best, as most of the time it was difficult to reach all the country at once for security reasons. The lack of central statistics led in many cases to duplication of programs and a waste of resources (Mhanna, 1997a). I further discuss the role of these organisations in chapter four.

Recently, CDS and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) carried out country wide surveys. CDS studied the living conditions of families in Lebanon during 1997 with the aim of producing statistical data on social and economic conditions as well as identifying problems families may have in meeting their needs (CDS, 1998). The study covered areas of population demographics, work and work related income and expenses, housing and health care. MOSA's (1998) recent study on population and housing presents a baseline on a set of indicators adopted from UN standards to be used for future development planning in Lebanon.

The findings of both the CDS and the MOSA were released to the public within a few months of each other. The surveys had been funded by UNDP and UNFPA respectively, two UN agencies, the offices of which are located in the same building in Beirut. Given the lack of country wide statistics for more than fifty five years and the importance of these surveys, it is surprising that neither of the studies refers to the other's findings nor were there any efforts to coordinate implementation plans.

The reports rely on statistical information gathered through questionnaire surveys from family based and household samples of the population to describe the relative inequalities within the country as well as international comparisons. The indicators are useful for development planning and serve as a baseline of cross sectional findings of the country's demographic and social conditions. However, they do little to explain socioeconomic differences between regions and underlying factors which contribute to these conditions as they are descriptive, not analytical in nature. Furthermore, meanings people give to their situations and the

complex social organisation they are a part of are difficult to obtain by using surveys. I have referred to the findings of these reports in the following discussion of the contemporary socioeconomic conditions in Lebanon.

### 3.6 Current socioeconomic conditions

From an outsider's view, Lebanon is on the path to development. International statistics point to Lebanon as a moderately developed country with a Human Development Index (HDI) rank of 101 (in a range of 1 to 174), based on literacy, income and life expectancy (UNDP, 1995). However, the international statistics which compare Lebanon with other countries do not consider the many internal differentials which have only recently been measured by countrywide surveys and some small scale studies. According to the World Bank (1996), the income per capita was US\$ 2600 in 1995. However, unequal income distribution resulted in the richest 20 per cent of the population receiving 55 per cent of the wealth, while the poorest 20 per cent receive 4 per cent (New Internationalist, 1994).

During the 1975-90 war, the number of poor people increased with the disappearance of the middle class. With the decline in economic conditions of the country and the destruction of infrastructure, people lost jobs and sources of income. Those who could afford it, migrated. Many others were displaced from their homes and became poor. UNDP (1996) states that wages dropped by two thirds between 1984 to 1992 as a result of inflation and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a small number of the population. So the poorer areas of Lebanon, considered by IRFED (1960-61) and UNICEF (1993) to be Akkar and Beqa, expanded to include the suburbs of Beirut and other locations where refugees gathered.

Meanwhile, rural conditions continued to decline with the breakdown of the public sector. According to UNDP (1995), 95 per cent of the urban population in Lebanon has access to safe water, but only 80 per cent of rural inhabitants do. But these figures may be inflated as local studies show less



access in both areas (see UNICEF, 1993 and Baalbaki, 1994). UNICEF (1993) also argues that approximately 60 per cent of urban and rural water sources are contaminated. This means that even if access to water is high, water quality is a cause for concern. Also, 94 per cent of hospital beds in the country are in private hospitals which are mostly located in Beirut and Mount Lebanon (Jurjus, 1997). Unemployment, illiteracy rates and infant mortality are the highest in rural areas of Beqa and Akkar (MOSA, 1998).

Although the government is rebuilding Beirut and the damaged infrastructure, it has not supported efforts for social development which ideally, according to Burkey (1993), involves gradual change leading to improved social services, supported by financial resources from economic development and national policies. From this definition, social development requires state policies addressing unemployment, education and health services, rather than physical infrastructure alone.

### 3.6.1 Poverty and unemployment

Unfortunately, prevailing economic conditions are not supportive of social development. Unemployment, poverty, weak education and health care services are among pressing problems. The Lebanese labour market is open to non Lebanese workers especially in construction and informal services (Haddad, 1996). The labour force grew from approximately 900,000 in 1987 to 1.01 million in 1993 (MOSA, 1995). One of the implications of incoming foreign labour to Lebanon is the financial transfers from Lebanon to their respective countries (MOSA, 1995) and therefore instead of contributing to the country's economic development, it leads to the leakage of money to the outside. Van Lerberghe et al (1997a) estimate that there are 900,000 to 1,200,000 unregistered foreign workers mainly from Syria and 400,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. All the casual workers, except for the Palestinians who live in refugee camps, do not live permanently in Lebanon and send the wages they receive back to their families abroad. This

unrestricted and cheap foreign labour force is in competition with local labourers, who are increasing in number due to the decline in external migration after the war. An estimated 55 to 60 per cent of the labour force in Lebanon are casually or regularly low wage earners and are exposed to the risk of poverty because of the decreasing number of available jobs and the rising cost of living. Also underemployment may be hidden. Not only has unemployment risen among unskilled labourers (8.1 to 8.9 per cent of the work force are unemployed), but there also seems to be declining opportunities for university graduates seeking jobs for the first time as well (CDS, 1998).

Haddad's (1996) study on poverty in Lebanon highlights the underlying causes of poverty and presents a holistic approach useful to understand how poverty is linked to structural conditions in the country. It also discusses the government's interventions to address the situation. The statistics he presents are not based on representative samples but are taken from a study of a small number of urban families in Beirut. However, he utilises a number of other social and economic studies.

According to Haddad (1996), the extreme poverty line for Lebanon is approximately US\$ 306 per month, below which a family of five could not meet its food requirements. Another poverty measurement is the absolute poverty line below which a family of five cannot meet all its educational, medical and other basic expenses excluding food. This is estimated to be approximately US\$ 618. According to this measurement, 28 per cent of the Lebanese families (one million people) are estimated to live below the absolute poverty line, and 7 per cent (250,000) live in extreme poverty. In rural areas, 75 per cent of the families who live from agriculture are poor and 40 per cent are extremely poor (see table 2).

Table 2 : Poverty in Lebanon

Poverty Lines	Income US\$/month	Pop. with less than this income	Poverty in agriculture pop.
Absolute poverty	618	28% (1,000,000)	75%
Extreme poverty	306	7% (250,000)	40%

In the rural areas where agriculture is the major source of livelihood, the condition of the land is neglected. Labaki (1996) estimates that only twenty seven per cent of the agricultural land is irrigated. Irrigation systems, such as that for the Baalbeck-Hermel areas in Upper Beqa, receive only a small proportion of the funding required. The lack of sufficient irrigation, as well as flooding of the Lebanese markets with Arab agriculture produce, has caused difficulties for farmers. As a result, Lebanon imports 75 per cent of its food which represents a significant proportion of Lebanese total imports (New Internationalist, 1994).

A budget of US\$ 54 million was allocated to the Integrated Rural Development Plan for Baalbeck-Hermel in 1994 to assist its population of 54,000, but only US\$ 13 million has been made available so far, despite promises from US, European and Arab governments. The majority of the existing funds have gone to research on high yield crops and building a hospital (Haddad, 1997b). As a consequence of the lack of irrigation systems and the adverse social conditions, the population had been forced to grow and sell illicit drug crops during the war because the markets dropped for rain irrigated products, such as potatoes. The illicit crops did not require irrigation and produced large amounts which returned a large profit. The growers did not fully benefit from external sales because these were controlled by a few middle men. After sudden eradication carried out by the government after the war in the early 1990s, the farmers and their families were left with nothing.

One could argue that if more funds were spent on strengthening the agriculture sector, the rural population would be able to sustain itself more. However, it is unlikely that the government will be able to assist with further funds as the entire agriculture sector, which contributes to less than 10 per cent of GDP, has already been allocated 4.8 per cent of the reconstruction and development budget for all Lebanon. There are simply too many pressing problems.

### 3.6.2 Education

Funding for education, classified under social development, receives 13.1 per cent of the budget allocated for development as outlined by the government (Labaki, 1996). The funds go primarily to reconstructing and building schools and vocational training centres. The state budget deficit due to the war led to a decline in the quality of education in the public schools and institutions. This resulted in large drop out rates, estimated by the Central Directorate for Statistics (1998) to be approximately 30 per cent, highest among boys aged fifteen to nineteen years who leave school to look for work (CDS, 1998), and to the reduction in enrolment in public schools and universities (Haddad, 1996; MOSA, 1995). CDS (1998) estimates that 35 per cent of elementary level students are enrolled in the public sector compared to 44 per cent in the private. But given the lack of income for many, the annual US\$ 72 tuition fee per child, which does not include the costs of transportation and stationery, and which has to be paid at registration, is unaffordable for a family of more than one child. This further marginalises poorer families whose opportunities contract with the lack of access to education. The private sector schools attract more students, but only those who can afford the tuition fees. Private sector schools improve as they have independent administrations and budgets. After the war, private tuition fees continued to rise to reach an annual average of 1,328,000LL (US\$

867) for elementary classes compared to 111,000LL (US\$ 72) in public schools (CDS, 1998).

In its reconstruction plan, the government has budgeted to strengthen the Lebanese University, the only public university, and the vocational schools as well as to train public school teachers (MOSA, 1995). However, there is no mention of increasing the current capacity of public schools nor of introducing high school classes. There is also no plan to integrate university specialisations with market demands.

### 3.6.3 Health and health services

Public health care services are no better off. The provision of medical services is in the hands of private hospitals which bill the Ministry of Health for services, but over which the Ministry has little control. Services in the public hospitals deteriorated during the war as buildings were destroyed. This forced the Ministry to rely on private hospitals to treat people covered by public insurance schemes (Arbid, 1997). CDS (1998) estimates that 42 per cent of the population is covered by a health insurance plan which is part of the public sector social security system. Employees of the public sector and those employed in the private sector who are registered with the national security fund, are covered by the public sector social system which provides coverage for health care, family allowances and pensions (Ne'meh, 1996). The rest of the population pay their own expenses or are covered by costly private insurance. The poor, who are neither public nor private sector employees rely on low cost medical services offered by health centres subsidised by NGOs.

Infant mortality has decreased from 48 per thousand before the war to 34 per thousand in 1992, which indicates that infectious diseases have decreased in incidence. The under five mortality rate is 43 per thousand, but this is not the same in all areas. The preliminary results of a mother and child survey in 1996 show that the IMR is 28 per thousand (Van Lerberghe et al,

1997a). According to a study done in 1990, Beqa and Akkar account for more than 60 per cent of the under five mortality (UNICEF, 1993). In 1997, Abdallah (1997) estimated that there was one physician per 700 people, but 78 per cent of them are in Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

As a result of statistics such as these, the pattern for demand for health care in the country has shifted to chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. This has triggered an increase in hospitalisation and medical services for those illnesses, rather than increased health promotion and other preventive health measures which may help in decreasing their incidence (Van Lerberghe et al, 1997a). The ratios of high technology such as open heart surgery units, MRI and CT scan units to the population are higher than those in Germany and Canada (Jurjus, 1997). The private hospitals where costs are unregulated have increased their high technology services aimed at wealthy clients. Ambulatory care provided by private clinics run by physicians as a private fee for service are mainly located in urban areas.

The private clinics and health centres providing electrocardiogram (ECG) services and hospitals providing open heart surgery contrasts with the lack of anti-smoking campaigns and nutrition education. Priorities given to kidney dialysis contrasts with the lack of prevention programs for diabetes. Similarly, medical services predominate over others in prevention and health promotion. Prenatal care is left to the delivery wards of hospitals, rather than being available through maternal health clinics in urban and rural communities.

During the war, when the MOH was ineffective, public health programs such as immunisation schemes were initiated by international non-governmental organisations such as UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (WHO). NGOs also provided emergency outpatient services through their health centres distributed throughout the country. However, their services decreased as funding declined after the war. The focus moved back to the public sector which was expected to resume its services (Mhanna,

1997b). In the post war period, however, the debt that the MOH faced in hospital expenses increased to cover kidney dialysis, heart surgery and cancer medications for the general public after a government decision in 1990 to include these in health coverage (Van Lerberghe et al, 1997a). This meant that funds for health promotion were not available, given the outstanding debt.

Public expenditure on privatised health care is growing and the strain is becoming debilitating for the Ministry. A call for reform has been made by various groups including politicians, academicians, NGOs and MOH officials and different agendas for policy reform have been suggested. The World Bank has recently provided loans for administrative reform and the Ministry, backed by some international organisations, has begun to initiate reform to address health care delivery and its financing. However, Van Lerberghe et al (1997b) argue that this reform is a process of experimenting rather than implementing a coherent plan.

### 3.7 Conclusion

Disparities among the regions in Lebanon are not a new phenomenon. Historically the coastal cities flourished in trade, education and infrastructure. Their geographical location together with favourable political climates and an active private sector played major roles in their development. Meanwhile, the rural hinterland lagged behind as it had no geographical advantage. The rulers were not keen on developing the area as, ever since the Ottoman landlords, they have been involved in private gain.

The state has not been able to do much to improve these conditions which it inherited with independence. The economic development policy which the modern state adopted enabled only the private entrepreneurs to flourish from trade, but did little to bring about positive effects to the outlying areas. Administratively, there were no useful statistics to describe

the problems. Politically, pressures from communal loyalties and unstable surroundings contributed to aborting any development initiatives.

After the war, in the 1990s, the state faces a damaged infrastructure, internal debt and country wide unemployment. Education and health services are mainly in the hands of private organisations which means that only the more affluent of the population are able to benefit from them. Patron-client relationships and communal loyalties are strong and regional security pressures continue to have their affect.

Given this historical context, development may take more than construction and utilising updated statistics. The deeply rooted communal ties connecting individuals to their sects, families and political affiliations are presently more powerful than the ties to the state on one hand and on the other, there are many problems to address, most pressing are unemployment and poverty. Any state development plan must not only address structural problems of poverty and inequitable social services, but must also address inherent obstacles which have impeded development in the past.



## CHAPTER FOUR : DEVELOPMENT IN LEBANON

### 4.1 Introduction

Before accessing the villages, data were collected from development professionals in governmental and non governmental agencies (NGOs) working in Lebanon. I examined their approaches to development as they appear in their discussions and written documents. The analysis of the documents and the interviews shows that the approach to development in Lebanon follows a modernisation theory framework, apparent from the stress on economic development and infrastructure. Development through modernisation is an implicit approach adopted by the government and favoured by major western donors. Even though the academic literature points out various limitations of modernisation theory, the approach is unquestioned in development reports.

The language of the development professionals indicates that the project approach is used. The professionals seem to be unaware of the problems with the project approach which the development literature has critiqued extensively. On the contrary, they appear to see no alternative way of carrying out their work. They are uncertain that what they are doing is different from relief work because the procedures are similar to those in the work they were doing during the war.

The chapter begins with an overview of the development role of the state and non governmental organisations in a postwar situation where the government is expected by aid donors to resume its role. An analysis of this development practice in light of the literature on development theory and practice is presented. The modernisation theory of development which prescribes economic development and technology transfer for country development, is critiqued. Its limitations make it an unsuitable framework for all countries to adopt. This chapter also gives an overview of other approaches to development, namely dependency theory and Islamisation as

well as feminist critique which attempt to provide alternatives to modernisation theory. But they too have limitations for practice. These issues in development point to gaps between theory and practice in current development discourse and consequently to problems in development practice in Lebanon.

#### 4.2 Roles of the state and non governmental organisations in development

The current role of the state is devoted to reconstruction after the war. The original plan announced by the government is called Horizon 2000 Reconstruction and Development Plan. The Plan is mainly concerned with reconstructing damaged infrastructure. The plans for the education and social sectors, which come under the term 'social development', are dominated by rebuilding damaged schools and hospitals (CDR, 1996). Funding has been sought by the government from international and regional sources as the local national budget could not support all the new plans, due to the devaluation of the Lebanese pound as a result of post war inflation (Bashir, 1994). Governmental efforts have secured significant funds as loans and grants. The majority of funding for the Reconstruction and Development Plan is in the form of loans. UNDP (1996) reports that, in 1995, external assistance to Lebanon amounted to US\$ 231 million distributed equally between grants and loans. The total amount of funding required to cover the reconstruction plan from 1995 to 2007 is US\$ 18 billion. Originally it was \$13 billion for 1993-2002. The projects completed include administrative reforms for the public sector to fight corruption, restructuring buildings and equipping the office of Ministries with computers and software programs (UNDP, 1996), and an international sports stadium (CDR, 1997).

In the light of all these problems, the state has been criticised for overemphasising physical reconstruction and not including social issues in its long term planning (Shammas, 1996). It has not presented a clear policy to fight poverty or to address unemployment. To meet the high cost of living,

the government increased the minimum wages for low income earners sometimes more than once a year during the 1980s and early 1990s, but this has not kept up with the devaluation of the Lebanese currency and the increasing costs of basic food items. To reduce its current account deficit and to allow the increase in expenditures for reconstruction, the government has increased both direct and indirect taxation. At the same time, it has decreased the tax burden of larger companies, which further increases the gap between the affluent and the poor, by reducing the amount of available income for redistribution (Haddad, 1996).

During the war, as mentioned earlier, many local and international non governmental agencies (NGOs) played various roles. Their work included providing emergency assistance such as food relief distribution, repairing schools and infrastructure, providing medical supplies to the hospitals in war affected areas as well as some non relief development activities in other parts of the country. Their efforts have been described as effective in keeping the 'society together' as the government was largely absent during the war. Since the end of the war, NGOs continue to work in Lebanon, but their roles have changed from relief work to development.

The term NGO in current development literature covers a wide range of organisations and movements of diverse sizes, functions and purposes. Many have been classified into categories, such as international, national and community based. New terms have emerged, such as private organisations, voluntary organisations, non governmental voluntary organisations to mention a few (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994). However, a general understanding remains that regardless of the terminology used for these organisations, they provide assistance to others for reasons other than profit or political motives. In general, the NGOs in Lebanon fit this description with the exception of some which were established by political leaders as will be discussed below.

Despite the efforts and the supportive services the agencies have provided, their work was neither planned nor efficiently coordinated even

after the war had stopped. Mhanna (1997a) argues that donors continue to determine the work of the agencies by promoting the project mentality, which has often reduced the motivation for innovative techniques and long term planning. In general, because funding agencies receive more money for money spent, their interests lie in the number of projects rather than their quality or the approach used to implement them (Tisch and Wallace, 1994). For example, USAID, a major donor for humanitarian assistance, recently allotted \$12 million over a five year period to be granted to American or affiliated NGOs for development projects in Lebanon, following the \$2 million allotted in 1996 (Dick, 1997). Toward these goals, USAID has named rural community development projects in credit loans as priorities (USAID, 1997).

Baalbaki (1994) argues that coordination of development activities is also difficult due to conflicting program and political priorities as well as competitive funding. Several NGOs have been established by political leaders in Lebanon to benefit their confessional or political groups and to gain popularity through the implementation of welfare projects by 'their' organisations (Mhanna, 1997a; Sayyah, 1997). Mhanna (1997a) points out that conflicts over political and geographical control continue to influence the type and number of local projects implemented, just as these conflicts similarly interfered with state attempts in development planning. However, a recent listing of non governmental agencies functioning in Lebanon includes a majority which are non political organisations. They have various interests, such as children, human rights, the disabled, environmental conservation, youth, culture and research, as well as the national and regional UN offices (Wehbeh, 1997).

The domestic non-governmental sector in Lebanon has not been able to play a full role in development due to a number of restraints which include fluctuations in funding. Funding is scarce and securing suitable funds has become competitive and time consuming for NGOs. Haddad

(1997a) argues that foreign money, which fluctuates according to the foreign policies of donor countries, has been more times than not barely enough to cover the administrative costs of the agencies and hence diminished their programs. It is difficult to instigate long term change through short term development assistance as change is usually a slow process and its results do not show immediately. In order to share the burden and to maximise funding efforts, some of these organisations attempted to coordinate their work and form collective assemblies of various kinds (Mhanna, 1997a).

When funds are approved, they are accompanied by the desire of the funders to hold NGOs accountable to them. It is argued, that by accountability, issues of importance, such as gender awareness, participation and sustainability are ensured in projects. In practice, this is reduced to financial accountability where auditors play a major role. The fact that auditors are the primary evaluators means that the recipient agencies are more involved in perfecting administrative procedures than in staff learning and institutional growth (Shepherd, 1998). With increased funding, there is the risk that the implementing agencies may lose their focus as they spend more time servicing their donors' requirements and consequently become more bureaucratic and distant from the people they serve (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994). In countries, such as Lebanon, where funding fluctuates and funds for development projects have declined, recipient agencies, in an effort to obtain funds, produce project proposals which reflect the donors' strategies rather than reflecting local needs. For example, even though many funding agencies now require that women are included, it has been argued that these project proposals target women in order to attract grants rather than to improve women's conditions (Carapico, 1997).

The sudden shift from relief to development projects after the war left many agencies trying to interpret development according to their own views and many NGO staff were not well trained for this kind of work. The expressed needs for training have not been met as the funding has only been

for program reviews. Chambers (1993) argues that development professionals' university training provides them with specialised knowledge and academic methods in problem solving, but does not equip them with the knowledge required for successful development work of a more complex nature. Therefore, development work needs 'new professionals' whose training extends to the social aspects of development projects rather than limiting concerns to narrow aspects of particular technologies. However, training new professionals is not a development priority among funders. External funding from international donors that used to support the training of indigenous professionals in developing countries did not reap the anticipated benefits of creating agents for institutional change. Reasons for this include the varied personal motivations as well as the social and administrative barriers for change existing at various levels of the organisations (Tisch and Wallace, 1994).

Today, the number of non governmental organisations continue to increase in Lebanon, particularly since the end of the war. According to Baalbaki (1994), between 1960 and 1980 the number of local NGOs rose from 59 to 168. However, their programs have been limited by a decline in international funding. Sayyah (1997) argues that NGOs have had no role in the recent national reconstruction and development planning initiatives as the government has excluded them, despite their long experience of working with the people.

This background on the role of the state in country development and the NGOs in community or sector development is reflected in the documents and interviews with development professionals discussed next.

#### 4.3 Development documents

I reviewed reports from a number of NGOs, international agencies and governmental bodies concerned with development in Lebanon, with the aim of understanding development issues as they appear from a professional

point of view. I have chosen to discuss in detail three documents which I obtained from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 1996), the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR, 1996) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 1997) which represent an international development organisation, a governmental agency and a donor agency, respectively. Public access to contemporary reports from local and international development agencies is difficult because the development agencies in general do not regularly publish their reports. There is no central body which stores and retains such reports for research and debate.

Analysis of the documents shows that they all emphasise achievements in rebuilding physical infrastructure damaged during the war as well as equipping offices and hospitals. UNDP describes physical infrastructure achievements as an indicator of the development efforts the government is pursuing, pointing to the fact that building permits have gone up and the movement of cement used for construction has increased. In its latest progress report covering the period between 1992 to 1996, CDR also presents a detailed account of progress in building construction and infrastructure projects. Progress includes roads, electricity and renovations for damaged public premises, especially in the central Beirut area. Again, the focus is on physical structures. CDR supports this information with large coloured photographs of the construction process. CDR has been responsible for planning, mobilising external finance, managing the design and monitoring developments in the national reconstruction program. The reconstruction activities were implemented either by CDR itself or through domestic and foreign contractors. USAID maintains that although new plans are more towards enhancing economic activities in rural areas, it will continue to support a range of community-level reconstruction activities aimed at agriculture, roads, schools and potable water systems, to mention a few.

Another concept stressed in the documents is economic development. UNDP explains that the components of development are productivity and income generating which increase economic growth at the country level. Economic growth is considered important for generating financial resources to pay for the reconstruction program and to undo the huge regional imbalances in infrastructure, income and wealth. UNDP acknowledges the discrepancies in socioeconomic status among the different regions and argues they will only be addressed with a strong national economy which distributes benefits with equity. UNDP also points to the need for a plan to decrease debt, indicating that forty per cent of the annual budget went to servicing debt in 1996. In its new country program strategy, USAID (1997: 3) also refers to economic development for the country as a whole as well as specific objectives for rural areas:

'Assistance is designed to assure that USA contributes to goals of peace, democracy and market economies with Lebanon' [and target] '...a limited number of clusters of rural communities' .

The proposed funds will be spent on promoting economic opportunities for rural communities chosen according to criteria of need and community participation and 'matching contributions'. Program strategies include assisting community development through village banking and micro enterprise credit programs. According to the document, the World Bank and CDR have targeted urban areas and therefore, this program complements their efforts.

The description of economic development for rural areas in the USAID document seems to be used interchangeably for community development which implies that economic development, particularly through credit loans, will result in community development. However, this plan overlooks factors of access to loans and distribution of benefits. The document also implies that the donor has already decided on the areas for



development assistance and the amount of funds to be spent on specific projects as well as the mechanisms which leaves little opportunity for the development agencies which execute USAID projects to decide on priorities.

Only briefly mentioned in the three reports is progress in the social services such as health and education. Social issues in development are mentioned in terms of improvements in education and public health services which also emphasise construction work as well as equipping schools and hospitals to provide services. In the public health sector for example, CDR reports on progress in hospital and health centre construction and equipping the new buildings. Public health is mentioned in relation to vaccination campaigns supported by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and UNICEF since 1987, and preventive health care messages about maternal and child health. As for education, CDR describes progress in rehabilitating damaged public schools in remote and war affected areas. CDR also briefly brings up social development by referring to a Sustainable Human Development activity funded by UNDP to evaluate the national policy and human resources of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA). Sustainable development is a term which was originally defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1988) as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In the interpretation of this concept of sustainability, human health and well-being have been at the centre of concern, and therefore, human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature (British Medical Association, 1998). Neither CDR nor UNDP define how they use this term and hence it is up to the reader of their reports to deduce how they do so. CDR uses sustainable development to describe phases of the reconstruction program which implies self financing. On the other hand, UNDP (1996: 2) defines sustainability as

'access to opportunities ensured not only for the present but future generations'.

In that section, there is a detailed description of proposed activities in the environmental sector. In another paragraph, UNDP explains that the interests of these generations are taken into consideration by people-centred development. The section refers to productivity in economic income generation as one of the core components of this development. So by analysing both sections, sustainable development would mean self supported economic development which, ideally, should not threaten natural resources.

Another term related to social development, empowerment, appears only in the UNDP report. Here, one of the goals of development planning is to empower, or offer a chance for, all people to participate in the development process especially women, labour organisations and NGOs (UNDP 1996: 21):

'Development must be by people, not only for them. People must participate fully in the decisions and processes that shape their lives'.

So empowerment for UNDP mainly entails enhancing people's participation in decision making. There is much detail on supporting administrative rehabilitation and reform, but there is no mention of social complexities which may not allow all people to participate equally, if at all.

For these three agencies, then, achievement is measured by the visible reconstruction of buildings and by increased national economic performance. CDR enumerates the successful building renovations and completed construction works in Beirut while UNDP describes the favourable developments which have occurred in the trade sector. UNDP suggests further promoting industrial activities which produce food items, clothing, leather goods and jewellery in order to ensure export sustainability. UNDP sees economic growth, measured in GDP, as the basis for social development because it can provide the funding for reconstruction. USAID outlines improvements in social conditions of rural areas as a result of potential improvements in economic conditions as a whole. A discussion of project

failures however, if there are any, and lessons learnt do not appear in any formal document read, nor do any discuss social development at any length.

The documents clearly use development jargon and use grand themes without adapting them to the local Lebanese contexts. The assumption that the themes implied in these western terms are successfully translated and successfully adopted in Lebanon. A further pitfall of applying western development definitions to non western contexts is the risk of overlooking or simplifying existing social structures.

The modernisation theory approach to development used in Lebanon is not explicit in a state development policy, but it shows through the reports which stress economic development and projects. However, economic development has not been sufficient by itself to bring about lasting improvements for all the population in Lebanon as I have pointed out in chapter three. Economic development adopted by the post independence governments has benefited part of the population in some areas of Lebanon while the rest of the population and outlying regions have remained poorly underdeveloped. The problem was and continues to be resource distribution. Millions of dollars worth of funds are being spent on reconstructing damaged infrastructure mainly in the Beirut area. This is basic for economic development and it is in the hope that when achieved, the benefits of economic development will reach all the population. However, without a national system to ensure that some of the resources are directed into social development, benefits will not equitably reach all. The current state development policy is not forthright in presenting such a structure and the economic policy is slanted towards privatisation. Meanwhile, some aspects of social development, although mentioned in development reports are a second priority.

The reports that the development agencies write are aimed at the international development audience such as donors and head offices. It is therefore expected that these documents include quantitative descriptions of

how the funds are spent because such accurate reports are important for more funds. The reports which the government produces also stress development project achievements of specific outcomes and tangible results because the government is also accountable to its donors and is striving to regain its credibility after the war.

It is not surprising that development professionals in Lebanon have adopted the modernisation theory approach to development. The donors who provide the majority of funds to Lebanon, namely the World Bank, USAID and OECD favour this. The industrialised west has been assisting Third World countries with development aid since the end of World War Two, mainly through development agencies set up for this purpose. In 1992, for example, sixty per cent of more than US\$ 130 billion flowed from western states to developing countries and the rest from private donors (Tisch and Wallace, 1994). The World Bank is currently one of the largest multilateral development funding organisations. It contributed a total of US\$ 1,640 billion to international development in the period from 1990 to 1995 (World Bank, 1996).

Modernisation theory, although not the only one which describes development and underdevelopment, is the leading theory behind practice, at both international and domestic levels. Western donors follow modernisation theory as an approach to development since its first use in the United States after World War One. In 1949, US President Truman, in his inaugural address presented his view on the role which western industrialised countries should play to make their advantages accessible to the poor areas of the world (Caufield, 1996). Consequently, development came to mean a program that aimed to make the advancements in science and industrialisation of the west available to underdeveloped nations through economic growth and industrialisation (Sachs, 1993). In subsequent decades, this process came to entail development programs and aid flowing

from affluent western countries (USA, Western Europe) to the less affluent Third World countries of Africa, Asia and South America.

Despite its limitations in alleviating poverty and socioeconomic problems in underdeveloped countries, modernisation theory still informs aid donors at the state level and development agencies at the project level. A discussion of modernisation theory and its critique is appropriate at this stage.

#### 4.4 Modernisation theory of development

Esteva (1993) states that economic development, based on the western capitalist model, became popularly seen by world leaders after World War Two as the essential path for colonies to follow. To develop, the nations of the post colonial era were required to follow this model which represented a modernisation imperative. This imperative, based on western economic history, prescribed a path towards development (Brohman, 1996). Modernisation theorists such as Rostow (1971) emphasise development in terms of surplus economic goods as a result of industrialisation. His model committed to westernisation and industrialisation with its focus on increasing and directing investments toward manufacturing. The more sophisticated the products in a technologically advanced or industrial economy, the closer this economy comes to development as it accumulates wealth which can then be devoted to other productive investments. So progressive economic development and growth would lead to social and political benefits for all people of all countries (Stein, 1997).

Modernisation theorists rely on an evolutionary perspective of social change to describe development. Social change is unidirectional where societies move from primitive to advanced stages (Webster, 1990). Rostow (1971) presented the stages of economic development as the replicable path for all countries, describing traditional societies as being at the first stage of low productivity methods. The last stage of high mass consumption,

following the modernity of the industrialised countries, is the ultimate goal where traditional societies would have broken through their static traditions and become capable of spending on goods beyond basic food and shelter. For this to happen, marginal economic growth is not sufficient. If the state is not capable of fulfilling this task, then it must be supported by foreign assistance in the form of investments or aid (Brohman, 1996). The thrust of this aid would be in the form of industrialisation, modernisation of traditional economic roles, changing agriculture practices from subsistence to export cash crop production, modernisation of infrastructure: water, sanitation, health care services and roads (Stein, 1997).

Weaknesses in the modernisation theory of development lie in its assumptions. One of these are that all countries are able to follow the same path to development presented by the west. The theory is based on European history and fails to consider historical and political differences between nations (Webster, 1990). Countries are labelled developing in contrast to the developed countries of the west which leads to stereotyping, overlooking their individual characteristics (McMichael, 1996). Another assumption is that all countries will benefit equally from the transfer of technology similar to the benefits to the west from the Industrial Revolution (Isbister, 1995). On the contrary, in Third World countries, as Gardner and Lewis (1996) argue, industrialisation has involved changes from subsistence agriculture to cash cropping which caused the poor to be displaced from their lands by machines. Burkey (1993) also adds that modern technology requires maintenance costs as well as trained technicians to operate it who may not be locally available. Also fuel and spare parts are a drain for national budgets because to purchase them from western countries requires foreign exchange.

Modernisation theory fails to describe within country situations as it describes development at the level of nation states. While economic growth has been achieved in some parts of the world at a macro level, the trickle down effects have not reached all people equally. This is due to problems

deeply rooted in the administrative and power structures in particular countries (Madeley, 1991).

Other criticisms directed at modernisation theory have to do with the way it views traditional societies. According to modernisation theorists, these are hindrances to development and must be overcome for society to develop (Rostow, 1971). But Webster (1990) shows that traditional societies can play an important role in supporting development and illustrates how replacing sophisticated kilns by traditional pottery techniques improved production in Mexico.

Crocker (1991) poses an ethical concern regarding the transfer from the west of one or more of technology, information and culture which may not be congruent with people's views or needs. Adverse effects of technology include pollution from industries, transportation and chemical wastes which makes the newly industrialised cities such as Sao Paolo, Bombay, Jakarta and Cairo the most severely polluted areas in the world (WHO, 1993). Weil et al (1990) also argue that health problems arise from industry, extensive use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. As a result, for example, mosquitoes have become resistant to spraying in some areas of the world.

Finally, the increasing debt that has resulted from the borrowing countries' fluctuating interest rates on loans from major donors such as the World Bank, has increased the burden on their economies in servicing the debt. The World Bank in its conditions to provide these loans specifies structural adjustments in public spending within the borrowing country which impact on the poor. This top-down approach to development activity has in fact not led to development in the Third World. It has increased gaps between the poor and the affluent countries (Toye, 1993; Stein, 1997) as well as among already marginalised people within Third World countries, such as poor women (Snyder, 1995; Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994). Nevertheless, borrowing continues.

#### 4.5 Dependency theory and Islamisation

Another theory which provides a counter argument to modernisation theory is dependency theory produced by Third World critics as a response to the western modernisation model. Unlike modernisation theory, dependency theory emerged from the experience of Latin American countries of the development model set up by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America. While Latin American countries were supplying raw material for the industrialised countries of northern America and Europe, they were failing to develop their own industries and fell into a state of dependency on the affluent northern countries for export markets (Frank, 1969). Dependency theorists deny that capitalism, which has led development in the west, can develop underdeveloped nations because both development and underdevelopment are aspects of the same economic processes (Baran and Hobsbaum, 1961; Wallerstein, 1974). Baran and Hobsbaum (1961) argue that large inequalities within and among states are created by capitalist production in a market influenced by international capitalism, favouring the rich countries. Their view of an ideal society is a socialist society where potential economic surplus is used for the benefit of the majority, rather being in the hands of an exploitative minority (Harrison, 1988). Underdeveloped countries remain that way because of their dependence on the developed countries. Thus for dependency theorists, development would occur if such links with industrialised countries were broken.

Using Wallerstein's (1974) terminology, dependency theory implies that periphery states (Third World countries) and their populations are passive and are only aware of their exploitation by the core countries (developed) influencing their lives. It thus overlooks internal dynamics and the possibility of development from within, where societies act differently to resist oppressive powers. Many have even embraced capitalism (Gardner and Lewis, 1996).



An issue that dependency theorists raise which is overlooked by modernisation theorists is that of who gets what from development. Analysing how profit for a few connects to loss for others is an important contribution to the understanding of development dynamics (Gardner and Lewis, 1996). However, the possibility of an ideal society based on socialism, where inequality no longer exists, is a utopian view. It relied too much on the Soviet model of development which emphasised heavy industry and capital goods, but resulted in greater inequality (Harrison, 1988) and it has been shown not to be sustainable.

Another reaction to modernisation theory is Islamic development theory which also stems from a Third World region, that of the Middle East. The Islamic response to modernisation theory is that western notions of development are inappropriate to non-western countries. Modernisation deprives the non western countries of their values, because it breaks down their culture as they embrace it. Also, with its emphasis on technology and excessive use of chemical fertilisers, modernisation destroys their agricultural lands, and marginalises their people in the individual pursuit of self interest (Sardar, 1997). The religious leaders in the villages of the study are informed by this Islamic model and their rhetoric portrays their disappointment with the current state initiatives (see chapter six).

Islam defines development in a more comprehensive way to include a spiritual as well as a material character. Development should include qualitative and quantitative change, that is cultural and moral development as well as physical development. The goals of development policy should be human resource development, expansion of useful products to reach all regions and the evolution of indigenous technology (Sardar, 1997; Ghazali, 1990). Sadeq (1990:2) argues that an alternative view of development in accordance with Islamic teachings is the 'multidimensional process which involves improvement of welfare through advancement [and] reorganisation of entire economic and social systems, through spiritual upliftment'.

Economic development becomes important in establishing this welfare both materialistically by the distribution of the benefits of economic growth and morally through people practising high moral standards and Islamic values. The underlying explanation is that a Muslim needs to be economically prosperous to lead a good life and to fulfil family, social and religious duties (Sadeq, 1990). Islamic scholars agree that development will be successful if the Muslim communities of the world unite and dependence on the outside world is reduced.

The Islamic theory of development includes elements from modernisation theory while its proponents claim that it opposes western views of development. There is a similar emphasis on economic production and the use of technology, although they are described as indigenous, to enhance the development of all regions. The call for the integration of the Muslim community (*Ummah*) and the reduction of dependence on the outside world reflects the dependency view of achieving development through cutting off ties with the west. Ideologically, development from an Islamic perspective appears to borrow from both modernisation and dependency theories but presents these elements in a religious context and may be seen as a version of modernisation theory culturally appropriate for Muslim countries.

Although this new concept of development presented by Islamic scholars includes the elements of morality and human welfare at a micro level, which is missing in modernisation theory with its focus on nation states, it has weaknesses in regard to the practical issues of implementation. The boundaries of the *Ummah* are not well defined and the people for whom these ideals are formulated have only religion as a common characteristic. Ahmed and Donnan (1994) point out that there are one billion Muslims in the world distributed in fifty countries, ten to fifteen million of these live in the United States and Europe. They have become citizens of the west and may not share these aspirations or alternative views. Moreover, countries

described as being a part of the Islamic community include among their citizens non Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds. They also differ from each other in social organisation.

#### 4.6 Feminist critiques

None of the major development theories are particularly useful in describing and prescribing paths to social development. They focus on economic development and are unable to answer internal resource equity, where inequity is embodied in social and political relationships. These theories of development are further critiqued by feminists for overlooking the effects of economic development on women. They argue that industrialisation and technological advancements have benefited men more than women and that women are stereotyped according to the now outdated western model of the division of labour which shows women as non participants in formal economies (Snyder, 1995; Moser, 1991; Boserup, 1970).

Attributing women's unequal social status to the sexual division of labour, liberal feminists seek to ensure that women get greater access to a wide range of occupations and decision making power (Young, 1993). Women In Development (WID) efforts emphasised the integration of women into development through the provision of appropriate technologies, credit programs and training to improve existing income generating skills. However, this has led to a concentration of projects and research with a women only focus (Moser, 1991). For example, the focus on women in health programs reduces them to reproductive agents. In maternal health programs, such as the Safe Motherhood Initiative supported by the World Health Organisation, Koblinsky and Gay (1993) argue that there is a need to focus exclusively on reducing maternal mortalities by increasing access to maternal health clinical interventions and family planning. However, Sai and Meacham (1992) consider that this approach limits women's needs to those of their reproductive capacities and measures their well being in terms of

successful birth control and staying alive. While these are important, this strategy overlooks women's other needs, their perceived sense of priorities and the wider sociocultural factors surrounding them.

The more recent Gender and Development (GAD) approach focuses on the relations between men and women as the core of the problems in development. The premise is that women are incorporated in development in very limited and specific ways and that a focus on women only is not sufficient to introduce lasting change. This approach recognises that women are not a homogeneous category of passive individuals, but differ in experiences and attributes and are involved in social relationships. So deconstructing the structures which support women's disadvantage will involve both men and women in a struggle to adapt to changes in their relationships (Moser, 1995).

Agarwal (1997) claims that gender continues to be a topic of 'special interest' rather than being integrated into development policies. Moser (1991) argues that women's projects are still perceived by development personnel as sex stereotyped activities for income generating that reinforce women's roles in household activities such as sewing and food production. But Longwe (1991) argues that, where development is concerned, issues such as access to land and production resources, equal participation in decision making, planning and benefits are among those which should be considered. When these elements of gender analysis become a part of planning, benefits for women will improve.

Feminist critiques have been instrumental in the recognition of women's role (or its lack) in the male oriented processes of development. Focusing on women is also not awareness of gender issues. Creating more jobs for women does not necessarily improve their living conditions as their income may be spent on their families. Gender awareness requires a comprehension of culturally specific forms of inequalities such as patriarchy-based kinship relationships and related belief systems. This is the case in

Lebanon and these issues will be discussed further in chapter five. These feminist critiques have been useful but they have rarely been appropriately applied to deal with the fundamental problems involving both men and women.

Despite the criticism, modernisation theory continues to be used as a development framework in countries which receive aid. The alternative frameworks, which criticise it, also seem to be unsuitable. Internal factors, such as in-country resource distribution is a matter of political will and so, without it, the impact of development agencies is debatable. As will be discussed next, the work efficiency of these agencies is influenced by many factors including those which have to do with the prevailing country conditions as well as the agencies' perceived roles in development.

#### 4.7 Interviews with development professionals

Although the development professionals and I spoke in Arabic, some terms remained in English. 'Community', 'village cluster', 'NGOs' are part of the development jargon in Lebanon and it is taken for granted perhaps that those who are in the development profession know what they mean. 'Gender' which is also part of the development jargon has no equivalent in Arabic. This indicates that gender issues are not part of the Arabic speaking countries such as Lebanon. These terms are more easily understood in English. The Arabic term the professionals used for development was *tanmiyeh*, which implies a process induced by others rather than by oneself, which may be translated as *nomou*. *Tanmiyeh* was used together with the term *mostadimeh* which is currently used among development agencies to mean sustainable. The term 'sustainable development' is used to mean the contrary to 'relief'.

These development professionals used conventional development terminology to describe the work they do. For example, 'target populations' are the recipients of development efforts, further classified as 'disadvantaged

and vulnerable groups' 'displaced', 'village clusters', 'partners'. These 'beneficiaries' tend to be portrayed by development professionals as a homogeneous group of individuals who are similar in development needs and dependent on the professionals to improve their conditions.

Everyone explained that in the post war period, their current work is difficult. Relief is no longer the priority and they are aware that they should be orientated towards development. However, they were unsure about how this should happen. A number of them told me that they were trying to figure out the most appropriate way to assess the needs of particular communities in order to write a program proposal for funding and they needed ideas. One person asked me my opinion about managing solid wastes in a rural community setting and another told me that she was struggling with how to involve people in environmental issues. The professionals repeatedly spoke of the need to involve beneficiaries, especially women, in income generating projects, environmental conservation and waste management which seem to be a priority in current international development initiatives. Since accessing funds has recently become more difficult than it was during the war, proposals including these topics would improve funding possibilities but may not necessarily represent priority community needs.

Although the focus of the agencies they work in has changed since the war from infrastructure projects to community development, the approach the professionals spoke of was the same. Written requests to the agency signed by the community representatives and followed by field staff visits to assess project feasibility continue to be the accustomed procedure. The main target communities are currently the less advantaged displaced people who are returning to their villages after the war, as well as rural communities in remote areas. To facilitate post-war development, interviewees explained that their agencies would have to concentrate more on income generating projects and small scale credit loans. Infrastructure projects such as water and

sanitation, emphasised in the 1980s, should receive less attention. There was a general understanding that a shift from relief towards development would include activities in income generation and that the donors favour such activities. Unfortunately, there is little training available they can utilise to help them. None of them spoke of an integrated approach to programs or had a vision of a general social outcome to their work. Rather their descriptions were more of short term achievements and specific sectoral projects. It seems that to achieve development means implementing a series of development projects.

#### 4.8 Conclusion

Development in Lebanon is being attempted by the state as well as multiple non governmental agencies of a local and international nature. The state is currently involved in reconstruction activities of damaged infrastructure and buildings. While the non governmental agencies had a valuable role during the war in providing the population with basic medical and relief services in the absence of a government, this situation has changed in post-war Lebanon. The NGOs find themselves in a different environment of scarce funding and unclear relations with the government as to their role in development.

From the analysis of reports on countrywide development in Lebanon, it is clear there is an emphasis on infrastructure which was much destroyed by war rather than social development for people such as education and training, employment and health services. There is an emphasis on numbers of buildings constructed, projects completed and funds spent. This is related to the need to be accountable to donor agencies to secure further funds.

The implicit framework to development in Lebanon is modernisation theory. This shows through the stress on economic development, high technology construction and tangible outcomes. However, according to the literature, modernisation theory is not without its limitations and applying

its strategies is not without problems. It is very unlikely that non western countries will be able to develop sustainably through economic development alone, because the trickle down effects to all people and all sectors in the country are shown not to occur equitably. The limitations of modernisation theory are not mentioned in the professional documents, nor do the documents show that critiques of modernisation theory have made any difference to development thinking or practice, although the terms empowerment and participation appear in reports.

The professionals themselves, although committed to their work, are uncertain about what they are doing and are confused about their role in development. The kinds of projects they oversee are donor driven and the proposals they write are slanted towards donor interests to secure funding. The project approach, within which they work, is unable to accommodate satisfactorily gender awareness and community participation because of its rigid constraints. Poor co-ordination among agencies also leads to project overlap. This lack of planning and coordination, together with the lack of suitable training for agency personnel, are major problems which are not being addressed. Development professionals are too pre-occupied in keeping their offices in operation and following directions from aid donors. These issues will be discussed in relation to a particular development project in one of the field sites. This discussion will be found in chapter seven.



## CHAPTER FIVE : VILLAGE LIFE

### 5.1 Introduction

Villages are often portrayed as serene locations in the countryside where the inhabitants live peacefully from the land, far from the strife and conflict of urban life. This image stereotypes villages and the people living in them as traditional, static and homogeneous. However, villages, such as those in Lebanon, are in fact different from each other, although they share regional and religious characteristics. They are not closed communities, but have linkages with the wider society and change with time. Furthermore, conflicts and differences in opinion exist among the villagers.

The available literature on Lebanese villages is thin and has not been updated since the end of the civil war. There is not one study that presents a full representation of the physical and social aspects of village life in the late 20th century. Comparing the villages in this study to the 'typical' Lebanese village as presented by the earlier literature is not without its limitations. However, it does allow me to illustrate variations over time. Therefore, in the first part of this chapter, I discuss the available studies of the Lebanese village to present the historical background and identify the conditions that have influenced their current status. Then I present a physical description and a detailed analysis of the economic and social organisation of both villages from the data I collected during my fieldwork.

The chapter shows that Dar el Lawz and Ain Zeitoun are both similar to and different from the earlier Lebanese village. Their physical layout, as well as their social organisation such as the extended family (*ail*), village leadership positions and traditions are still intact. But unlike the earlier villages, where village leaders were chosen among the prominent elderly, village leadership today is gained through men competing with each other through their outside contacts. Men and women continue to do similar types of work but women have recently been able to gain some income through

selling home made goods to help with family expenses, where previously their work was unpaid in the home. This is because not all the men profit from selling agricultural produce and their opportunity for casual work off the land is limited. The villages in the study have more contacts with the outside than the earlier villages and the people are more educated, but men continue to have more privileges than women.

Dar el Lawz is less dependent on, and has fewer contacts with, the outside than Ain Zeitoun. The telephone lines have only recently been installed in Dar el Lawz, while in Ain Zeitoun there are many houses which have access to this type of communication and there is a local public phone for those who do not have one at home. There are more paved roads leading to the surrounding villages in Ain Zeitoun and, consequently, its inhabitants go out more and are more in contact with them. On the other hand, Dar el Lawz has more financial security than Ain Zeitoun because its land holdings are larger and its main cash crops (almonds) are more profitable than the olive crops sold by Ain Zeitoun. Nevertheless, the public services in both villages are relatively the same, despite the fact that Ain Zeitoun has received more development projects. The following chapter will show how these projects have produced similar effects and experiences in each village.

## 5.2 Studying the Lebanese village

The Arabic word for village is *qariyah* or colloquially *day'a*. According to the official definition of a village, it is a cluster of not more than 3000 local residents. Any gathering of more than 3000 would be considered a town and subdivided into neighbourhoods, each considered a village. This number was specified by Lebanese law in 1947 to assist in organising representative councils and municipalities. Hence the term 'village' describes an administrative unit in the state bureaucracy. There are hundreds of villages in Lebanon distributed in five Lebanese governorates excluding Beirut. These villages are linked to the main city in the respective governorates through

locally elected municipalities. These municipalities represent the people to the state (Qabbani, 1981).

Lebanese villages and cities carry names that are illustrative of their origins. These may date back to Phoenician or Aramaic times or they may have been established during the Arab quest in the 7th century (Khater, 1985). Arabic names such as *Wadi el Jamous*, *Souk el Gharb* or *Beit Shabab* meaning 'valley of the buffalo', 'market of the west' and 'house of young men' respectively are easily understood by the Lebanese. But the non-Arabic names of villages, such as *Bhamdoun* or *Rishmayya*, which are of earlier origin, may only be explained by referring to specialised dictionaries such as the Dictionary of the Names of Lebanese Cities and Villages by Freiha (1996).

The available literature on Lebanese villages is scanty, and most of it is not recent, mainly because the 1975 civil war interrupted scholarship and research. Most studies concentrate on single villages, highlighting those aspects of village life of most interest to the various authors. They tend not to be concerned with the history of their chosen village, except for Tannous (1941, 1942a, 1942b, 1943 and 1956) who wrote several studies about the village he had lived in, each dealing with one aspect of life. Murr (1987) suggests that much of village history is undocumented as cultural heritage is transmitted orally. Villagers did not, and still do not, resort to writing about their villages except in exceptional circumstances.

Generalising from these individual village studies to the whole population is risky as they show that village social organisation is quite diverse. This is a result of many factors, including the different religious and ethnic backgrounds of the people and the geographical position of the village. Proximity to the city, for example, plays a significant role in determining work opportunities and hence access to other resources. Therefore, what may be true for a Muslim village on the coast may not be true for a Catholic or Druze village in the mountains.

Dasgupta (1978) has even cautioned against studying single villages on the grounds that this may over-estimate internal ties and processes and under-estimate external links through trade, migration and work. None the less, I argue that it is possible to make some useful generalising statements from the literature which are pertinent for the present study. I have referred to Tannous (1941, 1942a and 1942b, 1943, 1956) for his detailed descriptions and analyses on the social changes which have affected village life in the late 1800s and early 1900s; Hoblos (1987) for his work on the history of Akkar and social structures of the villages there; Khater (1985), Freiha (1989) and Murr (1987) for details on social and physical structures of Lebanese villages.

### 5.2.1 Historical background

An early study by Tannous (1943: 271 and 274) describes village life in both Lebanon and the surrounding Arab states in the first half of the 20th century as consisting of 'deplorable conditions'. The peasant (*fellah*) lives in houses with his animals and works on the land which is half the time owned by feudal lords. In his work, the peasant utilises 'ancient techniques' in agriculture such as the 'wooden plough from biblical times' pulled by oxen. Tannous also mentions high incidences of infectious diseases, such as trachoma and malaria. These do not exist in Lebanon nowadays.

In another study, Tannous (1941) gives an explanation of how the silk industry impacted on economic activities in some villages. Economic self sufficiency based on land tenure, and agriculture production as a main source of income, continued until the development of the silk industry, which grew in the 19th century. He presents the story of how the silk trade in Lebanon challenged traditional village life and its values. Most of the villages in close proximity to Beirut first started producing silk for trade in response to the early demand for silk from the west, especially France. Silk production spread to other villages through trade merchants establishing profitable silk production centres and factories. Instead of raising olives and vegetables for

local consumption, the villagers began to raise silk as a cash crop. With time, mulberry trees needed to feed the silk worms replaced olive trees. Land was sold for money when necessary to be invested in the new activity. The more cash the villagers had, the more they could spend on new commodities in Tripoli and Beirut. Ultimately, possession of money gradually replaced land ownership, successful farming, physical courage and other values as a new symbol of prestige.

The silk trade was significant in the history of the Lebanese village as it not only introduced a new cash crop and with it new ways of life, but it also brought with it prosperity that fluctuated with external influences, which the villagers were not accustomed to and could not handle. With it, the village organisation changed somewhat from community coherence and dependence on the extended family to individual decision making. The villagers directed their search to business, emigration and city employment for possible solutions to their new economic problems.

About 1925, artificial silk appeared in the markets and by 1928, its quality competed with that of natural silk and its cost was far less. The drop in demand was universal. In time, the factories closed and the villagers who depended on them were left jobless and bankrupt. This led a large group of young men to migrate to the city and abroad to America. Migration as a possible solution was open to Christian villages first because they were in contact with the western missionaries through the schools the missionaries opened in the villages. For example, Tannous (1942b) explains that the American mission taught people English and introduced them to a new culture and hence made it easier for them to enter and stay in the United States of America. Migration continues to be an outlet for Lebanese villagers who seek economic security and who are unable to find work at home.

Huxley (1978) also writes about an area of interest to this study in his ethnography of a Druze mountain village in Chouf. He discusses the role of mediation or *wasta*. *Wasta* is a socially organised way of conflict resolution

for the village (see also chapter three). Huxley shows how this process of conflict resolution links the village to the diverse groups that live in the surrounding mountains. He describes how powerful individuals are contacted by village members to gain access to services and employment or to resolve a conflict. The study presents a description of the actors involved in these transactions and the relationship that is produced by the mediation process. The mediator himself, usually a powerful individual at the political or familial level, is contacted by a less powerful person to ask for a favour, or simply to resolve a problem among members of conflicting groups. This process results in benefits and protection for the villagers in exchange for loyalty for the leader, displayed in support during elections. *Wasta* is still an important concept in contemporary Lebanese society, and I discuss later how it operates in the two study villages.

To explain the role of village power structures, Gilsenan (1996) wrote an ethnography of Berqayel, a town in Akkar. His 1971 study, which relied on male informants, emphasises the power of the rural landowners over the peasants. The study focuses on the threat of political violence by the local landlords, which they used to maintain their control over peasants who tended the landlords' lands. The study contains a description of the village and of Akkar at that time when rival landlords controlled much of the area and the villages on it. The landlords governed the agricultural production and had influence over jobs. Therefore, they created spaces for their clients and dependents to improve their conditions, while the general population remained poor. This caused many divisions within the population and led to revolts and feuds. The area is described as less developed and more impoverished than the other rural Lebanese regions and its villages. Indeed, it continues to be described as the least developed in current development literature.

Murr (1987) has reviewed the literature on Lebanese villages written during the 1940s and 1950s. He mentions studies on customs and activities

within the villages as well as social processes influencing behaviour. He then describes the impact of change on life in a Christian village in Mount Lebanon and its ties with the outer world. The conditions he describes, which prevailed in the 1960s, cover the physical setting of the village and its layout including buildings, as well as the social organisation of the family, the church and customs. Some characteristics he describes such as loyalty to families, land ownership, types of agricultural produce and the celebration of feasts are still found in many villages today. His demographic statistics can be usefully compared to the present situation. However, health and health care have changed. For example, malaria no longer exists and access to rural health services has improved. Nevertheless, Murr presents an account of social structure and physical features still useful for a general understanding of contemporary village life.

His explanation of change brought about by modernity is insightful. In his study, which began in the 1960s, Murr (1987) describes the changes occurring as a result of the expansion of transportation, the media and education. He presents the village as a unified social unit giving the impression of harmonious relationships and serene lives for all the villagers as a background for his argument of the ill-effects of modernisation on village life. The 'new life', consisting of a set of changes that have been introduced by the new economy and through the mass media, has impacted on the physical setting and the social relationships of the village. The villagers accepted the physical changes such as western style clothing, new tools, motor vehicles and telecommunications, but they became dependent on the city to supply them with these items and on the need to find cash to buy them. As a result of these changes, the village faced economic problems. The increasing demands of the urban markets for agricultural and other goods in return for money could not be effectively met because of inefficient cultivation of the land and migration. As a result, people remained cash-poor.

Other more recent literature by Freiha (1989), Matuk (1986) and Khater (1985) also describes the customs, traditions and culture of the village. They agree on the centrality of village life in Lebanese culture and, as with Murr, document the changes that have occurred through the influence of the media, transportation and migration but do not analyse internal power structures.

These are useful studies as they show the existence of diversity in village social contexts, such as variations in religious backgrounds and social customs depending on the geographical location. They also illustrate that villages are not isolated from their surroundings, but have social and economic linkages. Common to all the villages described in the literature are the networks of family and religion, connecting them to local as well as external networks. These include patron-client relationships which produce dependence but strengthen ties with leaders. This will be discussed further in chapter six.

### 5.2.2 Village characteristics

The characteristics acquired through the contacts of the Lebanese with the Greeks, the Turks, the Arabs and the west fused to some extent to form the Lebanese culture, accommodating Christian and Muslim religions (Murr, 1987). Although a 'typical' Lebanese village does not exist because of the diversity mentioned earlier, there are some common characteristics. Freiha (1989) mentions hospitality, respect for the elderly and reconciliation to dissolve conflicts (*wasta*) as some common characteristics found in Lebanese villages at the beginning of the 1960s, while Murr (1987) describes family solidarity, attachment to the land and interaction with the outside world.

Lebanese villages were established by a family or group of families who built settlements of houses close together. Loyalty was to the village community, extended family (*aili*) and religion. In the 19th and first half of the 20th century, Lebanese villagers were complete as social beings only in relation to their *aili* and community. The nuclear family consisting of a



couple and their children was not as significant as the *aili* in the village. The *aili* is a kinship structure which derives its strength from the association of its members and their social interactions. This kinship group is the largest family group whose members share or claim descent from the same paternal ancestor. The oldest member of the *aili* held the highest authority as its leader (*wajih*) and when he died, the oldest or most courageous son took his place. The *wajih* spoke for his *aili* and had a role in solving internal as well as external disputes when they involved one of its members. Other responsibilities included advice on crops, dividing the land among the *aili* members and deciding on punishment if one of them shamed its name. The *aili* and the *wajih* are still important institutions today. The *aili* still exists despite urbanisation, which affected family ties through migration, and the emergence of the nuclear family, consisting of a married couple and their children, as the basic unit for economic activity. As discussed previously in chapter three, the *aili* plays a role in political decision making in all areas of the country.

In many Lebanese villages, a preference for male children still exists even though there have been some changes in economic activities in the villages and both men and women are gaining access to work and education. The eldest son of the family had and continues to have a higher status than his younger brothers and sisters in the household. His parents' first names are replaced by "father of" (*abu*) and "mother of" (*um*) as soon as he is born. A son is still preferred to the sisters because he will carry the name of the family and will help the parents in providing another source of income. The eldest is still consulted in family issues and has an influence over his younger siblings, especially over his sisters. He is in charge of the house in the absence of his father. In both Christian and Muslim villages, girls submitted to the authority of their father and brothers when still in their parents' house and then to their husbands after marriage. A woman's duty was limited to work in the house and often in the field with her family. These roles have changed

somewhat. Some women have joined the workforce and have become more independent (Boustani and Moufarrej, 1995). However, as long as Lebanon is a patriarchal society, the domination of, and preference for, males is likely to continue.

Other features that characterised the Lebanese village as described by the earlier literature were the land (*msha*); village square (*saha*); the spring (*ain*); the bakery (*furn*) and the oil press (*makbas*) (Freiha, 1989). The village square (*saha*) was the first place for social and economic activities. It was where the villagers met after prayers and exchanged goods. Today, it remains the location for many of the village shops. The place of worship, the village mosque or church was built in the *saha* for easy access to all. The *ain* or the water spring was the place people in the village collected water in pottery urns, usually every day. A small stone water reservoir would be built there to collect water from the spring. Shepherds drove their herds to it. The *ain* became a place for social gathering and fights over turns to collect water (Khater, 1985). The *ain* was not only a source for water in the village but was symbolic of abundance and was the site of social interaction for the villagers. Today, many of the villages receive piped water and depend less on the *ain* for daily supplies.

Most of the current administrative organisation in Lebanon was put into place during the Ottoman rule. In 1864, a new reform policy divided the property of the Ottoman Empire into provinces (*wilayat*) subdivided into smaller *aqdiyah* which consisted of villages governed by a municipality and a mayor (*mokhtar*). The *mokhtar*, meaning 'the chosen one', was the most powerful government representative in the village whose initial job was tax collection. He was elected annually by tax payers in the village and supported by a council of elders. He was responsible for conveying instructions to the village from his superiors and administering the village by prosecuting law breakers, updating birth and death registries and land transfers. He was also sought by the villagers to intervene in both legal and

social conflicts. The presence of a *mokhtar* relieved the head of one *aili* from governing the whole village.

Other prominent figures in the village were and still are the religious leaders, the priest for Christians and the *sheikh* for Muslim villagers. The religious leaders had an advisory role as well as a spiritual role in the village. They were highly respected and influential in social and religious issues. The religious leaders and the *mokhtar* are still the prominent and most respected figures in many Lebanese villages today although the *mokhtar's* social advisory role may have declined in some places.

The growth of the villages and the degree of mobility of their people were influenced by their geographical location. The mountain villages such as those in the north were isolated due to the rugged terrain. Many villages became self sufficient by producing their own food and preserving their own identities and ways of life. Historically, villages were built in strategic areas rich in water, fertile land and which provided some means for protection. Water in the form of springs would be the ideal source used for drinking and cooking in the dry season. Springs are abundant in Lebanon, formed from melting snow in the mountains. The second factor, soil fertility, was necessary for agriculture to produce food. Terracing, applying animal manure and alternating crops were some of the practices the village farmer used for increasing the fertility of the land. For defence, the choice of the village location was mostly on a hilltop overlooking a valley to avoid attacks. It was not until roads opened that the villages were connected with each other and the cities.

However, the land was not equitably distributed among all the villagers. Murr (1987) states that in the mid 1950s, the Lebanese Ministry of Education estimated that 91 per cent of the landowners in rural Lebanon owned less than 4 hectares of land each and those who owned more than 50 hectares represented one per cent of the rural population. This means that the majority of the rural population did not own much land and were tenants

working in other people's lands for subsistence. This was the case in Beqa, and areas in north and south Lebanon. Hoblos (1987) and Khater (1985) speak of the relationship between the landlord and the tenant as one of mutual welfare, yet more profitable for the landlord who was in control of the land and the people working on it. The landlord was the collector of taxes for the Ottoman Empire and had privileges over the peasants. He was distinguished by the power to interfere in the peasants' lives. Obedience to the landlord meant his permission to cultivate the land and live on it. This situation led to the formation of two classes, the rich landlords and the poor peasants, in the rural areas of Lebanon.

Freiha (1989) describes the general characteristics of the Lebanese villager as seen at the beginning of the 20th century. He mentions generosity and hospitality towards guests, shown in invitations to share meals or to spend the night and gifts of local produce to a visitor. Other virtues include helping others in times of need, patience, loyalty, discretion and respect for the elderly. However, Freiha (1989) mentions what he considers drawbacks in villager mentality, such as being under the influence of group norms and traditions and limiting one's behaviour to these standards. Adherence to traditional values gave the villager a conservative character and a group identity. This point is mentioned earlier by Tannous (1956) who described village farmers, whether sharecroppers, tenants or owners, living in closely knit village kinship groups and united by common social values, as a common trend in the Middle East in general.

Many of the attributes that are mentioned in these earlier studies of the Lebanese villages will be seen in the following descriptions of the two villages in the present study. The two are similar to each other in geographic and religious characters and social norms but vary in some important aspects. That they show many similarities to the village conditions described in the earlier studies means that they have not changed to the extent villages

in Mount Lebanon or neighbouring areas in the north have changed (Baalbaki, 1994).

### 5.3 The villages in the study

Data from Dar el Lawz and Ain Zeitoun show that the two villages are different in some aspects and similar in others. Table 3 compares some physical aspects in both villages. Both are situated in relatively similar geographic locations and climatic conditions in Akkar. This explains some common features such as agricultural products and kinds of work opportunities. The villagers in Dar el Lawz and Ain Zeitoun similarly produce crops from the land and have work outside the village. However, as table 4 shows, the main source of income for Dar el Lawz is cash crops and secondary incomes are casual work and full time employment. In Ain Zeitoun, the majority of the villagers work as casual labourers and depend less on selling their agriculture produce (Table 4). Dar el Lawz is twice the size of Ain Zeitoun which explains its larger land holdings, but ownership of that land differs. In Dar el Lawz, outsiders, descendants of the Ottoman Empire, own the land while in Ain Zeitoun, the land is in the name of deceased forefathers. Titles cannot be transferred, for reasons discussed later. Ain Zeitoun has experienced more development projects than Dar el Lawz. However, the basic infrastructure in both is unfavourable: the water projects, sewer lines and internal roads are incomplete.

Maps 2 and 3 of the villages are redrawn versions of the official maps of the villages which do not show most of the houses existing today. The reason for this is that many have been built without an official license. I have added the necessary symbols to show their location and represent major landmarks. Several of the photos taken from the field study appear at the end of the chapter. Each of the villages will now be discussed in detail.

Table 3 : Main Features of Dar el Lawz and Ain Zeitoun

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Dar el Lawz</u>	<u>Ain Zeitoun</u>
area	800 hectares	400 hectares
altitude	550 metres	150-200 metres
population	approx. 3000	approx. 2500
land ownership	descendants of Ottoman landlord	deceased relatives
land holdings	av. 150,000 m2/ family	40-50,000 m2/ family
sources of income	almonds, carpentry	olives, construction
major crops	almonds, olives	olives
roads	only main road to village paved and internal roads not paved	two main roads to village and most of internal roads paved
telecommunications	private cell. phones, television.	few house phone lines, 1 public phone, television.
water source	rainwater and distant spring	spring in the village and public waterworks
sewer lines	not available	incomplete
development projects	incomplete water project.	incomplete water project, loans, food aid..

Table 4 : Main Sources of Income in Dar el Lawz and Ain Zeitoun

<u>Village</u>	<u>Cash crops</u>	<u>Casual labour</u>	<u>Employment</u> <u>(Full time)</u>
Dar el Lawz	majority of village	300-400 men	100 men in army, 20 in other jobs
Ain Zeitoun	100-200 men	majority of village	less than 10 men

### 5.3.1 Dar el Lawz

#### 5.3.1.1 Physical layout

The village is situated on a hilly region in Akkar, 550 metres above sea level, overlooking the coastal area of Al Sahal and the Mediterranean Sea coast at the western edge. It is approximately twenty eight kilometres north of Tripoli and is surrounded by other similar villages. It spreads over an area of 800 hectares, the majority of which is covered with almond and olive trees (photo 1). Brick houses of one or two storeys are located on both sides of the main narrow paved road leading to the village square.

The main road to the village was opened in the 1940s and paved in the 1960s. This two kilometre road links Dar el Lawz to the nearest village, and is often used by the inhabitants to fetch water on donkeys or to go by car to buy meat, commute to other areas for medical services and to reach olive presses to produce oil. On both sides of this road, almond trees and new yellow electricity poles are apparent in addition to the newly installed telephone lines at one side (photo 2).

Other secondary roads within the village such as those leading to individual households and neighbourhoods (*harat*) are not paved (photo 3). A winding road recently cut through the rocky terrain that reaches another village was recently partly paved with cement with the financial help of local members of parliament who either provided funds directly or through their personal contacts. Footpaths leading into the fields are wide enough for a donkey to pass. An army major's house stands out among the rest of the houses and is well known because it is larger than the rest and is painted on the outside. The road leading to his house is paved.

The houses are built of cement brick. Walls of grey cement bricks means that a house has not been plastered, also with cement, and is hence not ready for people to live in, but many such houses are inhabited. Many are built together wall to wall as it is traditional in many Lebanese villages. This

saves on building costs. These are mostly single storey houses. Almost every new brick house has an old stone house of one or two rooms attached to it, originally built and used by previous family members. The stone house is now used for lighting fires to heat water, bake bread and cook. It may also be used as a tool shed and as a stable for animals. There is only one stone house which is still inhabited by its original owner and his wife and their two daughters. His sons occupy a modern house nearby (photo 4).

Many houses are newly built in the midst of a surrounding garden. The land around the houses is used to plant crops and fruit trees for domestic consumption. Decorative shrubs are grown in tins on the terrace or balcony. The majority of the households in Dar el Lawz own twin-tub washing machines but heat water for them and for other purposes in the shed using firewood. The neighbourhood which does not have electricity installations (ten houses), and approximately six other households who cannot afford to buy machines, wash clothes manually. Other electrical appliances usually include a television set and/or a radio.

A mosque with a high minaret, built in 1963 and currently being renovated, stands in the middle of the village square (photo 5). A new section is being added for women to pray. Men usually come alone to pray in the mosque on Fridays when the *sheikh* preaches. The prayers are heard throughout the village through amplifiers attached to the minaret. Women gather in households once or twice a week for prayers and to discuss the Koran.

There are seven local shops located in the village square and the oldest is the *mokhtar's*. The shops are relatively small, ranging from twelve to fifteen square metres, underneath or near the owner's house. Goods available in these shops include sweets, potato chips, bread, disposable baby napkins, paper tissues, canned foods, cigarettes, carbonated drinks (Pepsi, 7-up), tomato paste, toys and ice cream. There are some vegetables including potatoes and onions. Many shelves are empty. Vans and cars from the nearby



Bared Palestinian refugee camp and some surrounding villages distribute items to the shops and sell goods such as plastic kitchenware and vegetables to the houses (photo 6). Travelling salesmen from the Bared camp walk through the village selling clothes. There is no local butcher. Villagers buy their meat from a nearby village. Some families bake their own bread on a hot metallic sphere (*saj*) using the flour they buy (photo 7). Others buy bread that is sold at the local shops. Newspapers and other printed material are not available in the village. Soldiers in the armed forces bring the army magazine with them when they come home.

#### 5.3.1.2 Land and crops

Building a house or adding another storey requires official permits only given where land ownership can be proved. This is frequently not possible because the land is either still in the name of a family member now deceased (two cases) or, more usually, in the name of the last Ottoman landlord. Up to the early 1950s, Dar el Lawz, as many other villages in Akkar, was owned by governors of the Ottoman Empire, which explains why the majority of the villagers do not officially own the lands that they have 'inherited' and built their houses on. The land in Dar el Lawz is still registered in the name of Abboud Bey, who was the landlord during the late Ottoman regime in the early 1900s. After 1918 and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, he continued to rule the area as he was elected five times as member of parliament for Akkar until his death in 1958. Abboud Bey gradually took the land from its owners in return for seeds, oxen and food. Then he registered it in his name taking advantage of the powerlessness of the farmers. Now, it is a matter of understanding that the land belongs to those who live on it. But as they have no legal ownership, no one can buy or sell. A bank loan is not possible because there is no official land title that can be used as collateral. The villagers who depend on the land for their livelihood fear that one day it will be confiscated and returned to its legal owners, the

descendants of Abboud Bey, who are now in Europe. For this reason, the villagers approach a politician for *wasta* (see chapter six) when they need to start the foundations of a house or to complete a phase, enough for some of the work to get done. This protects them from prosecution by the police. It is expected that this favour is returned in elections with the villagers' votes.

The land represents a source of livelihood which they thank God for, but it also represents a sense of identity. It is part of their heritage, even though most of it is not officially owned by the current villagers. Despite the difficult financial situation of many, they would not leave it and migrate, although some have left for temporary work overseas.

'One's land, honour, religion and dignity cannot be sold'.

(Man in Dar el Lawz).

Elderly men and women proudly narrate stories of how they defended their land from landlords in the past and say they are ready to do so again when necessary.

'The village belongs to the village folk. If the land perishes, the village will fade. And as long as the villagers are staying on it, no one can intrude'.

(Man in Dar el Lawz).

The average land holdings are 150,000 square metres and range from about 10,000 to 400,000 square metres which may include either olive or almond trees or both. Crops grown locally include fava beans, grapes, figs, wheat, olives and almonds. These are crops that are watered by rain (*baal*), as irrigation systems do not exist. The crops, except almonds, are cultivated for local consumption and summer food stored for winter consumption (*mouni*), but any excess produce is sold. Wheat is boiled in summer to make crushed wheat (*burghul*), used in cooking (photo 8). Honey is also locally produced.

Almonds are the main cash crop, sold to the cities of Halba, Tripoli and Beirut. They are profitable crops as they may be sold either ripe or while they are still green. The first plants were shipped from Europe and sold through a government owned nursery, hence these varieties are called Italian and Spanish. Less than half of the farmers buy chemical fertilisers from stores in Halba and Tripoli to apply to their crops. The rest use animal manure. Olive groves are only ever fertilised with manure. No scientific knowledge or training is available for spraying pesticides. This means that the farmers who can afford sprays risk misusing them.

#### 5.3.1.3 Work and employment

Men work in a variety of areas, such as in agriculture, in the public sector or carpentry. Not all men can make a living solely from the land. Tractor owners are hired by others for ploughing. Up to twenty per cent of the men go to Koura, a nearby region, to work at tilling the land there as daily workers. They say that the pay is better than what they get in the local area. In the rainy winter season, work on the land is less as the harvests are picked and the land is already ploughed. It is in spring that work begins again, especially for those who plant summer vegetables.

The women help their husbands in the fields. Their work consists of planting and picking almond and olive crops as well as taking the livestock to graze, fetching firewood, baking bread and preparing meals. Using scythes the women cut the grass, which is left to dry in heaps if the cows do not eat it, to prepare the land for ploughing.

The children in Dar el Lawz help in daily chores early in their lives. At the age of four, girls and boys start watching over and feeding domestic animals. Around the age of ten, boys go to fetch water on donkey back. Girls help their mothers in housework and when they are not in school, they tend their siblings. When a girl marries, she is restricted to work in the house and

some work in their fields, while her husband works outside to earn their living.

The majority of villagers live from the land and either sell their crops in the cities through an intermediary who is entitled to a fee or they bring in a wholesale buyer who picks the crop and resells it in the market. A farmer's yearly earnings from almond sales ranges between US\$ 3,500 to US\$ 15,000 depending on the size of the land holdings. A farmer may produce between 3.5 to 15 tonnes per harvest. There are only two or three farmers who make around 16 tonnes and earn an income of US\$ 60,000 per harvest. These individuals are considered by the other villagers to be the rich landowners. But this does not apply to the majority of the farmers who are not as well off. Almond and olive crops produce in alternate years. The money from sales goes to building houses for sons and caring for the land such as applying fertilisers, ploughing and labour for picking the harvest. Olive groves produce a maximum of twenty gallons of oil per harvest per family which are stored as *mouni* for all year consumption. Apart from the rich few, the men describe their financial status as disagreeable and difficult. When the almond crop in Dar el Lawz is plentiful in alternate years, for example, it is in competition with the cheaper almonds coming in from other countries.

'A kilo of almonds is sold at 1500 Liras [US\$ 1], but when the Syrian and Jordanian [almonds] hit the market, the price goes down to 500 [US\$ 0.35]'.  
(Fifty year old farmer in Dar el Lawz).

This dependence on selling almonds as a cash crop is a frequent theme. The men understand that the dynamics of the market determine the income they earn from selling their crops and this in turn is affected by the macro economic situation in Lebanon and the role of the state in regulating the incoming foreign crops.

Work on construction sites in Koura and in carpentry and furniture painting in the cities of Beirut and Jounieh are common occupations for the men. In Dar el Lawz, there are three carpentry workshops which provide furniture for the local and urban population (photo 10). There is also one small brick factory located in the lower ground floor of the owners' house, operated by two brothers. It supplies bricks to the village and nearby villages.

An estimated 300 men out of approximately 1100 are currently unemployed because cheaper Syrian, Egyptian and Asian labour has taken over daily work opportunities in Lebanon. These younger men, who depend on carpentry and other crafts for their income and who do not work on the land, have not been successful in finding work. The wages for a daily worker have dropped from US\$ 20 in the 1980s to US\$ 8 since the early 1990s.

'Work is scanty. There is no money. An Egyptian, a Syrian is paid 12,000 Liras (US\$ 8). So they have done without us. I used to get paid \$20 a day as a furniture painter in Beirut. The *moallem* [foreman] brought in Syrians and Egyptians and paid them \$8.'

(Twenty eight year old man in Dar el Lawz).

Approximately 100 men are employed in the armed forces and fewer than twenty villagers are employed full time in other types of public work. Although the public sector salaries are not very high, they have regular income and health insurance. Two men are employees in the electrical and water works and four are teachers. Other occupations include one lawyer, two army majors and three computer programmers. Fewer than ten men are university students.

#### 5.3.1.4 Public services

The public services in Dar el Lawz are minimal or non existent. A large area of land once used for planting fruit trees at the end of the village limits

was bought by the local government owned water works from Abboud Bey more than thirty years ago. On this land, it built a dam to generate electricity from the spring of the Bared River. However, in the village, electricity is still not connected to ten households which constitute the remote separate neighbourhood of *Haret el horsh* in the east.

The dam project directed the river path used for irrigation away from the land and flooded other areas with water. Today, there is neither a water source nor an irrigation system in the village. People collect rain water in tanks for household use and go to fetch drinking water from a village in the area using a car or a donkey (photo 9). During the dry months of summer, water consumption increases and water trucks transport water for domestic use to the tanks found in yards. A full reservoir costs 20,000LL (US\$ 13) and is used for household cleaning, washing and watering the animals. This lasts for a few days, depending on its use. There are five water trucks hired to carry water to the houses. In the local school there is no drinking water. Some students take bottles with them and others go home for a drink during the thirty minute break at 10 am.

A water project which aimed to distribute water from a distant spring by installing pipes in the village and a generator at the water source was partially funded by two private organisations. The water project did not sustain itself. There were high operational costs and disagreements on water distribution among the villagers. I discuss this later in chapters six and seven.

There are no permanent public sewer pipes either. Most houses have latrines and own or share sewage pits to dispose of waste. Those who do not, defecate in the open. The villagers burn refuse separately or take it to nearby open dumps in the field. Litter in the village streets surrounds the shops and consists of paper wrappers and empty bottles.

The nearest public phone with an international line is located in Minyi, twenty four kilometres away. A few villagers own cellular mobile phones. A cellular phone and line cost US\$ 750 to US\$ 1000 in 1996. There is a monthly

bill for calls and maintenance. The public phone lines have been installed but they have not been connected to the individual houses yet.

#### 5.3.1.5 Social organisation

Nowadays, Dar el Lawz has a population of approximately three thousand people, distributed in about two hundred and fifty households. A population pyramid would have a wide base as the number of children is high, compared to the number of adults. A nuclear family would have an average of six to seven children. All the villagers are Sunni Muslims. There are five major *ailis*. Some members of one *aili* migrated to Australia and some members of another to Saudi Arabia. They maintain relations through visits and mail. Key people in the village include the *mokhtar*, male heads of *ailis*, called the *wojaha* (pl. of *wajih*), and two *sheikhs*. Both *sheikhs* reside in Beirut or Tripoli during week days and spend week-ends and holidays in the village. The key people are called upon by the villagers to intervene and resolve disputes among the villagers. They do so because they consider this a moral obligation. In return, they receive praise for their efforts from the villagers. This act of mediation is called *wasta* which is different from the *wasta* used to access material gains although the terms used are the same.

Marriage is at an early age (thirteen to eighteen for girls and fifteen to twenty four for boys). The couple are usually biological first cousins, ideally a man's daughter marries his brother's son. In all the village, only six men have married women from 'outside' the village. These wives are known as strangers (*ghorb*). A village wedding is a frequent celebration that most of the village attends. The invitation is sent to the *wajih* who conveys it to the rest of his *aili*. It is held on Thursdays or Sundays. The wedding celebration is held in the bride's house. There is no mixed dancing. On rare occasions when the groom can afford it, he holds the wedding party in a hotel by the sea. But it is necessary that he buys his bride jewellery for the engagement. The groom and his parents build a house for the newly weds. The bride's parents

help by buying any furniture they can afford. When signing the marital papers, the groom signs an agreement to provide a certain sum as a payment to the bride in case they divorce.

Polygamy is not uncommon but infrequent. Five men in Dar el Lawz have two wives. If the man can afford it, he provides each wife and her children with a separate room or house. His time is divided between the two families. The women claim that they are respected by the men as they are not physically abused. As for inheritance, a Muslim woman is entitled to half of what her brother receives. According to the men, this is reasonable because the male family members have more responsibilities towards raising a family and supporting the women. Mayer (1995) suggests that the Islamic law of inheritance in allocating such shares is a means to keep the inheritance within the patrilineal family and prevent fragmentation of property. However, the women told me that these inheritance guidelines are not always applied in the villages.

'As for inheritance, a girl has nothing. According to religion, she has a share, but here they don't give her. Some do, some don't'.

(Woman in Dar el Lawz).

Recreation for the women during the day includes visits to family members or neighbours after the housework is complete. A common gathering is the late morning visit (*sobhiyyeh*) during which the women drink coffee or tea and read their cups. Men play cards or backgammon or gather round in the village square during their free time depending on their work. Boys go bird hunting with their sling shots and play football (photo 11). At night, all the family watches television at home or at a neighbour's house.



#### 5.3.1.6 Religion

Religion is an important part of the villagers' lives, especially the women as it provides them with a feeling of security and protection from evil and uncontrollable circumstances. The main holy figures are God and the Prophet Mohammad. God is the provider of material and non material abundance, such as plentiful crops, many children, homes, good health and educated youth. He provides solutions for people's problems. Whenever there is a reference to God, a word of praise, such as 'Praise God' (*Al hamdillah*) is mentioned.

'*Al hamdillah* we have land, we have children, we have roads, we have education..'

(Woman in Dar el Lawz).

God also has the power to know the future and control people's lives. Regardless of what people do or what happens, there is a belief that at the end there is a written fate for everyone.

Armajani and Ricks (1986) describe Islam as not only a religion but a way of life for Muslims. It attempts to regulate how people live in that it sets spiritual goals outlined in 'articles of belief', as well as providing institutions, laws and the general context in which these should be obtained in 'articles of practice' (Armajani and Ricks 1986: 38). This means that very little is left to the individual.

For the women in Dar el Lawz, religion offers another benefit. The women who gather for prayers and religious discussions at each others' houses are also socialising. At the end of the prayers, they share food or beverages. When I visited them there, the women were all dressed up and I noticed that the atmosphere was informal and happy. It is one occasion when the women do not have to ask the men's permission to go out because the event is religious and it is held in the village at a fixed time each week.

The villagers observe two main religious occasions: Ramadan (*Al-Fitr*) and Adha. During both, they pray and exchange visits and after prayers in Adha, they slaughter sheep or goats and share the meat. Two other important days are the Prophet Mohammad's birthday and the Muslim New Year during which there are no formal celebration activities. People visit the graves of their deceased regularly during feasts. Each *aili* has its own graveyard. The graveyards are located at various places in the village. If there is a burial place of a *wili*, the graveyards are usually there. The *wili* is a holy character who according to Muslims died preaching Islam.

#### 5.3.1.7 Education

The Lebanese flag on top of the local school indicates it is a public school. The two storey white building is apparent from the right side of the main road. The people of Dar el Lawz built this school in 1965 and handed it over to the government in 1974. There are twenty teachers, six of whom live in Dar el Lawz. The principal comes from another village. The public school holds classes up to Brevet- just before high school, nine grades altogether. After completing the last class, students who wish to go on to high school go to neighbouring towns. In 1997, there were 148 girls and 173 boys enrolled at the local school. Students attend until they fail or complete the available classes. School leaving age ranges between twelve and sixteen years. Yearly registration fees are 90,000LL (US\$ 60) per child. This excludes the cost of books, school uniforms and stationery which total approximately 50,000LL (US\$ 30) more. School starts at 8 am and ends at 1:30 pm. All school children walk to and from school. Approximately fifty children attend private schools in the vicinity, which cost about US\$ 500 to US\$ 600 a year per child in tuition fees, and they are transported there by mini buses owned by drivers contracted by the schools.

Both men and women admire education and the educated in the village. Education is something the older women did not have access to

because of social restrictions and the lack of schools in the village when they were young.

'Education is the explanation for everything'.

(Elderly woman in Dar el Lawz).

'Education strengthens the mental capabilities. Education is light. It helps'.

(Fifty year old woman in Dar el Lawz).

In fact, since the school in the village was only built in the 1960s, only those aged forty years and below would have had a chance to go to school. But not all the children complete their education. Drop outs include girls who were not allowed to pursue their education outside, boys who worked at a young age and those who failed their classes as mentioned above. Before the school existed, boys learned how to read and write from the Koran in the village, taught by the local *sheikh*. One may correctly conclude that all the women living in the village, aged forty years and above, are illiterate and that often those who are younger have not all completed their primary school education. The women hope that with time, their male children will become more educated than their generation was able to be. The women used the Arabic term '*awlad*' which is commonly used to mean 'children'. Its singular, '*walad*' means 'boy' in formal Arabic. This indicates that male children were preferred in earlier times and this continues to be the case in the villages. I discovered from other discussions that sons were preferred to daughters when it came to education.

In Dar el Lawz, the men and older women see education as unnecessary for girls. Even though some of the girls may be educated at the local school, their parents do not permit them to work after leaving or to further their education in another village. Consequently, the girls lose their interest in education.

'The girl here prefers to sit, because anyway she will stay at home.

Though she goes to school, she isn't getting anything. With [some

education] she can teach her son [help with studies].. till the fifth grade she can teach him. I mean if she wants to read something, she can; to write something, she can; sign her name...'

(Newly married eighteen year old woman in Dar el Lawz).

The few women who hold high school certificates attended schools in the city where they lived and then either returned to the village with their parents or moved there after marriage. As women are not allowed to work in public places, none of the few educated, nor the majority with a primary education, have high status in the village. There are however, exceptions. A woman's status comes from the status of a male member of her immediate family, such as her husband, father or brother. There are three sisters who are teachers in Dar el Lawz. They are the daughters of a well to do man, and one is the wife of the *sheikh*. As the wife and the sisters-in-law of the religious leader, they have a high status in the village. If a man, on the other hand, holds a university degree, he is looked up to by his family and other villagers as a hope for the future. His view of the other villagers may be different however. One *sheikh* holds a negative attitude towards villagers who are not educated, but he does not say so in public.

'Here, they don't know how to invest money.....They sit in front of the fire every winter and play cards and spend it.....They have no sense for business, no sense for trade, no sense at all...'

(*Sheikh* in Dar el Lawz).

As it will be shown later, the educated men in both villages share this view about other less educated villagers. Similar views are held by the medical professionals who are in contact with the villagers.

#### 5.3.1.8 Health services

As discussed earlier in chapter three, the majority of the health services in Lebanon are provided by the private sector and health centres of non governmental organisations. For medical consultations and laboratory tests, the villagers go to a health centre four kilometres away or to other health centres in the area by car. There, the physicians are available in the mornings only. There is a traditional healer in Beddawi, twenty eight kilometres away who is sought for herbal remedies for all sorts of conditions. Vaccination services are available in another village and through mobile clinics which visit the village square during the National Days for Immunisation (three times a year).

A sign indicating the presence of a clinic in the village is a remnant of one physician's efforts to establish a health centre there. The physician came from the Palestinian refugee camp near the Bared River, about fifteen kilometres away. The centre did not last long because the villagers did not utilise it. The reason for this is that the villagers mistrusted the physician's abilities.

The local traditional birth attendant (TBA) helps in the majority of the deliveries for a variable fee, depending on the financial capability of the woman. As part of the traditional care, the TBA stays with the new mother after the delivery, and gives the child aniseed tea with honey. Then she visits from time to time afterwards to check on the mother and her newborn. The women who can afford to, which usually means that they are insured in the public sector insurance plan because of their husbands' jobs, go to the city hospital.

A mobile clinic from a private organisation, the Mouawwad Foundation, visits the village once every fortnight. The charge is 5000LL (US\$ 3) for a medical examination and medications. The medical team in the mobile clinic do not give the villagers enough time for consultation and interaction. Their schedule of visits includes a number of distant villages

before they reach Dar el Lawz and by the time they get to the village, the team is very tired. The examination area in the van is not a private place as the inside can be seen from the street. The driver also stays in the van during the visits and the assistant stands at the back. This means that the women may not come for medical consultations requiring physical examinations.

As I was speaking with the physician's assistant, who was standing outside the mobile clinic in Dar el Lawz, a man stopped his car and presented him with an empty box of medications and asked him if more of it was available. He went inside, picked out a similar box, wrote the man's name in the registration book and took approximately 3,000LL (US\$ 2). This assistant described the villagers as careless with their children's health and ignorant of their own well being, but the way he gave out the medications was hardly professional. Officially, he should have requested that the man see the physician before repeating the dose. The van left after thirty minutes.

The physician I spoke with in a nearby health centre described her view of the villagers who come to see her, which is similar to that of the mobile clinic assistant. Among these villagers are the women of Dar el Lawz.

'In Tripoli, there is ignorance and here there is ignorance... Here there is more respect for power, for the educated. If you tell them not to deliver at home, they do what you tell them.'

(Physician in nearby health centre).

From an outsider's point of view, the villagers do not care for their health and it is easy to blame them for it. The medical professionals explain how to use medications but may not feel it is necessary to further discuss the problem with the villagers as they may not understand anyway. From the villagers' point of view, the medical professionals do not serve them adequately and do not understand the extent of hardships they face to reach them and the disappointment they get from not being able to benefit according to their expectations. They are left alone after the consultation to

make sense of the interaction the best they can. This issue also appears in Ain Zeitoun.

After presenting the physical and social characteristics of Dar el Lawz, I now do the same for Ain Zeitoun.

### 5.3.2 Ain Zeitoun

#### 5.3.2.1 Physical layout

Ain Zeitoun is located twenty kilometres north east of Tripoli extending over an area of four hundred hectares, at an altitude of 150 metres to 200 metres above sea level. The residential area is thirty hectares. The rest of the land is olive groves and unused land. The village spreads over two hills. The eastern hill comprises the main residential area (photo 12) where the houses and shops are built. The other western hill is less populated and its slope is cut by foot paths winding among fifteen houses, recently built yet not completed. One of these paths leads to a neighbouring village (photo 13). Ain Zeitoun is surrounded by other similar villages. The villagers go there for various reasons, such as attending high school, seeking health and legal services and visiting friends.

Unlike Dar el Lawz, two paved roads link Ain Zeitoun to these neighbouring villages, cutting through olive groves on both sides. These two main roads meet at the bottom east end of the village and lead up to the village square. Three secondary roads branch out from the main road and lead to major parts of the village (see map 3). These are paved with cement. As in Dar el Lawz, other roads leading into the houses are narrow and are not paved.

The majority of cement houses are built wall to wall. This means that unlike Dar el Lawz, there is very little land that surrounds the households. There are two kinds of main entrances to the houses. If the houses are built side by side facing the road, then the main entrances are separate. Other

times a front door of one house may be reached by passing through the neighbour's back yard. Not all the houses are complete as additional storeys for the sons are usually gradually built above their parents' ground floor house. An unfinished house may also mean the owner ran out of money and could not afford the floor tiles, wall plaster and paint. Approximately eighty per cent of the houses have television sets and other electrical appliances. The newly weds whose families can afford it buy washing machines, refrigerators, video recorders, stereo radios and new furniture. There is a phone in the barber shop in the square that is used as a pay phone. Approximately eight houses have telephone lines and these have been there for some time.

As in Dar el Lawz, the houses are grouped together into neighbourhoods (*hara*) which consist of families of the same *aili*. Those who have moved away and built a house on a more distant piece of land belonging to the immediate family have done so because there is not enough space. If a new house is distant from the village residential area, there are no electricity connections which is similar to *Haret el horsh* in Dar el Lawz.

There are eleven shops in the village, eight of which are situated in the village square and on the main road leading up through the most populated part. As in Dar el Lawz, a shop is a part of the owner's house, situated either on the ground floor or next to the living premises. The items found in most of the shops include vegetables, fruit, potato chips, cigarettes, soft drinks, coffee and food items. The largest one contains more kinds of goods than the others. Its owner explained that he likes to please all his customers by selling a variety of items not found in other shops such as hair spray, window cleaners, sanitary napkins, children's napkins, different brands of powdered milk, pocket cameras and films. Wholesale merchants deliver the merchandise mainly from the Bared camp. Travelling salesmen and cars carrying varieties of goods including kitchenware, clothes and carpets come regularly on Mondays and Thursdays from the Bared camp and from Syria.



The women have become familiar with the schedule and wait for the salesmen. One elderly woman goes once a week to Syria to buy children's clothes and resells these in the village.

A butcher sells fresh meat that he slaughters once a week. In winter, more meat is sold and makes more profit than it does in summer as the meat does not lose some of its weight from drying up. In the summer months, more vegetables are consumed because they are more plentiful.

There is one olive press owned by a man who once transported goods to and from the Arab countries. He bought the olive press machines gradually after selling his truck. Both fellow villagers and those from the surrounding villages come to squeeze olives for oil in winter.

For transportation, as in Dar el Lawz, the villagers use motor vehicles and animals. Among the vehicles are six water trucks, three taxis and fewer than twenty cars. Three people have small motor bikes they use on the unpaved roads. People use donkeys to go to the fields.

#### 5.3.2.2 Land and crops

Unlike Dar el Lawz, not all the villagers in Ain Zeitoun have access to land. In this village, no land means no livelihood. One family who does not have land has been cultivating a large area owned by people from another village and planting wheat to sell. In 1996, they were told that they were no longer allowed to use it, because the owners were afraid they might hold on to it. Consequently, the owners gave it to another family from Ain Zeitoun to use. The family lost that source of income and the women have resorted to selling some home made products, such as molasses and *mouni* items to people who come from the city to buy.

Unlike Dar el Lawz, the vast majority of the land in Ain Zeitoun is registered in the names of the family members who owned and cultivated it before them. The villagers build on the land that their families own but cannot afford the fees to transfer ownership from previous generations. The

transactions involved in this process are tedious and expensive and require a series of visits to the relevant government offices in Tripoli. That is why selling and buying land does not happen. Those who have added a storey to their houses or built new ones have done so during the 1975-90 war when no permits were required as laws were not enforced.

The average land distribution is 30 to 40,000 square metres per family which is mostly olive groves. Olives are the main cash crops in Ain Zeitoun, but are less profitable to the villagers than the almonds in Dar el Lawz. Vegetables such as wheat, okra, beans, peas and tomatoes are grown for local consumption, as are fruits such as grapes. As in Dar el Lawz, women boil wheat to make crushed wheat (*burghul*) used for meat dishes (photos 14 and 15). There is one bitter orange grove in the village from which flowers are sold to people from Tripoli to make orange essence.

Landowners started to apply pesticides five or six years ago against the diseases that appeared on the olives and almonds. The villagers buy the chemicals from agriculture companies in Halba. The grape vines that grow on the roof tops are also sprayed as they are less resistant than the kinds found in the fields. Cow dung is the natural fertiliser which the villagers apply to the land that can be reached by tractors. Otherwise, people buy chemical fertilisers known as "white sugar" (*succar abyad*) in bags which are easier to transport to the fields.

### 5.3.2.3 Work and employment

As in Dar el Lawz, men are the primary breadwinners for their families. They are also the major decision makers who decide on issues of importance such as their children's education, who their daughters marry and where their wives may go. The main source of income for the men is casual construction work, such as carrying buckets of cement for building (*sab bittankeh*). The men go to sites in Beirut and Tripoli. They start work at the age of fifteen to help support their families and to gain enough money to

get married, but because of the influx of cheap labour from Syria and Egypt, work opportunities have decreased. The daily wage of 12000LL to 15000LL (US\$ 8 to US\$ 10) that a Syrian or Egyptian worker receives is enough to support him and to send some money back home where living expenses are cheaper. So during the day, the men are not found in the village as they spend much of the daytime searching for any kind of casual work. If a worker is called in for night time work, he is paid more for the hour. This type of work is called 'stealing' (*sor'a*) as it involves work in illegal construction, carried out at night to avoid being seen by the police. It also involves high accident risks for the workers, but they accept it for the pay.

Unlike Dar el Lawz, in Ain Zeitoun few villagers are employed in public sector jobs, except for the local school teachers and one Ministry of Agriculture employee. Among the educated are seven army officers, two engineers who now reside in Canada, one judge living in Tripoli and seven university students distributed between Cairo, Russia and local universities. There is also one *sheikh* and one educated woman who holds religious study sessions in the village.

A second source of income comes from olive harvests as well as some almond crops. The revenues from olive harvests are not satisfactory as there is competition from cheaper Syrian and Turkish olives which is the same with the almond crops in Dar el Lawz. But, unlike Dar el Lawz, the olives are sometimes stolen by other villagers or outsiders while still in the fields. This forces the owners to pick the olives early before they ripen which means they produce less oil.

As in Dar el Lawz, women do not work outside their homes. Together with their daughters, they do the housework and care for their children. Some women assist the men by earning money locally selling their cow's milk and home made food items such as pomegranate molasses (*dibs rimman*) and foods made of *burghul* and yoghurt (*kishk*). In low income societies such as these, Freidman (1996) describes the processes of women

working together as one which enables them to survive by contributing to an action shared by the extended family, neighbours and friends. Preparing *mouni* together is an example of tasks that the women do collectively.

The girls go to the village school and after they complete their primary education they stay at home and watch over their younger siblings. The women are restricted to the social boundaries of the household and the neighbourhood. Their sphere of activity is limited to neighbourhood interaction, to their families and to helping the men by taking food to them while they work in the fields. Children are frequently brought up in women's discussions and women's lives seem to revolve around them. In their homes, there are framed photos of the children on the walls.

On the whole, the women adhere to traditional roles and appear to accept their allotted place in the village, but there is some resistance, at least among the younger women. The young women express the desire to work and gain an income but are not allowed to by their husbands or fathers as this is not a socially accepted practice.

'...employment, there is nothing of the kind. You can get crushed. Whatever educational level she reaches, she is helpless. She sits. If a groom comes, they give her [to him]. If not, she remains sitting in her parents' house.'

(A young woman in Ain Zeitoun).

The expression used is 'sit' (*to'od*) means they stay at home and keep house. It is used to mean lack of activity. So sitting is synonymous with lack of activity or boredom and consequently lack of cash. Those who are in higher classes at school help their cousins and siblings with their studies. Two young women have succeeded in part time private tutoring and each earns 30,000LL (US\$ 20) per month, which is a relatively small amount of money but accounts for some income. As in Dar el Lawz, a girl's education is seen as an investment for her future children, rather than for herself.

In Ain Zeitoun, the poor financial conditions of many of the villagers are related to the issues of the land. The average land holdings are not as large as those in Dar el Lawz and the crops they sell are olives which do not present a profitable income. This forces the villagers to look for jobs away from the land, namely labour work, to survive. The jobs have also been unprofitable as there is a general halt in construction activities in the area and those in the major construction sites, elsewhere in the cities, have been seized by cheap foreign labourers. The men have been aware of these changes in work conditions since the early 1990s, at the end of the war. They present clear explanations about their lack of financial resources (*illit maddiyeh*), literally meaning the lack of substance or material. Their income has decreased because of the vicious competition (*modarabeh*) from labour and agricultural produce coming from other countries in the region. The issue of inadequate financial resources recurs in discussions on many topics such as education, health and agriculture. The men wanted to illustrate the hardships they are living in and to make the point that they need money to access all the above. They relate their situation to the general economic and political conditions of the country as a whole and blame the state for neglecting the rural areas. In Ain Zeitoun, the men use statements, such as 'the state has strangled people' (*eddawleh khan'it ennas*) or it has 'besieged the citizen' (*imlit hissar ala elmouwatin*).

The consequences of this difficult financial situation on village life are many. The ill-effects are more apparent in Ain Zeitoun than in Dar el Lawz. Children run barefoot, the houses are overcrowded and the roads are unpaved. Young boys of six or seven years old go to the nearby fields and catch snails which they sell to people from other villages. Boys may be taken out of school to learn a trade. The lack of cash flow affects most families because most do not access sufficient land, but these few who do are recognised as being relatively affluent compared to the landless. Terms such as the comfortable (*mirtahin*) or the capable (*kader*) or the satiated

(*shibaanin*) recur in men's discussions to describe those who do not suffer from the financial hardship of the many, while the poor (*fakir*) or the moneyless (*tifranin*) or the hungry (*jiaanin*) describe the less fortunate of the population.

When the men have less money to spend on their families, they borrow cash from the middlemen who sell their crops or they obtain goods from the local shopkeepers on credit and pay them later. Both instances have led to troubles between the borrowers and the lenders. A common saying that 'one cannot feed his children meat' (*ma fi elwahid ita'mi wladou lahem*) is common in Ain Zeitoun. It is a sign that there is not enough money to buy meat which is more expensive than vegetables. The saying is also a metaphor as it stands for the good life which they do not have.

It is difficult to judge whether people have sufficient food to eat as none of the children appeared to be underweight except for two families. In one case, the husband was in jail and the woman depended upon her brothers for money. She described how poor they had become because all the money they had went to the lawyers. The second family had a sick child who needed medical tests and her mother told me that she had made an appointment for the tests at the American University Hospital in Beirut, but that she did not know whether she would have enough money to take her. The husband is a casual worker and did not have a job then. I discovered later that the woman had missed the appointment. She explained that she could not afford to go to Beirut. These two cases do not represent all the families in the villages. However, they point to the fact that people's conditions are insecure as most of them do not have a constant source of income.

In comparison to the men in Dar el Lawz, who are attached to their land and do not consider leaving it, the young men (*shabab*) in Ain Zeitoun, who can afford to travel, leave the country to escape these difficult

conditions. They settle down where they find more favourable conditions of livelihood.

'...this description about the village condition applies to all Lebanon. In my opinion and from my social contacts, I've found that the idea of migration is present in people's minds especially the *shabab*. Australia, America,... There is no longer a connection between a Lebanese and his land. The authorities are not promoting the connection because if he goes to Australia and comes to visit for example, he hurries to go back. Why? Because there is justice [overseas]. It has provided him with a chance to work, a life and social security....'.

(Father of immigrant sons in Ain Zeitoun).

#### 5.3.2.4 Public services

As in Dar el Lawz, Ain Zeitoun does not benefit from municipal services such as sewage and waste disposal, as there is no elected municipality in the village. It has received some development projects but they have not been sufficiently maintained either by the villagers or by the government. The projects have been funded and implemented by various governmental and private sources over a period of about twenty years.

The sewer lines collecting waste water from two neighbourhoods consist of those installed by the state and those installed by the villagers themselves with the help of some funds from a local politician and a non governmental agency. The network initiated by the Ministry of Social Works is not complete as only 400 metres out of a planned 2000 metres have been fully executed. Before that, Save the Children helped with 700 metres in another part of the village, also not completed, and these two projects are not connected together. They have become breeding places for rodents. The main aim behind digging the sewer network was to gather the openly dumped sewage water and to dispose of it in the valley but it now gathers in an open area behind several houses.

One water project is a municipal pipeline that reaches the village from a spring in a village in the mountains. The pipes have been there for over twenty years. During the war, the main water pipe was broken and the water was directed away from the main water tank that distributed it to the households. Recently, the public water officials repaired the pipes and extended new ones for more supply but at a fee of approximately 500,000LL (US\$ 320) per household. The water is cut four days a week to be distributed to other areas. This is drinking water but the villagers prefer the spring water from the bottom of the village because it is a local spring. I discuss the water projects in detail later.

Another development project initiated by Save the Children in the late 1980s involved distributing loans for small scale entrepreneurs to be used for income generation. Loans were intended to improve access to cash for land reclamation, buying agriculture tools or livestock. However, the collateral and the management skills required to access such loans favoured the better off among the villagers and they were used for different ends, such as buying household items or goods. According to the men who remember the project, it benefited those who were not in need of it.

The majority of the houses have electricity except for the newly built ones far from the main village setting. Nowadays, the current is sometimes cut but less often than during the 1975-90 war. The villagers who could afford it have installed small generators. Illegal connections to the electricity lines are not uncommon. The electricity bill for all the households used to be charged to the main village electricity meter and was divided among the houses connected to the supply. This was unsatisfactory for many because they ended up paying for other people's electricity consumption. Consequently, they have disconnected their own meter but still have illegal access to electricity.



#### 5.3.2.5 Social organisation

The estimated population of the village is 2500 to 2700. The average number of children in the nuclear family is similar to Dar el Lawz, six to seven. An estimated 120 of its population have migrated to Canada, Australia and Venezuela. There are ten *ailis*. The largest constitutes about eighty per cent of the population. As in Dar el Lawz, the villagers are all Sunni Muslims.

Unlike Dar el Lawz, in Ain Zeitoun the heads of most of the *ailis* have no major role to play in the village because the majority of the villagers are from the same *aili*. The *mokhtar* died a year ago and his position has not been filled. This means that there is no recognised elected leader for all the village. One man in the village is a public sector employee, and is known for his political influence. He is the head of his *aili* which is the largest in the village, which makes him the most powerful man, although many both within his *aili* and from other *ailis* dislike him and deny that he has any claim to represent them. His wife is a member of a local non governmental organisation which is based in Beirut and supports women's training projects. They are both known by outsiders who contact them first for any program involving the whole village such as establishing centres for elections as well as development projects.

There are two *sheikhs*: a retired elderly man and a young man. A notable judge who resides in Tripoli spends weekends and holidays in the village. The twenty eight year old *sheikh* lives in the village and preaches in the mosque. He is a resource person for the villagers and they respect him. However, he does not hold a powerful position in the village as he does not work outside and has no political affiliation which, unlike Dar el Lawz, is an important element in gaining leadership in this village. The *sheikh* heads a local social club which provides some social services, such as cleaning campaigns, fixing damaged walls on the main roads and holding sports activities for the youth.

The judge who lives in Tripoli is well known for his influential position in Islamic courts. He is sought for *wasta* and support in various issues. It is likely that because of his position, he has contacts with influential individuals who may be useful in exchanging *wasta* favours. Unlike the other men, his power comes from his education and his social position, rather than his political affiliation.

Within the village, there are many members of rival political parties which had armed militia during the war. Persons still associated with these political parties, no longer allowed to carry arms, consider themselves privileged and more powerful than the rest. This means that there are more disputes in Ain Zeitoun than in Dar el Lawz, where political affiliation is less common. The political parties back their supporters when they get involved in conflicts. Political affiliation is not necessarily familial as members of the same *aili* may belong to different political parties. Many men have left the militia and taken up other work since the end of the war, leaving their party membership behind, but others who are now prominent members, remain in the parties.

It is customary that men marry by their early twenties. Contrary to the tradition in Dar el Lawz, marrying biological cousins occurs but is not the rule. It is common that men marry women from other villages and these women are not treated differently from local women. Girls have a say in choosing their husbands and the parents try to convince them that the husband the parents have chosen is appropriate. A man may depend on his parents to choose a bride for him if they have contacts outside the village circle. Six men have married women with Australian citizenship and migrated with them to Australia. As in Dar el Lawz, the couple do not go out together before the wedding. Divorce is rare and polygamy is infrequent. When a boy is born, the family celebrates by giving out sweets and receives

visitors who bring gifts. On the other hand, when a girl is born, the event passes quietly.

In summer time, the children play in the village square. The girls have less leisure time than the boys. Card games, marbles and tree climbing are favourite entertainment for all ages. Unattended by adults, young children slide down the sloping roads on a metal tray or play barefoot, and run after each other. A popular locally made toy is a 'T' shaped stick made of a cane attached to two oranges which rotate about the axis sticking out at one end of the cane. The children push it around as a cart. Teenage boys play football in small open spaces, such as the front yard of the mosque.

As in Dar el Lawz, women gather round in their neighbourhoods at different times for coffee. Neighbours are an important part of the women's lives because they support and share their lives with each other. Examples of mutual support for each other which happens through socialising are assistance in preparing meals, baking bread, making *mouni* (summer foods) and spending free time together, as they also do in Dar el Lawz. The process of women working together enables them to adapt to difficult conditions and to support each other. The women also share their intimate thoughts and concerns with their neighbour rather than their husbands. During one of my visits, for example, three women were speaking together about their experiences with contraceptives. One of them, in her early forties, took a sample of contraceptive pills from her neighbour, tried them and has been on the pill ever since. She said that the method was effective in preventing pregnancy but her husband did not know about it.

#### 5.3.2.6 Education

The school in Ain Zeitoun is a public school built by the villagers in the early 1970s. It holds mixed classes up to Brevet level, similar to the school in Dar el Lawz. The school principal lives in the village while there are three teachers from Ain Zeitoun and fourteen who arrive in mini buses from Koura

and Zgharta, an hour away by car. There were 525 students in 1997. Not all the parents send their children to school at the beginning of the year as they do not have enough money to pay for registration fees, especially if there are many school aged children in the family. Another reason why children enrol late is that they are sometimes helping their families pick the olive harvest when school starts. The registration fees are the same as those in Dar el Lawz, 90,000LL (US\$ 60). If the cost of books, uniform and stationery costs are added, the amount becomes 250,000LL (US\$ 170) per child. The principal is known to have helped some in paying their fees by instalments if he is sure that the fees will be eventually paid. This was not a common issue in Dar el Lawz. Even though there have been renovation works for the school in recent years, the villagers feel it is not large enough for all the children in Ain Zeitoun. In summer, the religious leaders in the village hold classes for a cost of 7000LL (US\$ 5) per child. During this session, the children receive tutoring in school subjects as well as in religion. At the end of the summer session, the children are given gifts, such as story books and stationery, by the tutors.

Women speak of educating their children as a priority but not all the families have been able to do so due to their financial situation. The men also value education, but they have better access to it compared to the women. Only financial obstacles stand in their way. Some young men go outside to complete their high school education which means that there is extra transportation expenses. But it also means that only the young men can acquire a high school education. As in Dar el Lawz, the girls are not allowed to go outside their villages. However, the educated men cannot find jobs because of the lack of available work opportunities for high school and university graduates. So parents face the decision of whether to send their children to school and wait till the child graduates when they may not even then find a suitable job, or not to enrol them and send them off to learn a trade. In most cases, the villagers in Ain Zeitoun prefer to send their sons to

learn a trade at a young age, to earn their living and find work opportunities later in life.

'People are preoccupied with earning a living.... This concept is forcing people to take their children out of school and teach them a craft at a young age. The *moallem* [trade master] is giving him a wage and at the same time, he is learning a skill to work with.'

(Educated man in Ain Zeitoun).

Even though some of the girls may be educated at the local school, their parents do not permit them to work or further their education in another village. When the financial situation forces children's parents to think twice before paying their fees, it is usually the daughter who is taken out of school.

'I would like to complete my school education and then enrol in the army but my parents don't agree. I'm afraid that because we are many [children] in my family, my parents will make me leave school.'

(Fourteen year old girl in Ain Zeitoun).

According to the men in the village, education for women is useful only in raising their children. It may be argued that women, regardless of their educational level or their interests, are still seen by the men as housewives and child bearers and that education will not help improve the women's capabilities to perform these domestic tasks. Regardless of her educational status and her own preference, a daughter should end up married. She is given to the first man who asks for her hand in marriage and her father agrees to.

'He is not educated and she is. He can't read and write. It's all right. This way, she will stay in the village. At least, she will be able to raise an educated family'.

(Forty seven year old man in Ain Zeitoun).

Such an attitude plays an important role in preserving the status quo of the women in the private sphere and limiting the ability of the few educated young women to improve their conditions.

In Ain Zeitoun as in Dar el Lawz, women derive their status from their husbands. A woman who is originally from Tripoli has been able to carry out several activities for the young women in Ain Zeitoun because she is the wife of a local political leader. Yet, another woman in her twenties who has studied Islamic law (*shari'a*) for six years in a private institute, completed two years of university and taught religion for a year has no prominent status in her village. Her husband is a low paid daily worker who has no educational or political status. Now she does not work as she has a young child and there is no one to look after him during the day. She has not lost hope of returning to her studies. From time to time, she holds discussion groups for the women who are interested in learning more about Islam and its teachings to pass the time.

In Ain Zeitoun, education is not seen to be so powerful in itself unless it is backed by political power. The *sheikh* has a Bachelors degree and is doing a Masters, but he is not affiliated with a political party, and so he is not considered as powerful as the head of the prominent *aili* who is less educated but has political affiliations. Political affiliation plays a major role in the village when it comes to development projects which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The educated men in Ain Zeitoun, like the *sheikh* in Dar el Lawz, have negative attitudes towards the rest of the villagers. They describe the majority of the people as ignorant and blame them for their poor living conditions. According to them, the uneducated have wrong ideas and do not know how to express themselves compared to the educated. The educated villagers use more refined language and use vocabulary which is more common to written Arabic in their daily conversation.

In Ain Zeitoun, according to the school principal, the majority of the villagers are surrounded by ignorance, by which he means they are preoccupied with making a living and are not concerned with sending their children to school. According to him, if they send them, they do so to get rid of them for a few hours during the day. Two male university students in the village share this opinion and believe that the uneducated are only involved in fulfilling their urges and physical desires among which is obtaining money for a living. They claim other people have no intellect, only false thoughts. For this reason, the educated people have difficulty talking with them and prefer to make friends with those of like backgrounds outside the village.

'Participation with a person who is not educated is more difficult than with an educated person. You can give the educated more. He understands more and he moves on with you more.'

(Twenty two year old male university graduate in Ain Zeitoun).

The young university students spend time with their educated friends because the other young men do not share the same ideals. They involve themselves in intellectually rewarding discussions, while the other young men their age spend their time in less useful activities, such as staying up late outside their homes. This is considered immoral behaviour in a conservative society.

'In the village they all like me and respect me but my friends are from outside the village. I cannot take one as a friend because his concepts and thoughts are different to mine. My role is to reform society because I am educated. I go to [a nearby village] because I studied with them and our thoughts are similar.'

(Twenty one year old university student in Ain Zeitoun).

Despite their poor opinion of their fellow villagers, those young men apparently aspire to be reformers of their society, by educating the other young men. This is an aspiration they share with the *sheikhs* and will be

discussed further in the next chapter. However, given their lack of contact with other young men in the village, how they would do this is unclear.

#### 5.3.2.7 Religion

As in Dar el Lawz, religion is central to the villagers' lives. They refer to God and the Prophet many times in casual conversation. Men pray in the village mosque, but unlike Dar el Lawz, there are no women's groups which meet to pray and there are no plans for extending the mosque to allocate a place for the women. The women tell stories of how the religious holy man (*wili*) has helped the villagers through life threatening situations, such as fires, but who also demands their respect. They also believe that there is a written fate for them.

'We will live as God has written for us to live'.

(Forty five year old woman in Ain Zeitoun).

As in Dar el Lawz, the villagers observe the Adha and Ramadan religious feasts. Another religious event that the villagers look forward to and save money for is the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca, in Saudi Arabia. Muslims believe it is a duty that they must fulfil at least once in their lifetime. In Ain Zeitoun, women show photos and films of their trip to Mecca. A pregnant woman had even sold her jewelry to cover the expenses for her trip. People who are unable to go may ask others who have gone once before to go on their behalf. The trip takes seventeen days including two way transport by bus, lodging in tents and a tour of the holy places. Food is relatively cheap and people there offer animal sacrifices and distribute the meat among the pilgrims. It is the only chance for the most of the women to go outside their country and they look forward to it as a vacation and sightseeing event, not just a religious duty.



### 5.3.2.8 Health services

The situation of the health services is similar to that in Dar el Lawz. There are no health centres in the village. People go to private doctors in Tripoli or Halba or to health centres in the area. A mobile clinic from a organisation owned by a politician makes fortnightly visits to the village and stops in the village square for medical consultations and medications. A consultation fee of 5000LL (US\$ 3) includes some medication costs. Vaccination services are available in the health centres in the neighbouring villages, but some do not offer measles vaccines unless there are enough children to open a vial. Those who can afford it, visit private paediatricians who charge them for a general medical examination together with the vaccine.

As in Dar el Lawz, a physician tried to provide medical services in the village. He had studied in Russia but had not received his medical degree. According to the villagers, he discontinued his services because of malpractice. An attempt has been made by the same organisation which runs the mobile clinic to establish a health centre in the village. It failed because the villagers did not agree on how to spend the money.

Also as in Dar el Lawz, the local TBA delivers babies in the village and is also summoned to other villages for the same reason. Women who can afford it, and are being seen by a physician, deliver in hospitals in Tripoli or the town of Halba. The TBA refers the women to a hospital when she feels it is a difficult situation for her to handle. She spoke of a number of babies who were born to one woman and all had serious malformations and died shortly after birth. Unlike Dar el Lawz, there are also at least six mentally or physically disabled children and adults in the village who are taken care of by their families at home.

Using home made remedies is a common practice. People use these remedies because they have been tried and recommended by others. Capsules of antibiotics are available in shops and are used to treat wounds

and burns by mixing their contents with mercurochrome and applying the solution to the wounded area. For an aching tooth, two ampicillin capsules are taken and the aching area is rinsed with olive oil. Yoghurt and boiled potato are given in case of diarrhoea. One woman in Ain Zeitoun took her seven year old daughter, who had spilled boiling water on herself, to several physicians in the area as well as to two in the city. Her condition worsened and no one seemed to be able to make her better. Her burns started to get infected and she was beginning to lose hope in her daughter's recovery until another woman in the village suggested that she try a herbal lotion containing fig leaves. After doing so for a few days, she said that her daughter's condition improved and she was able to walk again.

Contraceptives are used by the women in the village. They told me that the men usually have to approve of it but sometimes women conceal taking pills which is the most common birth control method recommended to them by their friends who have used it. The women go to see a female physician in the city or nearby health centres for inter uterine devices. But if there is a problem, it is difficult for a woman to visit her physician again because of the lack of available transportation, cost and the pressure of household duties.

The women's expressed need for a local health centre in their village indicates that they carry both the burden and the responsibility of finding the appropriate health services for a sick child. They are particularly concerned with their children's health. When the children become ill, women are the ones who take them to a physician and that means spending money on transportation and medical fees. This may sometimes be problematic for them as they may not always have enough money to cover all the expenses.

Although there are health centres in neighbouring villages, the women have difficulty accessing them as there is no public transportation and they do not drive themselves. The women whose husbands or male family members own a car must wait for them to come home to take them, or walk.

Another alternative is to wait for the mobile clinic to visit the village once every fortnight.

'Instead of getting these cars [mobile clinics] sent by this politician and that.. Instead of paying for its fuel and the doctor and a nurse, and so on, they can build a clinic for this village carrying [someone's] name and it benefits the people at the same time'.

(Forty year old woman in Ain Zeitoun).

On my way to Ain Zeitoun once, I saw a young mother carrying her twelve month old son and standing in the sun waiting for a car to go by. She was on her way back from the health centre, approximately three kilometres away from the village. She got into my car and she told me that her son was sick with a respiratory problem and showed me the bag of medications she had just bought, which the paediatrician prescribed for her. She did not seem very happy about the visit as she told me that she paid approximately (US\$ 8) for the medications and she had forgotten how to administer them. When we arrived at the village, she wanted me to look in the bag. On the side of each medicine box there were hand written instructions on how to take the medications. But she did not know how to read, so I read them out to her. This woman who was in her early twenties is an example of a woman who dropped out of school at an early age and was functionally illiterate.

Many women had trouble understanding their children's immunisation schedules as written on their individual cards. Three women showed me the immunisation cards of their children and asked me to check the schedules for them. Two children were over five years, the age limit for DPT and Polio vaccines according to Lebanese guidelines, but had not completed their full immunisation schedule. The others were also incomplete but less than five years of age. When I explained what the cards said, I noticed that the women whose children needed no more vaccines were relieved and the others whose children still had some left, were unhappy.

One woman in her twenties told me that each dose of vaccine costs 1000LL (US\$ 0.75). Another woman in her thirties told me that her sister-in-law who lives next door spends much money on her children's vaccines. The paediatrician she goes to is in Tripoli and she is always confused after every visit. The physician informs her of new vaccines that he thinks she should vaccinate her children with, such as those for meningitis, tuberculosis and typhoid fever. Each dose costs an average of 13,000LL (US\$ 8.5) and they are not available in the health centres as they are not in the national immunisation schedule. Although these vaccines seem inexpensive, they are actually unaffordable for those families in the villages who have no regular income.

One might expect that because the women's expressed need for medical services recurs, women would most likely hold medical practitioners in high regard. On the contrary, they are dissatisfied with the treatment they receive. Instead of improving their medical conditions, the women claim that they become worse. They attribute this to the physicians' inadequate knowledge, especially in the community medical centres they visit. So the available health services are a source of frustration, not relief for the women. Many describe their mistrust for the health services and prefer to treat illnesses at home.

'The centres get doctors who are not qualified enough and they ruin the patient'.

(Woman in Ain Zeitoun).

In short, the women show their distrust in the medical profession. For them, medical services are important for the health of their children but do not meet their needs. The women spend their money on transportation, fees and medications but do not obtain anything in return. The women do not feel secure about medications as they are not able to read the prescriptions nor are they comfortable with discussing vaccines or medical conditions with the

doctors. Therefore, they prefer to wait a little before they seek medical advice in the hope that the condition will improve.

'If the child can hold on, they keep him till the mobile clinic comes. If not, they take him to a nearby health centre.'

(Woman in Ain Zeitoun).

#### 5.4 Discussion and conclusion

Comparing the villages with the available earlier literature, it can be seen that there are continuities in several aspects. The physical layout of the villages in the study is similar to the earlier descriptions, in that people live in houses they have built grouped together in *harat*. The village *saha* is also in the centre of the village where villagers meet to buy from the local shops and practise their religious rituals guided by a religious leader.

Aspects of social organisation continue. The *aili* is still an important institution in contemporary village life. Village leadership positions continue to be held by the heads of the *ailis* as well as the *mokhtar* and the *sheikhs*. But there are currently other avenues for men to take up leadership roles, such as affiliation to political parties which increases with contacts with the outside. This is the case in Ain Zeitoun whose villagers are more involved with political parties and politicians for *wasta* than those of Dar el Lawz. The practice of *wasta* described by Huxley (1978) in Chouf, is equally applicable to Akkar. Relationships between patrons and their clients continue to operate and play an important role in contemporary Lebanon. I have discussed *wasta* in chapter three and will discuss its role in village development projects in chapters six and seven.

Similar to the earlier literature, the land which the villagers inherited from their ancestors is an important source of livelihood and it also constitutes a part of their identity. The size of land holdings is still considered a source of prestige and power for the owners. But not all have been able to profit from selling their crops in the market, and very few own large lots of

land. Therefore, many men have turned to unskilled labour work for a living. However, the opportunities the labour market offers are few given the foreign competition and the limited work choices. As a result, many villagers do not have a constant income and have difficult financial conditions. In Ain Zeitoun, the revenues from selling olive crops are not as profitable as the almonds of Dar el Lawz and the average land holdings are less. The villagers of Ain Zeitoun are not employed in the public sector which provides financial security, so their dependence on the market for casual labour is extensive. Consequently, the villagers of Ain Zeitoun are relatively less affluent than their counterparts in Dar el Lawz and many young men are leaving the land and migrating as a result. The villagers of Dar el Lawz remain on their land even though it does not officially belong to their families.

A strict gender division continues in the villages. Men are the heads of households and are the breadwinners. Women are the housewives and the child bearers and are expected to submit to their male relatives. Difficult conditions have forced some women to contribute to their family income through small scale work, such as selling home made products and giving private lessons, although they still have household responsibilities. Even though this is still not widely accepted, nor has it become the norm in village life, this has happened particularly in Ain Zeitoun where the men's work has not been sufficient to cover their families' basic expenses. Consequently, the women there participate in more income related activities than the women in Dar el Lawz.

Compared to earlier studies, there have been other changes. It appears that education has gained importance in village life. In both villages, there are local schools which provide primary education, built by the villagers themselves and run by the state. Both young men and women have more opportunities to obtain a free education in comparison with the majority of the previous generation who are illiterate. However, girls are less likely to

further their education as they are not allowed to go outside their villages which is consistent with the prevailing views of gender mentioned above. The older men and women view women's education as useful for their future children because the young women are bound to continue with traditional household duties.

Linkages to the outside have increased with the advent of roads, communication and outside work. Men look more to the outside for work opportunities and higher education. There are increasing numbers of university students and jobs available in the public and private sectors but not in large numbers. These are available to men from a few families who spend time in urban areas. People in both villages go to health facilities outside their village as there are no health centres there. But these facilities do not fully meet the villagers' needs because there is no public transportation for them to use and the services are not satisfactory in the opinion of the women who utilise them the most.

Linkages to the outside are easier and more frequent in Ain Zeitoun than in Dar el Lawz because there are more connecting roads and, more importantly, the men need to go out to work. An indicator of the extent of external contacts is the higher number of married women who are not originally from the village. This increased contact may explain the greater number of development projects that Ain Zeitoun has received. However, these do not appear to have improved the material circumstances of the villages. The conditions of the electricity supply, internal paved roads, water and waste disposal remain poor for both. It also does not seem that the material well being of Ain Zeitoun has improved with these projects. On the contrary, the villagers have more financial difficulties than in Dar el Lawz which has received fewer development projects.

The data from both these villages show that their economic and social conditions are not well developed. Although some development projects have taken place, they have not made a large difference in people's lives.

Despite some changes in comparison to the earlier literature, the present conditions are still similar to the situation immediately post independence when Akkar was among the least developed areas in Lebanon. I now turn to village development where I look further into views and perceptions of development in the villages.



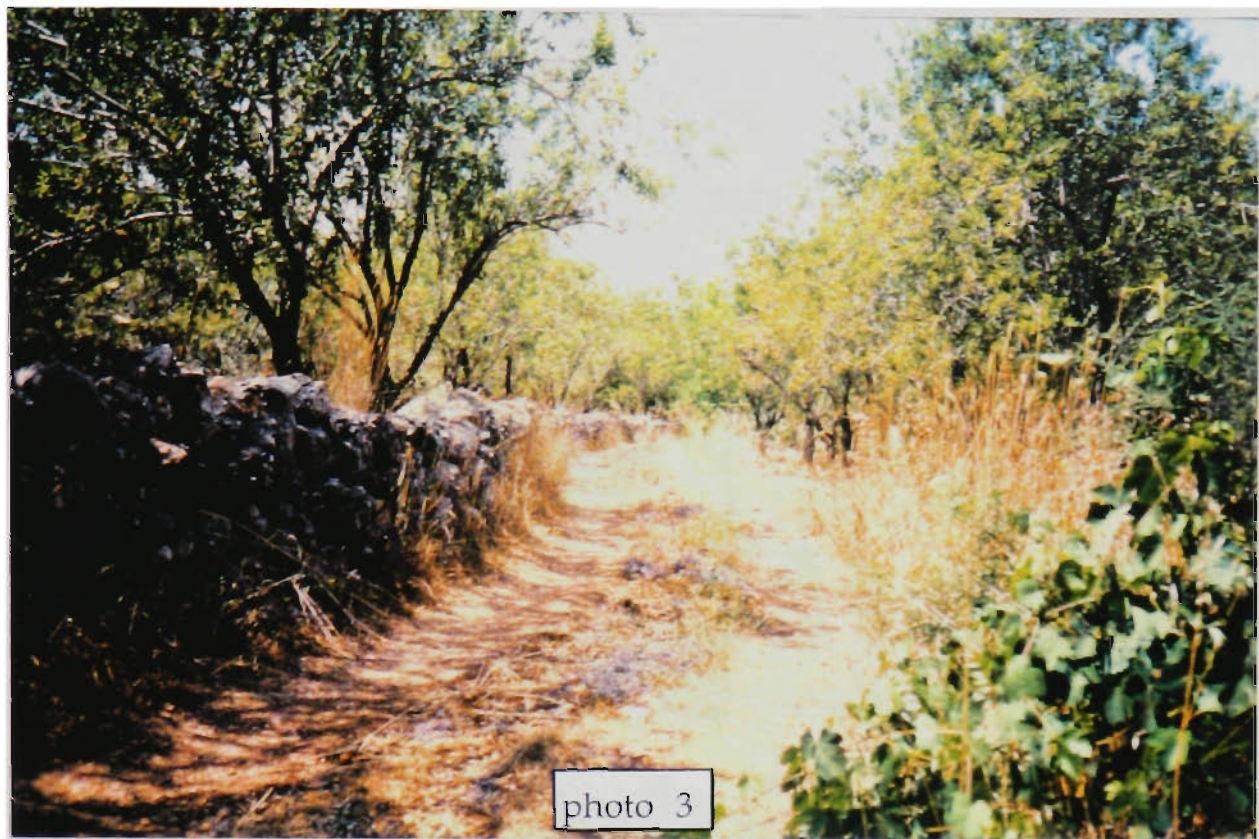


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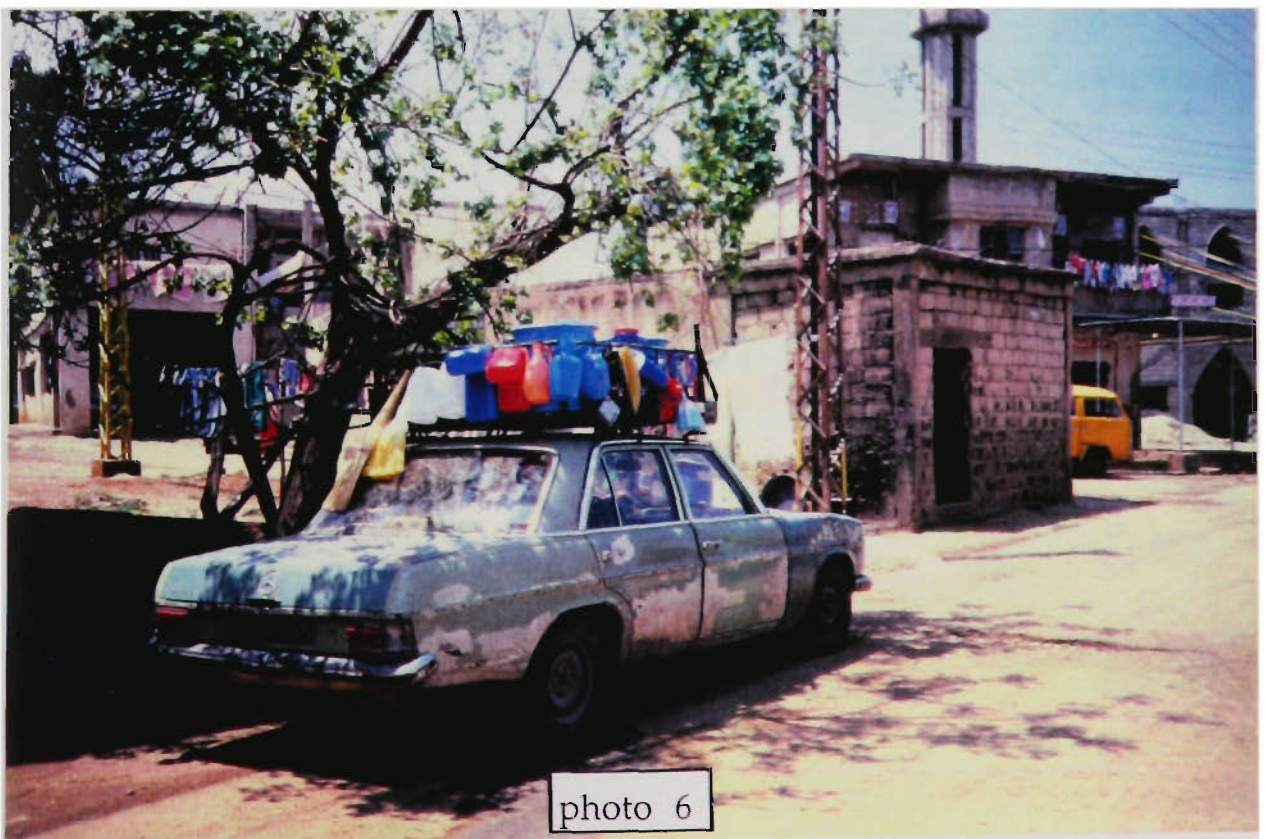






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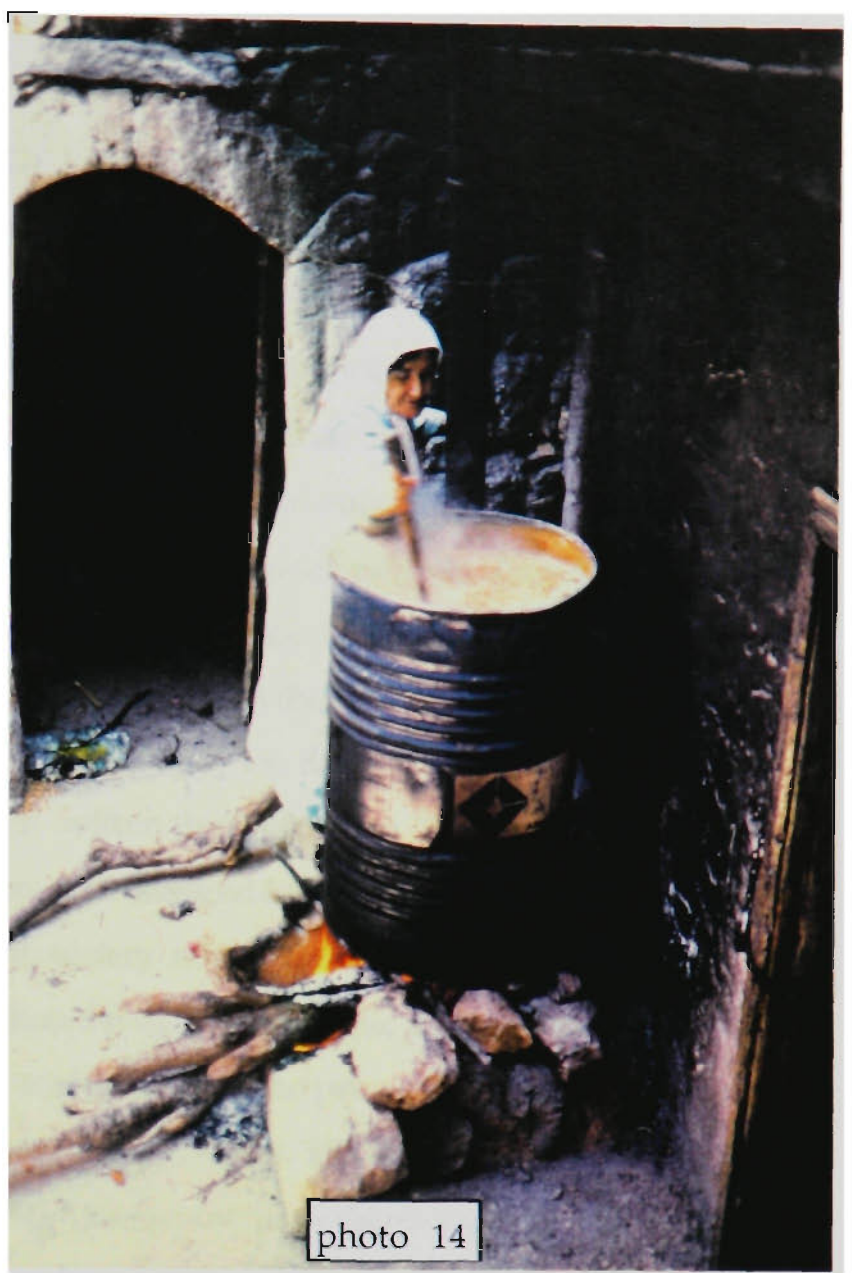


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## CHAPTER SIX : VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

### 6.1 Introduction

Throughout the course of the fieldwork, participants were asked to discuss a number of questions about village life, what they valued about it and what they perceived development to mean, together with questions addressing their experience of development projects (see Appendix F). As discussed in the previous chapter, village life is not as harmonious and as totally free of difficulties and problems as the popular literature portrays it to be. An inside view reveals that there are differences in status and opinions among the villagers, even within the one village. The deeply rooted gender divisions, for example, may go unnoticed by the villagers as they are a part of the traditional patriarchal society which has not changed a great deal. The women are less active than the men in economic and political life and more inward looking as they are involved in the private spheres of their families, households and immediate surroundings. The women's financial and social status is derived from their husbands' or fathers' status. The women are subordinate to the men and are not powerful enough to bring about change even to the areas which directly concern them. This has consequences for development, as I shall show.

The questions about village life and development were discussed informally with individuals and groups encountered during daily village activities and also more formally with particular 'key' individuals, such as the *sheikhs*, other village leaders, TBAs and school teachers. This chapter shows that while there are differences between the views of men and women in both villages, there are more similarities than differences in perspective between the villages despite their different experience of development projects. Men in both villages and women in both villages tend to have similar views of development which stem from their roles in village life and the conditions in their villages. In general, it may be said that men's views

reflect their roles as breadwinners and decision-makers. Better educated than the women and with more contact with the city, they are prepared to initiate change themselves and, where necessary, look for external assistance to bring this about and, incidentally, to use this to increase their own prestige in the village. Their 'development language' is similar to that of development professionals, which assists communication for development projects. However, this more active role in development and development projects may lead to increased tension and conflict within the village as the men compete with each other to secure funds. It may also increase their dependence on powerful political figures who are willing to assist them in return for their electoral loyalty.

This is not to suggest that all men think the same. On the contrary, there are diversities of opinion among them, which have to do with their status and position in the village hierarchies and with their affiliation with particular political parties and particular political leaders. As a result, some men are more likely to take on the role of development initiator than others. The influence of political affiliation in this process is more apparent in Ain Zeitoun than in Dar el Lawz. The male religious leaders also tend to have a different view than other men, one which may be said to be closer to the women's perspective in that it emphasises moral values. Again this is perhaps not surprising, given the centrality of religion in women's lives which was discussed in the previous chapter.

Women are more restricted to the private sphere of their homes and hence less involved in public development initiatives. The language they use to describe development, as I will show, conveys their lack of involvement. For them development is gradual and happens with time but through the involvement of others. They look to others to carry out development projects which they hope will reflect positively on their families and social lives.

## 6.2 The male view of development

Rather than using abstract definitions, men and women tend to define development by comparing their village with others. Those with more experience of the outside world tend to view their own level of development less positively. The most common word used by the men to describe their village is 'deprived' (*mahroumeh*) as the men in general are more in contact with the outside than the women in both villages. Only a few elderly men describe their villages as 'developed' (*mittawrah*) or 'advanced' (*mit'admeh*) in comparison with the past when they were young.

The more educated men, such as the school principal in Ain Zeitoun and the *sheikhs* in Dar el Lawz do not describe the village as developed. Their views present the people and the village as backward (*fi takhallouf*) and in need of efforts to improve, which implies more development efforts are required. They use the term *tanmiyeh*, a word taken from formal Arabic, not commonly used in the colloquial language. *Tanmiyeh* is also used by development professionals and means a development process requiring an effort or an agent (see chapter four). The noun *tanmiyeh* is derived from the Arabic verb *yinammi* which translates as 'to bring about development', originally used in formal Arabic to describe the act of increasing a fire by adding fuel or wood (*nammaytu ennar*) (Ibn Manzour, 1911). This necessitates the existence of an agent to initiate development as well as a receiver. Those who use this term perceive development as requiring initiators and are more likely to see themselves as one of these initiators. In these men's discussions, there are descriptions of planning efforts, contacts with funders, implementation and the search for hardware repairs in projects. These technical expressions as well as others, such as 'local community committee' (*lijni mahaliyyeh*), are also used by development professionals and are all adapted from their English meanings. This implies that the male educated villagers who have been involved in development

projects are able to communicate effectively with NGO officials, who are also men, using the same development language.

Men's views of development reflect their perceived roles as responsible for their families and as income earners. Some of them see themselves as powerful individuals either within their household or in other spheres. Their views are outward looking. They analyse the causes of their adverse financial conditions in relation to factors outside their village and present more sophisticated solutions than the women. The men locate their problems in structural conditions affecting their lives, the market and the state. Men's viewpoints reflect their social standing in the village. Their status may vary with education, political affiliation and financial standing, but the most powerful men are those who are politically affiliated and are known to have contacts with powerful politicians (*zu'ama*). For these men, using *wasta* is the most efficient way of accessing services as well as funds for development projects.

In the absence of a state development policy, the men in both villages see a need to intervene themselves to initiate projects. They have roles or potential roles in local development through their contacts with external change agents or being those change agents themselves. A measure of power is the ability to access funds for projects and to use them for initiatives which have tangible outcomes, such as roads, clinics, water projects, waste disposal and mosque renovations which are all mentioned in the more powerful men's discussions. The projects they pursue focus on physical structures and are similar to those the development professionals speak of. Therefore, for men, development is change which requires their efforts (*tanmiyeh*) resulting in visible improvements.

However, there seems to be a debate among them regarding the direction and the character of *tanmiyeh*: from within or external; with or without political support. For most men, the general preference is to stay away from requesting outside help in the form of *wasta* from useful but

powerful external patrons, as it necessitates loyalty and service to the patrons in return. Even though *wasta* solves some problems and may help to access funds, it creates conflicts among the men in the same village who compete to access it. The villagers are aware of the problems involved with accessing outside help, but sometimes they have nothing else to turn to. The *sheikhs* in Dar el Lawz insist it is better to depend on development initiatives from within. For them, their business contacts have been useful in accessing funds and services, but they do not consider it *wasta* as it is not related to politics. Ain Zeitoun provides an illustration of how *wasta* works at a village level in contemporary Akkar and its role in development projects.

#### 6.2.1 The practice of *wasta*

*Wasta* appears more frequently in men's discussions in Ain Zeitoun than in Dar el Lawz. The *wasta* the men in the villages speak of is the act of accessing material favours from powerful external politicians, the intermediaries, such as personal favours (employment, permits) or funds for a development project, as opposed to the *wasta* sought from the village leaders to resolve conflicts among the villagers. As Ain Zeitoun has more political contacts, it is not surprising that *wasta* is more widespread. *Wasta* may come from an individual politician, such as a local member of parliament, or a government official the villagers can reach personally or through others. *Wasta* plays a major role in men's lives to access favours, because the state does not assist in solving their problems or meeting immediate needs. It is the one successful method where others have failed. *Wasta* cuts through barriers to build, to get a job, to get a permit, to speed up transactions or assist in initiating projects. However, they are aware that *wasta* builds dependence and increases the exploitation of less powerful villagers, as it requires that the clients be loyal to the patron for life, especially in election campaigns.

'If there were jobs and work opportunities without referring to politicians, we would be very happy with that. ....one would [have to] slide on his stomach and be grateful all his life whether he likes the politician's ideology or not. It's a very difficult thing'.  
(Forty four year old man in Ain Zeitoun).

Not all men who seek *wasta* receive it as many of them may not be important enough to the *zaim*. The *zaim* prefers to give *wasta* to people who are in a more advantageous position in the village, such as a *wajih* or any man who commands the support of others in the village. This is in pursuit of his aim of increasing his popular support for elections or increased control of the village. The villagers who are not associated with political parties describe themselves as 'small' (*sighar*) in comparison to the 'big' (*kibar*) who are allied to powerful politicians. This latter term is also applied to the politicians themselves.

The villagers who regularly support political parties and politicians act as their liaisons within the village and derive their social prestige from these connections. A *zaim* has a vested interest in providing favours to the villagers as they then become his supporters. Since there are many *zu'ama* and several political parties, there are many such liaisons within these villages and the villagers do not all favour the same party or the same *zaim*. This explains the conflicts which arise among the men in the village. If a *zaim* fails to assist his followers with favours, he loses his followers' support to another *zaim*. Consequently, the *zaim* may prefer to preserve the conditions which force the villagers to depend on his assistance and create the need for *wasta*. Therefore, political leaders may not favour structural reforms, such as the regulation of employment or the reform of land ownership, as this may deprive the *zu'ama* of their influence over the people in the communities which they control. They may, however, favour small scale change which

may be linked to them in one way or another, for example a project carrying their name or which is known to have been funded or initiated by them.

The men constantly debate this issue which presents them with a dilemma: to improve something and be committed to the patron for life or not to change at all. *Wasta* is a way for some men to achieve their objectives. Other men, mainly those who are educated and perceive themselves as having high moral standing, refuse to seek *wasta*.

'It is wrong to get *wasta* because it is a violation of the public welfare'.

(Male university graduate in Ain Zeitoun).

Using *wasta* to access a job does not require the seeker to have the necessary credentials, such as a university degree, which makes university graduates critical of people who are less educated but get jobs first. Cunningham and Sarayrah (1993) describe the same incidents in Jordan where *wasta* interferes with administrative decisions on job applications and transfers. The process is problematic because it involves preferential treatment for those who are less qualified, and therefore all those involved may be considered corrupt and immoral. The system works this way. In Ain Zeitoun, two male graduates, who have studied geography and Arabic literature, have been looking for jobs. The geographer works as a casual construction labourer to help pay for the remainder of his tuition fees. The literature graduate has been applying for work as a teacher in the public sector but, because he has not resorted to *wasta*, he has still not been successful in his application. The employee where applications are received advised him after many visits to get a *wasta* to ensure a job. *Wasta* may be the only solution to secure jobs for these educated men and, although it is against their principles, they may have to get one.

A disadvantage of *wasta* is that it can be a hindering factor in getting villagers together. Those in the village who do not know a *zaim* or do not usually access *wasta*, feel threatened by the men who hold a political

leadership position in the village and who usually have their source of *wasta*. The school principal in Ain Zeitoun is an example how these people think of a man who accesses *wasta* for his own benefit.

'He is corrupt and has been accused of stealing the school money and spending it. They couldn't fire him. The problem is not with the man but with the currents that steer him'.

(Male school teacher in Ain Zeitoun).

As far as *wasta* is concerned, there are three levels in the patron-client hierarchy. In descending order of power, the *zaim*, who resides outside the village, is at the highest level. The person(s) with whom he has direct contacts, usually representatives of the *zaim* in their village, are at the second level. Finally, the majority of the villagers, men and women, who usually have no direct access to the *zaim* are at the lowest level and are not a part of the patron-client relationship.

The villagers at the lowest level of this hierarchy are the least powerful majority and have little or no access to *wasta*. Consequently, they are the least well off. Their relationships with their fellow villagers who are higher up may be difficult. The people in the third level are disregarded by the village leaders in decision making as they are considered to be of little account. They are not part of the *wasta* network. In turn, those who are closer to politicians and are located at the second level are considered by the rest as corrupt and threatening. However, these second level individuals do not have a positive relationship among one another either as they are affiliated with different *zu'ama*.

Individuals are introduced to the *zu'ama* through contacts from their education, jobs (government employment), social affiliations to prominent organisations and advanced political party standing. So to rise to the second level in this hierarchy, a villager must have access to at least one of these. It



follows that, in the village, only men can fit these criteria, as women are usually neither highly educated, employed nor do they join political parties.

In villages like Ain Zeitoun and Dar el Lawz, there is a constant race for leadership and community recognition among individual men and *wasta* allows the person pursuing recognition a chance to gain it by initiating projects in the village. If the projects that are carried out as a consequence of accessing funds are successful, the initiator wins support from other villagers. For example, the *sheikhs* in Dar el Lawz have used their business contacts (not referred to as *wasta*) to access funds for projects in their village. Through these contacts, they have helped in meeting medical expenses and obtaining funds to build the village mosque. They have acquired the villagers' support (expressed in manual labour and volunteering with chores) to go on to other projects despite their lack of political affiliation usually necessary for success.

If the projects are not successful, the initiator does not gain village support and may indeed lose his credibility. The *sheikh* in Ain Zeitoun who does not belong to a political party, has been unable to succeed in his activities because of political opposition in his village. On one occasion, the members of the local sports club, which he led, had announced themselves to be the village welfare committee and presented a request to a private organisation owned by a current member of parliament for funds to dig a well at the top of the village. Men with political affiliations in the village came to know of the *sheikh's* project and contacted people within the same organisation. These opposing villagers managed to stop the project by presenting their own request for building a bridge at the bottom of the village and another for a road. They convinced the funders that their project was more worthy. Consequently, the well project stopped and the *sheikh* could do nothing about it. This led to the loss of his credibility in the village and made him appear as a passive observer rather than an initiator of development projects. He is still respected as a religious leader, but lacking

political affiliation, he is not powerful and is not likely to lead change in the village.

Sheltered by their religious intentions and rhetoric, the *sheikhs* in Dar el Lawz are protected against criticism for corruption and selfish motives usually directed at politicians and their village supporters. They are seen by the villagers as men of God and His Prophet who set the example for the villagers to follow. They continue to be accepted as village leaders because they are seen as non violent, trustworthy and capable. In contrast, the *sheikh* in Ain Zeitoun has not attained this privilege as, in this village, political contacts are required for a person to be seen as capable and powerful in the eyes of the villagers. Further, unlike the *sheikhs* in Dar el Lawz, he has no outside business or other contacts through which to access funds.

The *sheikhs* adopt the paradoxical position of condemning the resort to *wasta* from the outside, but use it themselves. Despite their rhetoric of social reform, the *sheikhs* in Dar el Lawz are involved in the implementation of development projects, similar to those carried out by other leading men in the village. Their initiative, described as being from within the community is similar to the other men's initiatives in Ain Zeitoun. The *sheikhs* also access *wasta* through their business contacts which has helped in crossing financial barriers for the villagers. The *sheikhs'* actions differ from the other men's only in that there is no political dependence in their case, which is what they are proud of.

Some men in the third level express the need for the government to take over development efforts from individual politicians and from the villagers leaders. When the villagers speak of the government, they are referring to the state (*eddawleh*), whereas *wasta* is linked to individual politicians rather than the government. They say they themselves have done all they can to improve their lot. Some men want to limit the need to use *wasta*. However, they doubt this restraint will happen based on their experience of inadequate government action in the past. Individuals, such as

the *sheikhs*, speak of, and attempt to initiate, development from within the villages because they say that the state and its politicians are more interested in urban areas and in personal gain. In their opinion, the government is occupied in urban development and has no plans for developing the rural areas.

'Now we have the health centre project after the mosque. Mind you, there is no outside financial support at all- not from the public side, not from the state or any political party. Nothing. Just through my contacts as a businessman in Tripoli'.

(*Sheikh* in Dar el Lawz).

According to the *sheikhs* in Dar el Lawz, development requires planned efforts from within (*min al dakhel*) to be beneficial and compatible with Muslim values, as well as to conserve the identity of the village and protect it from urban and western ideologies, described as 'opposing currents' (*tayyarat mouakisi*). These are permitted by the state to reach individuals through mass media such as television.

'Lebanon is influenced by Europe. Instead of acquiring roads, refined economic methods, electricity, water projects and health insurance..... we are getting worshippers of the devil and such things. Today you look at the television, you do not get an hour of education. There is no awareness... You find corruptive programs, corruptive advertisements, dance, music... all this leads to madness.'

(*Sheikh* in Dar el Lawz).

The *sheikhs* desire a holistic spiritual reform of society beginning with individuals, especially the young men. According to them, this can only be achieved through planned change in educational and moral standing. They use terms such as: uplifting (*nohood*) and reform (*islah*). This is another dimension of development, that of social reform which, according to the

*sheikhs*, is missing in contemporary approaches by the government and by individual politicians who make the major decisions.

The desire for moral reform stems from a religious understanding of development. Development initiatives must be independent of external assistance, including that of the state, because the state represents a disappointing and corrupting influence. The *sheikhs* in Dar el Lawz do not mention NGOs as their development experience is limited to politicians and the government. According to the *sheikhs*, their own efforts have been successful and they are hopeful that their followers, some of the young men (*shabab*) will continue to cooperate and carry out such work in the future.

'In the presence of the *shabab* who are conscientious, everything will change in this village. It is very natural- nothing easier than that.'

(*Sheikh* in Dar el Lawz).

Ideally, according to this view, development will occur to individuals at first but only to those who are morally prepared. Then the individuals will bring about development in their community. The assumption that people are unworthy and are corrupted by western influences is related to the idea of religion as a moral force. Therefore, development will come from within individuals who work together and share common ideals for the benefit of their community. It also assumes that individuals will want to put in their personal efforts for uplifting their communities. According to their religious teachings, God will be watching them and this represents the ultimate reinforcement.

To summarise, the views of the men who are involved in initiating development projects in their villages portray development as change which requires their efforts, and assisted by *wasta*. With this view and given the advantages that *wasta* offers for acquiring leadership position, it is not surprising that some try to do their best to improve their conditions. In their efforts, however, they compete for funds which creates problems among

them and the other villagers. Nevertheless, these efforts in the absence of state interventions are necessary to improve their conditions. This view of development is different from that of the religious leaders who believe that development should be a result of social and religious reform, development from within, independent of powerful politicians. Although they preach grand change in society, in fact they have been more involved in meeting the immediate needs of the village, such as access to medical services and building a mosque. Thus they have gained people's support and reinforced their acknowledged leadership position. The women and the *sheikhs* speak of development in similar ways. The women are more interested in social development that is related to their families and the *sheikhs* speak of social reform. But as will be shown next, unlike the *sheikhs*, the women are not involved in development initiatives.

### 6.3 The female view of development

Like the men, women tend to use comparisons in their definitions of development. The women in Dar el Lawz are less in contact with the outside world than are the women in Ain Zeitoun. They describe their village as developed (*mittawrah*) derived from development (*tatawwor*) which means progress from one stage to another, and advanced (*mit'admeh*) from advancement (*ta'addom*). These terms suggest the absence of an external agent to lead the process and therefore imply the act takes place by itself. For the women in Dar el Lawz, manifestations of this development (*tatawwor*) include modern schools, high ranking jobs, water trucks and educated children.

Most of the women in Ain Zeitoun on the other hand, like the men, use the word 'deprived' (*mahroumeh*) to describe their village as they are more able to compare it with other areas such as the city, which they regularly visit. What they think is missing from their village is derived from an ideal situation they see in other places. The women in Ain Zeitoun express

their need in particular for the services that are available in the city, such as health care facilities and for more work opportunities.

Since they are less educated than the men, the women use colloquial Arabic. They are not familiar with the development language some of the men use. As one may expect, given the context in which the women live, their views on development emanate from their experiences as housewives and care givers. Their role involves children, the family and the social setting of their neighbourhoods. These are not superficial views but are deeply rooted in their views of themselves. For the women in both villages, social life is a source of moral support against pressures internal to their villages rather than security against external threat. The women claim that their village is serene (*arwa min ghaira*) because it does not have the problems which exist in other villages and that the women are respected by the men. Respect for women, according to the women themselves, is providing them with all household appliances that would make their housework easier. Another form of respect, according to the women, is being well treated by the men, listening to their opinions, allowing them to go for visits or to the market and not physically abusing them.

'Here, the men are obedient to women. You can say ..they do not rule..that is they are very understanding toward each other. Anything his wife asks for, he brings it to her the next day.'

(Newly married 18 year old woman in Dar el Lawz).

'Relatively few [men] insult a woman or beat her'.

(Twenty six year old woman in Ain Zeitoun).

The lack of paid activity outside their homes explains why most women tend to be inward looking. For them, development would incorporate: educational access for their children, medical services, and work opportunities for the men which would impact positively on their families. However, a few younger women are challenging their traditional position.

Some of them have started earning a small income in the village by giving private lessons. Other women whose husbands have not been successful in finding work have begun out of necessity to earn some income from selling home made goods. These women have moved away from the traditional view which presents women as housekeepers only. In the future, this may change the way women see themselves and how they view development.

At the moment, women see themselves as receivers of development rather than being active participants or initiators. The changes they describe which have taken place are presented as influenced by God who, according to the women, has already helped them in many ways. As mentioned previously, practising religion is equivalent to socialising for the women, especially in Dar el Lawz. Religion gives them autonomy, connectivity and a sense of protection which shows in their description of their village life as serene. Women view development as an inevitable and gradual change which requires no effort. According to the women, outcomes of development become apparent with time or even generations. Generations mix by meeting others from outside their village through education, work and trade. This contributes to development by improving people's lives and the way they think. So villagers become gradually more conscious of themselves and their surroundings and desire change.

'The older generation did not work outside [the village]. They worked on the land. This man has opened a shop. Another works in a company. Nowadays, this generation has gone outside to Beirut... and everywhere and sees other people... and wants to do like others.'

(Forty year old woman in Dar el Lawz).

Although they are not in favour of sudden physical change, the women do accept it in specific areas, such as those which they perceive to bring about improvements for their families, and are not disruptive of their lives. They show a preference for the young men (*shabab*) to be involved in

development projects. Educated men such as the *shabab* understand the village and may be less troublesome for the villagers than older men when it comes to implementing change. In the women's views, young men are becoming educated and education is seen to improve people's mentality.

'.. They are not looking for personal praise. They are after [improving] people's future so the people will become comfortable and they will develop.... I mean so the things in the village will become better'.

(Fifty year old woman in Dar el Lawz).

This contrasts with educated men's views of the other villagers who are seen as ignorant as mentioned in the previous chapter.

Most women do not demand that their status change in their favour as they have low expectations of change for themselves and perceive themselves as weak compared to the men. Given their lack of access to education, they may not fully understand their rights as Lebanese citizens and as Muslim women, such as those concerning their inheritance. This arrangement will likely not change if the men are content with it. The women do not expect the state to intervene and change their education and work conditions because they are not involved in debates about political life and they have not experienced improvement from the state. However, they do not go into details. It is not their role.

According to the women, development projects require other people's efforts, particularly those of individual male initiators from the village itself such as the *shabab*, the heads of the *ailis* (*wojaha*), or a local politician, such as a member of parliament (*nayib*). So even though they do see that someone has to take the initiative, it would not be them. When women are not involved in projects from the beginning, most likely they will not be involved at later stages. They are not involved because they are traditionally seen by the men only as housekeepers. The sexual division of labour is reproduced early in the children's lives. At a young age, girls take care of their younger



siblings and help their mothers, while the boys help their fathers outside in the fields. So women remain in the private sphere of the household and men in the public sphere of the market and politics.

While the women may appear passive on the surface, in fact they have very strong views about issues directly concerning them such as improving health services for themselves and their children, managing scarce resources, such as money, and working together. They are able to discuss in detail what they see as solutions for problems that concern them. However, the women who expressed their concern for their children's health showed no sign of taking action to initiate change for it. If the men were the ones who take care of their children and they were in need of a health centre, it is likely that they would take action and seek funds or *wasta* to have one established in their village. Men's concern and frustration about the lack of health services is probably less than the women's because they are not involved in caring for the children and they consider looking after a sick child is a female responsibility. The men also have access to transportation and control the money in their households. In Dar el Lawz, the men built the village mosque in the 1960s. It is currently being renovated and enlarged with the funds that the *sheikhs* have collected. The mosque is a priority for the men as they are the ones who usually pray in it. They have accessed funds to build it and they say that they will establish a health centre in the future.

While women speak about development in terms very similar to those of the *sheikhs*, unlike these male religious leaders, they do not see themselves as having a role to play in the process. The women have a potential for being suitable agents for change because they understand micro issues within their families and villages. They see solutions to their problems and can differentiate between what needs to be changed and what needs to be preserved. But their participation in development may require a change in how they perceive themselves and how men perceive them. Most do not have access to an income and therefore rely on their husbands or fathers for

cash to spend on medical services, transportation and their households. They have neither political nor educational power and their legal inheritance is not given to them. They do not wish for sudden change unless they see it is beneficial to their families or improves their conditions. These views are deeply rooted in the patriarchal society of Lebanon and specifically, in the Lebanese village.

Women base their evaluation of the success of projects upon benefits to their family, their neighbourhood and their village in this order. Change is positive for them if the benefits outweigh the negatives (increased water supplies for example, in comparison to their cost). But if conditions after change are worse than before, or carry negative side effects for them or their families (women standing hours in the sun to access water despite living in the vicinity of a redeveloped spring), then development projects are not useful. Unfortunately, the projects in Dar el Lawz and Ain Zeitoun have impacted negatively on women in general as the projects have changed the women's social relations and caused negative environmental problems for them and their neighbourhoods. The women still experience these ill-effects. They express disappointment with the projects which have affected the village social life and the cultural heritage which they value. This will be discussed at length in the case study in the following chapter.

Even though they have not been involved in development projects themselves, the women are affected by the clashes the men have over power and leadership in the village played out through the projects. This is a cause of anxiety for them and their families. The women try their best to interfere themselves in the disputes, but they do not succeed.

'They [older men] oppose as if they want this [project] to come from them only. There are some people whose minds are still old fashioned. Anything they brought into the village, they fought over it. And in a little while, if all the world comes in, it couldn't get their mentalities together'.

(Fifty eight year old woman in Dar el Lawz).

I discuss this in more detail in the following chapter.

#### 6.4 Discussion and conclusion

There are no differences between the villages in people's perceptions on development. It is expected that the residents of both villages have similar views as the social organisation is similar. The infrastructure in both is similar, too. The roads, electric current, water and sanitation facilities all need improvement. The projects that both villages have experienced have not been successful.

But within the villages, there are apparent differences between the men and the women. How they perceive their roles and responsibilities may explain these differences in views. Men, being the heads of their families perceive development as physical improvements to the village in which they may be involved. The women, being responsible for their households and children see development as gradual change which does not involve them as initiators. Further differences of views depend upon the social status of men and women. The women in Ain Zeitoun and Dar el Lawz have similar status as they are the least educated in the village and perceive themselves as inferior to the men. But since the men's status varies with education and political affiliation, the men tend to be in two social levels: those with political contacts with the external leaders and who access *wasta*, on one hand, and those who have no contacts and are less powerful, on the other. *Wasta* is important in both village life and for development projects, especially in Ain Zeitoun where political contacts are more common and their use is necessary to gain leadership power.

After discussing these issues, the next chapter focuses on the development projects which have been initiated with the help of outside sources of funding and development agencies to improve the current water

supply to the villages. None of these projects could be said to have been successful as they were not completed and the results were nebulous. The views of the men involved in the projects asserted their relative successes, while other villagers expressed disappointment with their failure. This raises a number of questions about the way the projects were implemented and managed as well as about the people involved from the village and the agencies.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CASE STUDY OF A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

### 7.1 Introduction

The common mechanism for development practice is the development project. The project approach in Lebanon as revealed in the development professionals' work is discussed in this chapter with a critique from the literature of its practical limitations. The chapter begins with an overview of salient points from the literature on development projects. The case study of the water project involving the spring (*ain*) in Ain Zeitoun follows the overview and illustrates the flaws identified in the development literature.

Among these points was the lack of consultation with the villagers to assess the need before the project began. Participation in the project was limited to the male village leaders who involved themselves in an ad hoc manner. This excluded the women's participation which points to a lack of awareness of gender issues. Though concluded, the project does not function properly. The lack of maintenance and evaluation after the hardware had been installed left the project's future unknown which means there was a lack of planning from the start. More importantly, the professionals were not aware of the relationships the villagers were a part of and the various levels of social hierarchy which affected project outcomes and how they were perceived.

Despite the critiques found in the literature about development projects, it is clear that these have not been useful in planning and practical implementation. The technical and social problems are unseen by the professionals and undocumented in their reports although they are apparent in the literature and on the ground. I use the literature where appropriate to point out these problems as they occur in the case study.

## 7.2 Development projects

According to the literature, development projects are the mechanisms by which development agencies intervene in the social and economic processes involving poor people (Oxfam, 1995). The common model for development projects includes a target population, an assessment of needs, strict time bound objectives, detailed implementation plans and evaluation at the end. These were the main elements of development projects in the 1960s and 1970s. I will discuss target populations, and assessments as they are of relevance to the villages in the study.

Target populations are the people that the development professionals call the beneficiaries, whom development projects are designed to assist. Gardner and Lewis (1996) describe them as a broad category which includes men, women, farmers and indigenous minorities according to the nature of the programs. The labels used by external agents to define the target groups of a development project may seem to be a rational way to proceed. However, these labels, such as subsistence farmers or illiterate women, are meaningless to the people. This is because the label does not mean the ability of people in a particular group to take collective action. People do not define themselves in reference to one exclusive characteristic and may belong to other 'target groups' with other specifications (Oxfam, 1995). This present study of the two Lebanese villages illustrates this point very well, as will be shown in this chapter in which I discuss a water project.

Shepherd (1998) argues that the reason for the 'target group' popularity stems from colonial times, when governments depended on community leaders to facilitate their interactions with rural people and to enforce laws. They assumed the communities under their control were a conglomerate of similar individuals leading traditional backward lives. Anthropological evidence shows that apparently similar communities may have different interests and needs and that sometimes complex power structures exist within a single community. As a result, outsiders may

erroneously treat a community as a homogeneous whole and thus may marginalise or stereotype some of its members (Gardner and Lewis 1996). Burkey (1993) argues that visitors, including development professionals, tend to romanticise community life in villages as one of harmony and happiness and this perspective has largely determined the approach to development work in rural areas.

Labonté (1989: 87) questions the use of the term 'community' as restricted to a geographical area or limited to demographic variables. He explains that the term has a Latin origin meaning sharing which is a 'dynamic interaction of people'. In fact, within the community, members may differ in economic and social standing as well as in their relationship to local power structures, which means their goals, interests and needs are not necessarily alike.

For planning projects, needs assessments or appraisals are used. According to Juliá (1992), needs assessments are carried out to identify people's problems to make sure that subsequent interventions by development professionals in health care and other areas will respond to their needs. There are many ways by which needs are assessed and priorities determined. For example, the South Australia Health Research Unit (1991) categorises needs in terms of how they are defined: by experts, community members through surveys, directly by community members and unmet needs in comparison with other communities. Other methods include surveys and rapid appraisals.

A popular method to gather information on needs is the questionnaire survey. Surveys are easily quantifiable. People's responses are aggregated to establish patterns and relationships among variables using statistical analysis. They are easily coded and analysed and establish correlations from a representative small sample (Fowler, 1988). For example, demographic indicators of health and socioeconomic trends around the world come from a series of standardised demographic surveys funded by international agencies

for development such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Demographic health surveys use questionnaires which ask about fertility, child mortality, immunisations, maternal education and household characteristics. The World Bank Living Standards Measurement studies poverty, education, health and income. The World Bank (1993) states that their success depends upon correct sampling and processing that may produce results in a few weeks. These statistics are then used by governments and external organisations to take decisions about development aid.

However, there are limitations to the use of surveys in social research. May (1993) argues that the most prominent weakness of surveys is that they cannot measure people's perceptions and beliefs in real life situations when questions are closed ended and answers are limited. Chambers (1983) argues that surveys may reflect the categories and concepts of the outsider and impose meanings rather than uncover reality from the participants' perspectives. For this reason, as Kellehear (1993) argues, questionnaire surveys are not an effective means for gaining insight into the social and cultural complexities of the people surveyed, nor do they necessarily contribute to explaining the underlying factors behind their conditions.

As a result of these criticisms and as part of the challenge to the conventional top-down approach of determining needs, other techniques such as participatory rapid appraisals (PRA) have been recently used in some areas. Ong (1996) and Theis and Grady (1991) describe PRA as a multi-disciplinary methodology which provides timely and relevant information. In particular, PRA appears to address the pressing issue of participation in development. Theis and Grady (1991) explain that PRA may be used by itself or to complement other methods of research such as cross sectional surveys. Its usefulness lies in its potential for identifying priorities in the field, with the participants. Results are obtained quickly and there is no need for lengthy data coding and analysis (Ong, 1996).



Although the literature discusses advantages and uses, there is little documentation on the shortcomings of rapid appraisals. Theis and Grady (1991) list a set of dangers of rapid appraisals pertaining mainly to the investigating team. They say that choosing the right team members may be difficult and, due to different training backgrounds and experiences, their attitudes may be inappropriate towards community members. Team members may be accustomed to conventional methods of closed ended questionnaires which do not require interpersonal skills and are quick to administer. Without training in PRA, members may lead superficial discussions and disregard meaningful information or they may be influenced by personal opinion and professional allegiances. Almedon (1996) cautions that rapid appraisals should not be used unless they are linked with a purpose, as they cannot assess development needs for a large community, city or country. Another limitation is the inability of rapid appraisals to ensure that people are included in the later phases of project implementation. Nevertheless, they do add an element of participation not found in quantitative methods (Ong, 1996). Their pitfalls do not imply that rapid appraisals are useless, but if the research team is aware of them, it will be easier to plan ahead and avoid them.

Using clinical terms of diagnosis and prescription, a project would describe normalised procedures or replicable models to alleviate the assessed conditions (Pottier, 1993). However, projects aiming at developing rural areas, for example, have proved to be problematic because of the dominance of a particular project culture, based on the ideal of management by objectives and cost effectiveness. This project culture was criticised for failing to adopt to changing contexts and local variations (Shepherd, 1998) but continues to be popular in modern development manuals and in office procedures of development agencies such as those in Lebanon. However, the term 'program cycle', with its familiar terms of needs assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation, has been replaced by the term 'program

spiral' which incorporates learning at every stage. This process of using lessons learnt illustrates that the experience gained may be used 'in carrying out a piece of work into future activities' (Save the Children, 1995:14). However, learning from the project may not be translated into learning from the people, but instead refers to improving project management.

From a critical point of view, projects are planned by distant professionals who are unaware of the conditions and the needs of lay people. These projects are then imposed on them rather than allow them to participate (Gardner and Lewis, 1996). Despite failures of this formula, sector specialists such as those in rural development, water and sanitation and agriculture engineering still expect people to organise themselves and to contribute to implementing the preplanned sector activities in the target communities (Burkey, 1993).

Projects are further criticised for their lack of definitions of terminology used. For example common misused terms are poverty, success, access and adequate. Poverty, the leading concern to development aid, is not well defined. Madeley (1991) and Satterthwaite (1995) doubt development assistance can alleviate poverty arguing that first, defining poverty is difficult. This is so because these definitions vary between material possessions, income and housing quality and are not the same in all parts of the world. In developing countries, for example, urban dwellers living in overcrowded housing facilities have poor drinking water quality and also lack sanitary facilities. Meanwhile, in northern America for example, the urban poor also live in overcrowded households, but have access to safe water and sanitation (Satterthwaite, 1995). There are continuous new comers to the poor in all countries of the world because of wars, fluctuations in the national economy and loss of jobs. These new categories sometimes go unnoticed and require addressing changes in structural causes of their poverty (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994).

According to Satterthwaite (1995), poverty measurement scales are transferred with little modification from one country to another. He questions the ability of external organisations to address people's needs, when these are defined in terms of set measurements of, for example, land holdings, number of children and level of education. He argues that there are discrepancies between local definitions and those of the World Bank and UNDP. Studies within nations use country specific poverty lines to describe poverty while the World Bank estimates rely on international standards for comparisons. Consequently, the estimates at a country level differ from the international estimates.

Another difficulty that makes reaching the poorest of the poor problematic according to Madeley (1991) is that the poor are not well identified and are not organised into representative committees. Although some development organisations require that people do organise before receiving any aid, poor people are often misrepresented or ignored by local governments. Tisch and Wallace (1994) also argue that development agencies looking for immediately measurable impacts preferentially extend development benefits to groups who are already organised and who are better off.

At a country level, when aid is channelled through government officials, the poorest seldom get their share when existing funds are spent on other political priorities. The bulk of aid assistance provided by donor country governments to their receiving counterparts is allocated mainly to strengthening their military power and overlooks pressing social issues (Rahnema, 1993). Many receiving governments tend to see their national needs, in a decreasing order of priorities, as the army and security forces, media and infrastructure and finally the social and cultural needs of their people. The statistics that appear in the Human Development Reports (UNDP, 1994 and 1995) support this argument. Ethiopia, for example, received a total of \$1209 million in foreign aid in 1993, the second highest

amount in Africa after Egypt. In 1960, military expenditure was 107 times more than the expenditure on health and education combined. This increased to 190 times cent in 1991. Meanwhile, only 19 per cent of Ethiopia's rural population have access to clean water and the infant mortality rate in 1993 was 119 per 1000. Ethiopia has the highest percentage of low birth weights (40 per cent) in Africa (UNDP, 1994).

There is clearly a mismatch between definitions of poverty at a macro level and definitions at micro levels which makes reaching the poor and alleviating their conditions difficult. Without a state policy to address poverty, governments tend to push such issues from their priority lists and replace them with more powerful interests such as upgrading their armed forces.

Success is another concept used loosely to describe the end of projects where outcomes are also defined in relative terms. Development projects document achievements in terms of planning and management and rarely discuss their impact on people. Jain (1994) for example, discusses the successes of development programs in terms of organisational management. He visited eleven development programs in India, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand funded by the UK and Canada. Program activities included credit loans, irrigation facilities, technical assistance, training, support for processing and marketing of agriculture products and family planning to bring down population growth rates. Successes were measured in terms of operational performances and their ability to shape the behaviour of beneficiaries as per program requirements rather than in benefits to the people.

The terms 'access' and 'adequate' are also used differently in varying contexts. Satterthwaite (1995) argues in his article on underestimating poverty that a workable agreement on what 'adequate' means is missing. Litvin (1998) illustrates this point by saying that an estimated one billion people world wide do not have access to adequate water supplies even

though this access is defined by their governments as a single water tap shared between hundreds. So these government estimates do not clearly document the actual situation. According to WHO/UNICEF (1993: 13) people are adequately served with water if they have 'access to safe drinking water within a convenient distance from the user's dwelling'. This definition does not take into account the weight of water to be carried and the distance or the prices paid nor the long queues at a public source when water is available at certain times during the day. Satterthwaite (1995) concludes that despite this lack of clarity in definition, the figures of access to water supplies in development reports remain inflated and people who are described as having access in fact may not.

The argument presented by Satterthwaite (1995) regarding the lack of practical definitions in measuring access is valid for Lebanon because 'access' is not well defined in the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) report, the most recent formal study on population and housing. The Arabic term *wosoul*, which means access, is used to describe water sources in the survey tool used by MOSA (1998) and additional questions enquired about the water sources. So Ain Zeitoun, which has its own spring, would thus be included in the statistics on adequate water supplies. Yet in reality, it does not provide equal access to all the villagers. On the other hand, Dar el Lawz which does not have a water source, but whose villagers collect rain water and buy truck loads for their supply may be classified as having no access. Reports on water projects tend to emphasise this access indicator and evaluate success in terms of the numbers of beneficiaries, in addition to the total amounts of funds spent, statistics which are useful in quarterly and yearly reports to donor agencies or main offices.

During the civil war (1975-90), when the government was incapable of providing most of the basic services to the population, UNICEF was among the many international NGOs and organisations which assumed this role. UNICEF became a major contributor to public health, water and sanitation

projects throughout the country. An excerpt from the Water and Sanitation Program report reads:

'A total of 46 water projects were executed between April 1990 and December 1991 with a total of 453400 beneficiaries.. distributed over all Lebanese regions..'

(UNICEF, 1995 :3).

A brief description of what each project entailed follows the summary and includes the location, partners involved in the project such as local committees, and the number of beneficiaries. These projects are considered technical in nature as they deal with infrastructure. Their impact on the people and their environment is not analysed, but, as I shall show, these may be considerable.

Questions of who benefits, what ill-effects are there to people's health and the environment and what is done with information are among the many ethical issues attached to development projects. Although successes have been reported, failures such as ill effects on the people and their environments continue to occur. Weil et al (1990), in their review of the literature on the impact of development projects on health, argue that economic growth and the expansion of infrastructure do not always lead to improvements in people's health. Health risks from the building of dams and irrigation canals, for example, which have not been maintained have led to increases in parasitic infections from stagnant water (Adams, 1993). They have also resulted in the displacement of hundreds of villagers from their land (Caufield, 1996).

To avoid potentially hazardous effects on people and their environments, assessments of such risks can be estimated prior to project implementation. One such method is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). EIA is one of the many procedures used by development decision makers to describe and analyse effects on the physical environment from a

proposed project activity and hence to overcome pollution problems or reduce their effects. Only recently has the concept of environmental impact assessment (EIA) been a part of development discourse and, more often than not, projects have just paid lip service to the procedure as the results depend on standards which vary from country to country. Originally developed in the United States, it has features which rely on democratic processes for its validity. This means including people in decision making while weighing benefits and drawbacks (Shepherd, 1998).

Even though EIAs are carried out by professionals, their findings may never be taken into consideration for other reasons. Caufield (1996) describes in length the efforts put in to carrying out an EIA report on a large dam project in India, funded by the World Bank. The independent consultants were well known in international development, anthropology and engineering. They worked for a year reviewing reports, interviewing people at different levels and studying the village sites. The final report pointed to flaws in the design of the project including the damage to the natural environment and displacement of hundreds of villagers from their lands as well as an overestimation of benefits, but the Bank and the local government disregarded the findings as it was to their mutual benefit to continue with the project.

Adams (1993) and Gardner and Lewis (1996) clarify why in-depth information on ill-effects on people may be hidden. They describe two different case studies of development projects in Asian countries which were originally planned to help the poor develop cooperatives and fish farms. Evaluations of the projects revealed that they became dysfunctional and grew out of touch with their clients but continued for a number of years. Previous reports were not available to the evaluation team as the agencies involved had concealed their findings.

Recurring criticisms are often directed to projects which overemphasise the use of hardware or technology, such as water projects. For

example, projects aiming to improve water supplies for community households emphasise the use of hardware such as pumps and pipes and overlook the problems for the people which may result. Rosov (1983: 29) in his review of the efforts of the international organisations and their local counterparts in the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, points out that the 'software' activities are more often neglected when installing the 'hardware' in these projects. The term 'software' is used to mean the infrastructure necessary for coordinating national efforts as well as health education and information sharing with the public. These require more effort and involve more activities whereas the installation of technology involves less activity and uncertainties are fewer (Shepherd, 1998).

Shepherd (1998) gives examples of water pumps installed to help women access more water but the women were not consulted about their design. The pumps were too high for the women to reach. The problem of not involving recipients, for example women in this case, as prime users of water projects occurs frequently in the critical literature. Mathew (1991) in reviewing a report on the evaluation of water projects funded by USAID points out that involving women in planning is an indicator of success of the projects and that involvement of women at various stages improves the rate of success. The issue of women's lack of involvement in development projects will be discussed further in the following case study.

The successes of development projects for target populations remain dependent upon the extent of how these various elements are incorporated in actual situations. Development projects do not work in isolation from development professionals who are employed by development agencies. Both the agencies and the individual professionals have roles in development processes and these affect the planning process and implementation of community development projects. Thus a project may meet a pressing need such as water or health services, but if it is poorly planned or executed, it fails to provide this service equitably.



Development projects aiming at improving water supplies for communities need to be successful as water is essential to public health. The literature on public health problems stresses the importance of adequate supplies of clean water in controlling waterborne infectious diseases. In development projects, the quality and the quantity of water supplied are usually the only indicators of success, and equal access for all people involved is a point usually overlooked. Although many projects have succeeded in providing water supplies to many areas all over the world, criticisms have been directed at these projects for overemphasising the transfer of technology, overestimating their benefits and underestimating any ill effects on the people involved.

### 7.3 Case study: a water project in Ain Zeitoun

In the development literature, water projects as a subject are included under the general sector of water and sanitation. Issues such as irrigation, land reclamation, biodiversity, dams, flood management, engineering technologies, and international conflicts over water are among the prominent areas covered. The literature describes engineering plants in water management and conservation strategies, successes in installing the hardware both in developing and developed areas as well as causes and effects of water pollution. Although water projects used for drinking receive fewer mentions, critiques levelled at development projects in general are applicable to these sorts of projects. The following discussion uses the literature on water projects as well as other literature on development projects in general to describe and analyse the project in Ain Zeitoun. Dar el Lawz has recently seen the commencement of a similar project and is beginning to experience many of the problems discussed here. Funding for the water project in Dar el Lawz came from outside sources through contacts from the villagers. The project did not sustain itself due to conflicts among the villagers over access and the inability of the village leaders, who were in

charge of the project, to cover the operational costs. So it stopped. Up till the end of 1997, the project was still not working.

The following case study of the water project in Ain Zeitoun presents the events in the life of a concluded, though incomplete project. The history is constructed from the villagers' accounts. Records of the project were not available from the participating development agencies, UNICEF and Save the Children Federation (SCF), as they considered them old. Hence the records had not been retained by the agencies. One of the two development professionals involved, the UNICEF engineer, had left the organisation, so his personal account of the reports could not be accessed. However, I met with the SCF area representative in his home town in Akkar at the beginning of my fieldwork in 1997. Although he had been involved in the project, I was unable to get many details from him as his part in the project had been a number of years ago. However, the villagers described it to me in detail as it was still of importance to them and they were still experiencing its consequences.

### 7.3.1 Phase 1

Ain Zeitoun has two sources of water; a village spring or *ain* and a state public water supply which brings water from a spring in the distant mountains. The public water scheme originally carried water from the mountain spring to a reservoir at the top of the village, from where it was distributed through pipes to the houses. However, this became insufficient to meet needs. New houses were built over the years and new pipes were needed while old ones needed repair. During the 1975-90 war, and due to the breakdown of law and order, the public water pipes carrying water to the village from the mountain spring were tampered with by people from other villages to redirect the supply to themselves. As a result, the water supply was cut off and could not reach the main reservoir. Further, during the dry months of July through October, the old village spring, the *ain*, was

producing less water, described as 'half an inch'. The village needed an alternative method of water supply to each household. In the mean time, women and children collected water daily from the *ain* itself.

A man from the village, who styled himself the village representative, met with a UNICEF representative through his contacts and asked for assistance. At that time UNICEF was providing assistance for water and sanitation projects in Lebanon. As instructed by the UNICEF officer, the village representative prepared a written request to the agency for assistance in improving the village water supply. UNICEF agreed to assist with the cost of building a catchment tank at the village spring together with the necessary pipes which would carry the water from the tank to the main reservoir at the top of the village. UNICEF would not tamper with any underground springs and so it would not be responsible for any work at that level. The village representative and the UNICEF officer disagreed on the plan for the project because they each had a different view of how it should be done. As a result, the village representative decided to collect funds from the village and to begin excavating the village spring himself to increase the supply. At the time, food aid from the United States was being distributed by SCF to war affected and poor families in Lebanon. This was being done by involving people from the communities in assessments and distributions. The village representative who was involved in the distribution of this food aid collected 1000LL (US\$ 0.65) upon each delivery of the food rations to households and used the total money collected on excavation costs.

Using heavy machinery and digging down eight metres, the spring source was reached. The village representative then called in UNICEF which was to contribute by building the catchment tank for the spring water. The village representative was also a construction foreman and so the UNICEF officer contracted the building of the tank to him, paying him US\$ 600 in instalments out of the total US\$ 1600 allocated to that part of the project by UNICEF. For reasons unknown, the UNICEF engineer left and never came

back to complete the payments. Other influential men in the village who worked to complete the project after him, claimed that the village representative stole the money and pressured the UNICEF officer so he did not return to finalise the project. The tank was built but the extra pipes to the households were not installed and the project remained without a pump. The village women and children continued to get water from the *ain*.

### 7.3.2 Phase 2:

Four years later, three men, the school principal, the owner of the local oil press and another villager who was an engineer, intervened to get a pump for the *ain*. They contacted the SCF representative, whom they knew personally, and asked him whether the organisation could be of assistance. The representative requested that they form a committee first to write a request.

'He said, "[Form] a local community committee of four to five men and present a written request for assistance" '.

(Olive press owner in Ain Zeitoun).

After they had done this, SCF assisted them with a water pump worth US\$ 1600 and more pipes but required that the village contribute to the cost, which they did. The group also contacted a local member of parliament whom they knew personally and he told them to write a request for 3,000,000LL (US\$ 1900) and he would follow it up with the Minister of Hydraulic and Electrical Resources. He was successful in obtaining this money for them (an example of *wasta*). The work ended with the building of a room for a generator and a pump to push the water up to the main reservoir at the top of the village.

The shape of the whole *ain* changed as a result of this work. The spring, whose waters ran out from a pipe to a two-basin urn carved out of stone, now flowed into a cement structure of three compartments. The

underground catchment tank (*bir*) of 48 cubic metres received and stored the spring water. This tank had an uncovered 40 to 50 centimetre wide square opening which was used to extract water for washing cars and kitchen utensils. A cement canal one metre wide to prevent overflow connected to the catchment tank led the water away from the *ain* to nearby land under a small bridge (see photo 16).

The project was complete. It worked for about a year, pumping water from the spring up to the village reservoir, originally a part of the public water scheme, and from thence it was distributed to the houses connected to the existing public water pipes, while the new houses were still not connected. Water trucks which also took their water from the *ain* supplied the needs of the new houses and some in other villages (photo 17). Then the pump stopped. Reasons why it stopped functioning given by the men involved, as well as the other villagers, varied from mishandling of the electrical equipment by the various people who took turns at turning it on, to intentional vandalism on the part of the village representative. He was perceived by the three men mentioned earlier and some other villagers to be the cause of the project's failure as he was accused of stealing some of the funds as well as intentionally interfering with the operation of the pump.

The local committee who initially signed the request for the project was not responsible for managing its operational costs and maintenance. Its composition meant that it could not function in the long term. As with previous committees formed for social or recreational activities in the village, it failed because of opposing political affiliations among the members.

When the pump ceased to work, the villagers resorted to different methods of drawing water for their households. Most common means included installing a private pump into the catchment tank and drawing up water by means of pipes to individual households. This means there may be at least twenty pumps working at the same time. Those who could not afford such appliances resorted to buying loads from the water trucks or they

carried water in plastic or pottery urns on their shoulders or on donkey back. This had consequences for the water trucks and for the women and children.

There was an incident involving the local police. The water trucks owned and operated by men from the village were a cause of much noise and damage to the roads. After emptying the water in nearby villages or local households, they came back for more all day long. The villagers who collected their water themselves, mainly women and children, had to wait for the tank to fill up again at the spring after the private pumps and the water trucks had taken their share. The police were summoned by some of the villagers who complained about the noise and decreasing water levels. This resulted in closing the water opening for a few days. The villagers reopened it because they needed this water too.

The individuals involved in this project were all men in the second tier of the village social organisation who access and are expected to use *wasta*. The man who initially assumed the role of village representative in this and in many other matters had not been elected by the villagers to speak on their behalf. He is the head (*wajih*) of the dominant *aili*. The man is also a member of a political party and its contact person for the village. This meant that the party supported his actions, and this gave him power. He is employed in the Ministry of Agriculture and also works as a self employed building subcontractor to earn additional income when necessary.

The local public school principal involved in the second phase of the project, is also affiliated with a political party, but one which differs in ideology from that of the village representative. The principal was criticised by the villagers for misusing school finances for his own advantage, but he remained in his job because of the influence derived from his political connections. The school principal initiated the second phase of the project with a friend of his, the owner of the local press. These two shared similar political affiliations with the third man, an engineer who lived and worked in the city. These three men already had political differences with the village

representative before the project began and this affected the project's outcomes. The local status of each was derived from their contacts with politicians. Everyone in the village knew about these affiliations and the largesse which could be derived from them.

Two outside development professionals were involved in the project. The UNICEF representative, a civil engineer, was the agency representative in the area towards the late 1980s and the early 1990s. The other was the SCF representative, an agriculture engineer, who lived in a nearby village and worked as field coordinator for the agency from 1985 to 1992.

The story of the project from the narratives of three of the four men involved showed some variations. The men I spoke with were the principal, the press owner and the village leader. Where interpersonal differences between the men appeared in their discussions, they blamed each other for failures at various stages of the project. Despite their local power, they could not keep the pump running. They had no plan or funds for its maintenance. They explained to me that despite their best efforts the whole project was not running well and each blamed the man/men belonging to the opposing political party for its failure. Each emphasised his personal efforts in initiating the project or continuing it where the others had left it, as well as the difficulties he faced in dealing with the villagers during those times, such as collecting cash contributions. However, male villagers who did not participate in the project gave reasons for its failure and criticised the initiator, but they did not discuss why they had not become involved themselves.

#### 7.4 Discussion and conclusions

The case study points to varying opinions on the outcomes of the project within the village. While the men involved described the phase they were involved in as successful, other villagers had different opinions. Other men were less powerful than the three: they were not as politically active and

had no leadership role. They felt that the failure of the project was due to disagreements between the men involved as they belonged to different political parties and to the competition among them for leadership positions in the village. The young *sheikh* was among the villagers who criticised the project for depriving many households of adequate water supplies, especially those where the women and children had to carry their water.

He also complained of the lack of a maintenance plan which was a major point in the discussions of the other villagers who were not involved in the project. According to a young man who lived in the *ain* neighbourhood, villagers who lived further away perceived the deteriorating condition of the road leading to the spring but they did nothing about it:

'Here [in the village] they say that the *ain* is in this neighbourhood. They don't care if it got dirty, broke down... This is the view of those [who live] far away. Even the road leading to the *ain*, if it needs fixing, they won't take part.'

It was not their individual concern, as it belonged to the whole neighbourhood around the *ain*. In reality, no one took responsibility and so the road continued to deteriorate. The local committee formed at the second phase was a SCF prerequisite for assistance. But the agency did not require the committee to follow up or take responsibility to operate the project.

The women did not participate in the project at any of its phases because they are traditionally excluded from decision making. They were concerned that the project resulted in the overuse of the water supply by those who had unlimited access through their private pumps and by the truck owners who sold water to other villages. The women in the two neighbourhoods located around the spring and the open water canal expressed their disappointment with it. They pointed out the aesthetic, environmental and social ill effects.



First, they described the *ain*, and in particular the two ancient carved stone basins, as ruined and no longer pleasant to look at.

'Did you see the *ain*? It was more beautiful before.'

(Woman in Ain Zeitoun).

The women spoke of the original shape as a link to their ancestral past and tradition, the loss of which may have been symbolic of a loss of security or identity. They declared that, before the project, everyone had equal access to the spring water and that all the villagers obtained water using the same means, which was by using the available public water system and carrying water from the spring. Now those who could not afford their own pumps nor buy from the trucks, stood hours in the sun for the water level in the tank to rise after the individual pumps and the trucks had taken their share. This divided the villagers into the haves and have nots.

From an environmental aspect, the women, especially those who lived in the vicinity of the spring, spoke of the noise that the water trucks caused all day as they filled up their tanks. Their other complaints included the continuous pollution of the water source by the lowering of pails and hoses into the uncovered tank; the breeding of mosquitoes and other insects in the water collecting around the reservoir; unpleasant odours from stagnating dirty water and the destruction of the surrounding roads causing many accidents.

'They have ruined the *ain*. It smells awful now!'

(Woman 1 in Ain Zeitoun).

'..they dug up the spring and ruined it. If [the water] runs, it is better. It washes away all this dirt in front of your house and it does not let the insects breed. It does not cause pollution.'

(Woman 2 in Ain Zeitoun).

On the other hand, the women who lived in houses far from the spring and who purchased their water from the trucks did not speak about these ill effects, but complained instead of the cost of buying water and their financial problems, which meant they could not afford to buy their own pump for a regular supply.

Suggestions for solving the problem of the *ain* varied between men and women and among the men themselves according to what they perceived the problem to be. Those who considered the pump could still be made to work, suggested hiring someone to operate it. This would hold one person responsible and provide a continuity of supervision for the pump. Another solution appeared to some to be the setting up of a committee responsible for maintaining the pump's operational costs and maintenance. Those who saw that the design of the concrete water tank was faulty, because it allowed anyone to openly access the contents, called for its rebuilding. Those who did not understand what the technical problem was, mainly the women, saw the solution coming from outside, a person of good will such as a politician. Even though the women did not initiate *wasta* themselves, or speak much of it, they knew it was a common thing to do. They had seen the men accessing it for a variety of reasons.

Ideas for repairs did not appear in women's discussions. They talked about the ill effects and described the project failures in detail but did not mention ways to repair or improve it. They explained that there needed to be someone responsible for the project so that they could get equal access to water. It was suggested that the government should have a role. The women who were responsible for collecting water, helped by their children, were affected the most from the failure of the project. They were not familiar with the technology involved and were not consulted at any stage, though neither were most men apart from the self appointed leaders. So the women were not the only ones who were marginalised.

The literature shows that failures in water projects such as the one described here are not uncommon and further that it is women who generally suffer the consequences of failure. Simpson-Hebert (1992) in her article on water and sanitation projects in Botswana argues that most of the women in Third World countries have major roles in transporting water to their households and spend most of the day involved in water related activities. Even though this is the case, new water projects are not useful to the user as they are technologically oriented toward men, while the women are not consulted about their design, nor about their use. When a water project that is aimed at improving people's access to water fails, women are the ones who are affected, as they need to look for other ways of obtaining water for household use or may go back to their original water sources. These could be unmaintained water bodies such as holes in the ground or remnants of the unsuccessful water projects (Mathew, 1991).

The failure of such development projects can also be explained in terms of excluding women from its processes. The women in Ain Zeitoun had seen and heard the work being done on the spring but they were not familiar with the details of the project. They were also not pleased with the project as it produced undesirable effects. The women in a neighbourhood near the *ain*, who were discussing the water project, stated:

Woman (1): 'Assistance came from where, to fix the *ain*, we don't know'.

Woman (2): 'We don't know'.

Woman (3): ' [pause] A certain individual got it.'

Woman (1): 'In the beginning, the spring was running in this field and we were getting water from it... Now they've dug it and ruined the spring and confined it'.

Woman (2): 'They made a hole in the ground and they're filling up the trucks.'

Woman (1): '[pause] They wouldn't let the water run and wash away this dirt [waste] from the ground.'

This lack of knowledge regarding the sources of funding and not being familiar with the external agents involved in the project means that the women were excluded from the project planning and execution. Apparently, the development agencies did not require that women be involved, perhaps because it was known they were usually not involved in public activities. When the agencies involved in development do not question the status quo in a project area, they reinforce existing power structures, in this case favouring particular men. This is an example where a development agency, by overlooking women's concerns, contributes to deepening the existing gender divisions rather than playing a role in empowerment.

Agarwal (1997) argues that although new property rights and institutions have resulted from shifting attention toward women's issues since the International Decade of Women, old gender inequities are becoming more deeply entrenched. The programs that focus on women, for example, tend to further reinforce the sexual division of labour. An example of a development project which created work opportunities for women in Mexico illustrates this point. Wright (1997) describes how foreign owned assembly factories justified recruiting women as employees, not men in its development program for Mexico. The argument behind their choice was that women were biologically and emotionally better suited for the job for their natural patience, passivity and ability to follow orders. To ensure social acceptability of the women's work in these factories, the project presented an image of women's roles as consistent with existing gender roles.

Wright (1997) argues that the dichotomies associated with gender are based on western ideologies of development. This is because they represent the western gender division of labour which portrays women doing the housework while the men are the income earners. This means that women's work has no economic value and this view also misrepresents the work done by women in Third World countries in the informal and formal sectors. These dichotomies of man/woman, public/private are reinforced by a succession of

other dichotomies of knowledge/experience, culture/nature and rational/emotional as a few examples. The first set of terms is highly valorised while the second is considered inferior. So according to this view, because women do not hold the powerful tools of knowledge and rationality, they are confined to the private sphere of the household. Following this argument, women are excluded from politics, a public sphere where men are usually the decision makers. Consequently, they are also excluded from development planning (Simpson-Hebert, 1992).

Joseph (1994 and 1997) describes the relationship of patriarchy to the state explaining that the dominance of males in kinship groups in Lebanon, as in the rest of the Middle East, is translated from the domestic sphere to the public sphere of politics. This segregation between women and men is based on traditional structures, such as the division of labour, ownership of material possessions and access to economic resources such as land which favour men over women and render women dependent upon others (Hanchett, 1997). The women in the villages are not doing much to challenge this status quo as they have little economic and educational power. Perhaps when they access more education and increase their income, they will be more capable of change.

In Ain Zeitoun, the women complained of conflicts between the men competing for leadership through the development projects. Although the women are less forthright in political affairs than the men, this does not mean that they do not understand how politics works in their village. They are separated from such discussions as they are in the private sphere and they know that issues of the public sphere involving politics and *wasta* are not their affair. They describe the problems they experienced in terms of the men's involvement in competition for leadership. The following quote reveals how the women explained the link between projects and the competition between the men.

'You go and seek and you get a little money and you install a couple of pipes. I go and compete with you to get some myself [from the same source]'.  
(Woman in Ain Zeitoun).

As mentioned above, the women in Ain Zeitoun were not involved in any of the stages of the development project. Their views reflect their perceived role as passive observers. They criticised but they did not initiate action or suggest courses of action. Their exclusion from the project and its politics stemmed from the roles they inhabited as housekeepers and child rearers. They were not consulted about the design, nor were the effects on them from the water project considered by the men involved.

Another cause of failure of water projects in development is that the village level institution set up as a condition for receiving assistance is not clear on its responsibilities. In the guidelines produced by agencies such as SCF, community participation is assumed to occur through a representative local community committee. The local committee formed was not fully involved in the follow up stages of maintenance as it was not initially set up for this purpose, as mentioned earlier, and did not involve other villagers in its activities.

The other requirement of written requests to initiate official assistance was not a difficult task. They were easily prepared by the initiators of the two phases. In the first phase, the village representative's wife was a prominent member of a local social welfare organisation and helped him prepare a request backed by her organisation and carrying its official seal. The second group of men who formed the committee at the request of the SCF representative also presented a request but were not required to plan how to run the project.

Villages are divided socially and there may be conflicting interests among the stakeholders. Shepherd (1998) argues that because some people

see water as a commodity, they tend to monopolise the water source and sell the water for their own benefit. This could be beneficial for others too if it becomes an alternative method of helping them access water at a low price where subsidised state supplies are not available (Litvin, 1998). The water truck owners in Ain Zeitoun were among the villagers who were benefiting most from the breakdown of the pump which was meant to carry water to the main reservoir. The situation gave them unlimited access to water to sell within and outside the village which met some people's needs and increased the truck operators' profits.

The many ethical issues attached to development projects in general, which question benefits and ill-effects to people's health and the environment are relevant here for the water project in Ain Zeitoun. The village representative saw that the project achieved the goal he set at the beginning which was to increase the water output. According to him, that phase of the project was successful as it produced 'three inches' of water rather than 'half an inch'. He described the villagers' reactions by using the Arabic term astonished (*indahshou*). The group of three men who took on the installation of the pump explained their success in terms of accessing the funds and the additional material to complete the project. The women in the *ain* neighbourhood claimed that it was not successful as it changed the traditional structure of the *ain* and made it more difficult for them to access water when they wanted to.

According to Long and Long (1992), any analysis of interventions must include an analysis of interactions between all actors. At the beginning of the project in Ain Zeitoun, the village representative disagreed with the UNICEF representative on a solution for the water problem in the village. The agency did not have the authority to fund spring excavations and the village representative saw that the water source was not producing an adequate amount for the village. At the same time, the village representative was not only motivated by increasing the water supply, but gaining other villagers'

approval. The points of view did not coincide and neither understood the other's concerns. However, the village representative's relative success in the project produced discontent in his political rivals because it meant a temporary triumph for him. However, their subsequent action to follow up on the project to install a pump left the project dependent on external assistance for repairs. The lack of long term planning for the project extended the project life to over four years and exposed it to uncertainty due to unsure external funding. As a result, interest in follow up and responsibility dwindled, leading to discontent and criticisms from the community.

Considering the differences in views, a project with a rigid structure which does not take them into account would fail. Pottier (1993), together with Chambers (1983) and Long and Long (1992) in reference to the bottom up approach to development, argues that there is no linearity to development projects and suggests a deconstruction of this reductionist view of reality which oversimplifies complex relationships among all people involved in the project.

The environmental effects of the project were not mentioned at all except by those in the direct vicinity of the *ain*. The unexamined impact on the local environment from the water project in Ain Zeitoun may be added to its other failures. The water running from the water tank into a piece of land next to the road has stagnated into a breeding place for insects. Had there been an assessment of where the water would collect, a plan to properly discharge it would have prevented its stagnation and hence lessened its environmental effects.

Even though the project did supply some villagers with water, it would not be sustainable in the long term given the absence of a maintenance body, the expense of operating individual pumps and the lack of control over water truck costs which may prevent those with little income accessing this water. Therefore, the development project was not successful as it did not achieve the goal generally intended for all water projects which is improving



people's access to quality water supplies. It has also not improved people's material circumstances except for the owners of the water trucks. The study reveals several critiques from the literature which the professionals are apparently not aware of.

The lessons learned from analysing this case study of the village water project suggests that the issues which have affected its outcomes are related to the social interactions among the people involved and the technical aspects of the development assistance carried out by the NGOs. An analysis of the social interactions in the village reveals that there are complex relationships between the men, between the men and external political leaders as well as between the men and the women. Within the village, the majority of relationships among the men, for example, involve either conflict or submission.

Members of opposing political affiliations play out their disagreements whenever possible as is the case with development projects intended to benefit the village. Since there is more than one political affiliation in the village, the men tend to disagree. The more powerful men who are involved in political parties seek leadership and control over other villagers. They then decide on their behalf when it comes to village concerns, such as projects. So their opinions dominate and, therefore, the relationships between the self appointed leaders and other less powerful villagers are unequal. These leaders are supported by external politicians with whom they have direct contacts. In the absence of state interventions and given the prevailing social and economic conditions of the country, these few villagers take advantage to improve connections with outside politicians. The relationships of power are not always straight forward, nor are they static. They are affected by relationships the men have with the outside which may have negative or positive consequences on the village.

Other relationships exist between men and women as a result of traditions favouring men over women in accessing economic resources and

education. Women submit to men and depend on them for income. The gender inequality in village settings, where women are not permitted to participate in development activities, is a challenge development professionals face. Should a development agency 'interfere' to empower women and less powerful men by requesting they take part in committees to present their views and thus risk creating tension among the villagers? Gender issues in the village are not isolated from the broader patriarchal contexts of national institutions and traditions. The state and its institutions still treat women as inferior to men and so do the sectarian laws which the state allows to govern men's and women's personal lives. This unequal relationship between men and women shows in the lack of women's involvement in the development project in the village.

In regard to the technical aspects of the project, described in the case study, the NGO officials were at fault in several steps. It seems that they were involved only in providing funds. They were not involved in assessing the situation but only called for the village leaders to request assistance at various stages of the project. The NGOs' only involvement was to supply funds to purchase the hardware and it could be argued that their role was no different than the *zu'ama's* in providing funds. No follow up assessments were done to evaluate the project after completion. No training on the role the committees were expected to play in maintenance was carried out either. The officials interacted with a few men in the village whose views were not representative of the others. They also did not require that the women participate in any way. Written requests for assistance and the formation of a committee were the only indicators of participation and accountability outlined by the agencies.

In the absence of a comprehensive national development policy which includes agrarian reform and regulation of export markets, NGOs fill gaps in development at a village level but cannot meet all needs. The types of projects they carry out may be needed and useful, but the methods they use

to implement them and their inability to accommodate the complexities of village life may limit their success.



## CHAPTER EIGHT : DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 8.1 Introduction

The aim of the research was to explore how people in rural communities in Lebanon understand development. Literature on development has been dominated by professional definitions and discussions of development practice at country and community levels. However, the literature on development rarely includes the perceptions of lay people, the receivers of development. This applies in Lebanon which has received funds for both development and reconstruction after the war. This small scale, in-depth study of two villages in Akkar has been able to elucidate many of the problems associated with development in Lebanon. It has also been able to present a different perspective to development offered by development professionals. The two villages I chose are located in one of the rural areas in Lebanon which received many development projects over the past two decades.

The ethnographic design allowed me to study people in their usual village settings and to understand their perceptions and everyday life. Using this design, I set out to answer three questions which were the objectives of the research:

- i. how lay people in rural Lebanon define the concept of development and how the definitions compare with those used in development discourse;
- ii. their understanding of the development process and
- iii. their experience of development projects.

This chapter discusses major findings from the present research and their implications for theory and practice. It concludes with suggestions for further research.

## 8.2 Village life

Understanding village life and its complexities is important to situating the villagers' views on development. The findings reveal that both the villages are similar in social structure and division of labour for men and women. Men are the breadwinners and are more concerned with external affairs than the women. They have more contacts with the outside than the women who are the housewives and who are generally limited to the private spheres of their households. Men's status is dependent upon their educational background as well as their political power in the village, while the women have lower social standing and derive their status from their husbands'. Even though Ain Zeitoun had received more development projects, perhaps because of its many contacts with the outside, the infrastructure of the two villages is the same.

Relative affluence in the villages depends on land tenure and the marketing of crops rather than the degree of development in both. Dar el Lawz is more affluent than Ain Zeitoun because the average land holdings are bigger in area and marketing produce is more profitable. However, even those in both villages who have access to sufficient land to derive an income are facing difficulties because of competitive cheaper foreign agriculture and labour. For those without access to land, or with inadequate land holdings, the situation is even less secure. The financial conditions of the villagers have subsequent effects on accessing educational and health services in a country where these services are mainly provided by the private sector. Although there are health centres in the vicinity of the villages, they are not evenly distributed to enable sufficient access, given the lack of public transport in the villages. Both the mobile clinics and the stationary health centres are not meeting the villagers' needs. They tend to be costly relative to income and provide a limited range of services. Education in the village is limited to primary levels and in case of financial problems, girls are taken out of school first. Boys also drop out to be taught a trade at an early age. The result is

often functional illiteracy and low expectations, especially for girls. These conditions are a reflection of the country's general economic conditions.

### 8.3 Defining development

The villagers' definitions of development are influenced by the way they perceive their roles in their village. Men see themselves responsible for the village as well as for their families. Their power is derived from their education which is important in Dar el Lawz and from their political affiliation which is more important than other factors in Ain Zeitoun. The men are outward looking and locate causes to their problems by linking them to the market and the state. They are more educated than the women and have more contacts with the outside. Through these contacts they access funds and services to improve their conditions and attempt to initiate change. The more powerful men, who are a minority, access funds for projects in the village. For them, development means planned change to produce tangible outcomes and, in the absence of state interventions, development involves them.

The *sheikhs* in Dar el Lawz, who are also powerful in their villages because of their business contacts and their role as religious leaders, share this definition of development in practice but their rhetoric is different. They believe that development is moral and religious reform. Similar to the other men, they believe it requires their efforts. Achieving development would entail reforming individuals who would collectively develop the village community. The desire for moral reform stems from the Islamic religious understanding of development. But so far, the *sheikhs* have been more involved in physical improvements and meeting basic needs in their village, which means that development, as practised, is synonymous to producing tangible outcomes.

The women's definitions in both villages also reflect their roles but as housewives and child rearers. They are interested in social development for

their children, families and neighbourhoods, such as education and employment more than physical development. They do not like sudden disruptive changes to their lives. They perceive themselves to be passive receivers of development rather than active participants. So for them, development is gradual change that does not require their efforts, but it is conceived as an action of external more powerful sources as God, who has already provided them with many goods. Development comes about with time and is apparent in improvements in education, employment and health care.

From the above, one can conclude that men's and women's definitions of development is a function of their perceptions of their roles and self worth. Since the men have responsibilities, development portrays active involvement. In contrast, women do not see that they can be involved in development as it is a public activity and they are perceived to belong only to the private sphere. Traditional views of gender relationships and low educational attainment mean that women are generally excluded from public debate.

The powerful and educated men in the village share similar views and a similar language with the development professionals. The professionals speak of their responsibility and role in developing the country and the less developed target groups. The professionals share with the educated men a view which portrays other, less educated villagers as backward and ignorant. Development is assumed to be best planned by development professionals and village elites. In practical terms, development means a series of development projects which result, or should result, in visible changes. Needs are defined by them.

#### 8.4 Understanding the development process

The village leaders understand the process involved in development as beginning with accessing *wasta* to obtain the necessary funds and ending



in a tangible outcome. To initiate development, the initiator must perceive a need pressing enough for him to act. It is usually men's perceived needs which spur them to undertake activities, such as mosque construction, sewer lines and roads. Other issues, which they have perceived to be women's responsibilities, for example health services for the children, are not among their pressing priorities. The chance to gain or improve credibility and prestige are part of the motive behind their contacts for *wasta*. It entails contacting a political leader or a development professional whom they know personally. Unlike the professional development project process, *wasta* does not involve planning and no meticulous analysis of the budget is required, because funds can be further accessed in the same way. Time is not an issue of concern for them as long as the outcome is achieved.

However, similar to professional development trends, the development activities of these village men are a top-down process. They do not entail or require other people's participation unless it is required by a development agency that the men have enlisted for aid. The men are familiar with NGO requirements: the formation of a local project committee (themselves) and a written request. Only the more powerful men are involved in the development process and play a role in decision making. Participation of the villagers, less powerful men and the women, tends to be reduced to financial contributions.

The less powerful men who are not involved in development projects understand that the process involves others' accessing *wasta* which may end up in doubtful outcomes. They themselves do not have access to *wasta*. They are 'small' (*sighar*) and do not have the power the 'big' men (*kibar*) have. They criticise those who have initiated *wasta* and failed. They would prefer development to be a state activity and not an individual centred process. Since they cannot access *wasta* readily as they do not have the political contacts, they see no personal roles for themselves in development projects.

It is hard to say whether women understand the development process, in the sense of understanding what is required to initiate and sustain a project to completion. They do not access *wasta* and, therefore, do not look to development projects as a way to further social and political relationships. Neither do they interact with development agencies. They are aware that *wasta* is used by the men to achieve infrastructure changes and that the process usually involves a powerful *zaim* but they do not discuss the issues further than that. They know that it is not their role.

In general, the women see themselves as non participants in all development projects as they are usually excluded from planning and other activities both by the men and by development agencies. For them, the process of development is on going, having no beginning and no end, evolutionary in nature and more of a self sustaining process in which they have no role. They are not powerful enough to initiate change even in areas which are directly of their concern. They look to others to do so. Their descriptions of what happens before, during and after projects is related to others' actions.

### 8.5 Experiencing projects

Although neither village has experienced a successful development project, opinions regarding the nature of 'success' are not entirely the same in both villages. For the powerful men, development projects are a means to access support and further their leadership positions and that of their *zu'ama* in the village. In the absence of a state development policy that alleviates their adverse financial conditions, the men see that they are responsible to initiate projects which they hope will improve their individual and village conditions. Where they are involved, they speak only of their personal successes and blame others for failures. 'Success' is in fact more than the completion of a project. The social and political relationships nurtured by the process are equally, if not more important.

So far, development projects have been perceived to be unsuccessful for the women. Not only have the projects not improved their physical conditions, they have resulted in ill-effects for them, their families and their surrounding environment. For the women in both Dar el Lawz and Ain Zeitoun, the water projects have increased the conflicts among the men, thus disrupting their social life which is important to them. The women in Ain Zeitoun have also witnessed increased environmental ill-effects and the destruction of a part of their cultural heritage associated with damaging the old spring structure. Their access to water actually decreased and obtaining daily amounts became more difficult than before the project had begun. In Dar el Lawz, the women correctly perceive development projects to be as a means to reach leadership positions for the older male initiators and are, therefore, arenas where conflicts are played out. The women would prefer the younger men to be involved because they think they would be more able to resolve problems without conflicts as they are more educated. Given the generally negative views of their fellow villagers, which the educated young men hold, this desire may be misplaced.

Where state projects are concerned, all the villagers describe their experiences as negative. No state project has been completed. The villagers were disappointed because they perceive the state, ideally, as the provider of services on an equal basis for all. But the government has not been useful in providing successful projects and, in particular, it is perceived to have neglected rural areas. The current services which the state offers, such as electricity and water are expensive to access for cast-strapped villagers.

### 8.6 Case study findings

The case study shows the use of *wasta* is fundamental in accessing funds for development projects as well as a main source of prestige for its users. Stories about corruption, although unprovable, are woven in behaviours of self appointed village leaders and described by narratives of

the less powerful villagers. The water project spurred no collective responsibility for maintenance from the more powerful villagers, nor was it an issue that demanded attention from the professionals involved. Environmental degradation although a resultant ill-effect of the project was not a concern for those involved. The development project, which ideally would have improved the community access to water, has only benefited those few who are capable of manipulating resources for their own welfare and who decide who is included in major decision making. In the end, women and less powerful men were excluded.

Where it comes to the involvement of NGOs, the lack of participation was obvious as there was no assessment of community views especially those of women as interaction was limited to a few men. There was also no assessment of the environmental impact of the project before the initiation of work. Nor was there any technical assistance for project management or training in any other skills. At the end of their contribution, the NGOs did not evaluate the project.

### 8.7 Change, diversity and resistance

This section sums up the changes that are taking place in village life. As I pointed out in the introduction to chapter five, villages such as Dar el Lawz and Ain Zeitoun are not closed communities. They have linkages with the wider society and change with time. Those who are able, or who must, travel outside the village for education or business opportunities, or in the search for labouring jobs, come daily into contact with the diversities and faster pace of urban life. Everyone in the village knows people who have migrated overseas. Even for those who do not travel far from the village, television is a means of seeing what is going on elsewhere and is a channel for the introduction of new ideas, however that may be resisted by some. While broadly sharing a common background and experiences, it must not be forgotten that the villagers are also individuals with different personalities

and viewpoints. The life chances and expectations of the villagers also vary with a number of social and economic factors including family circumstances, such as size of land holdings, access to education, the ability to mobilise resources and the availability of paid employment.

As a result of all these influences, village life is not homogenous and static. While it is apparent that the gender division of labour is still strong, changes are occurring here, too. The younger generation of women, who are more educated than their predecessors, seek further education in high schools outside the village because of the financial and social benefits which they have seen. For those, at the moment, still few who teach private lessons or who sell home made products, relatively small amounts of income have already changed their lives. They are slowly becoming more able to voice their opinions within their families and are gradually becoming more independent.

None the less, many women still see their main roles as the traditional ones of housekeeping and child rearing. Women's roles in the private sphere seem to have limited their involvement in development activities to receivers. Their opinions on public issues, such as development projects, are not customarily sought by the men who see themselves solely responsible for their families and for the villages. However, an in-depth look into the dynamics of village life reveals that women are not just passive observers, but hold strong views on and deep understanding of what they think ought to be done in the village. They understand the power structures which frame their lives and are able to describe them to a sympathetic listener. They know the details of the men's interaction with each other and with the outside as well as the larger agendas of some of the politicians who visit the villages. When asked, they are capable of describing solutions to problems, such as those pertaining to improving water projects and health services in the village.

The women share social support networks which help them deal with difficult situations. Through social gatherings and activities, the women cope with financial problems through collective activities, such as producing home-made products for local consumption, and for selling to help support their families in times of need. They also share information on medical problems and seek each others' support in child care. Morning visits and religious meetings have become a way to escape the restrictions of family life.

With increased access to education and employment opportunities, now mainly confined to males, it is expected that gender relationships will change. This could be to the advantage of both men and women. Men would not have the total burden of supporting the household, now a daily struggle for some, and more women would be able to realise their potential. Women would be in a better position to take part in development activities and to articulate their needs. This presupposes, of course, that the political system continues to be stable. Whatever their personal aspirations, people's actions are constrained by wider social structures.

## 8.8 Implications for development

Having summarised the main findings of the study, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of the findings for development theory and for development practice in Lebanon.

### 8.8.1 Implications for development theory

Chapter four included a description and critique of the main development theories and this section is not intended to reproduce that, but to assess the utility of the various theories to explain the situation in Lebanon. As was stated in chapter four (p. 64), it is modernisation theory which informs aid donors at the state level and development agencies at the project level. This is despite the limitations of this theoretical perspective in assisting the alleviation of poverty and socioeconomic problems in underdeveloped

countries. These limitations, which have been clearly identified in the literature, have been demonstrated again by this study.

Because it is a macro theory, modernisation theory is less successful in explaining within country development. Historically, countries may have developed unevenly, as in Lebanon, with some areas becoming affluent and others not. While economic growth may be achieved overall, the benefits of economic development, as this study shows, have been and continue to be spread unevenly. Rural underemployment and its attendant marginalisation, for example, is a significant issue in the maintenance of village life. Change to deeply rooted political and administrative systems is required to achieve any 'trickle-down' effect promised by modernisation theorists but, as elsewhere, those who benefit from current arrangements are likely to resist such change. Unless social development, including but not limited to access to education, is specifically included in state policies and programs and unless there is a commitment to equity and social justice, life for those who are excluded by current arrangements becomes even more precarious. As the economy recovers and grows, economic disparities widen rather than diminish.

As has been pointed out, so-called traditional communities such as these Lebanese villages are not in practice static or homogenous. Their inhabitants are not passively waiting for 'take-off' but are attempting as best they can to deal with changing economic circumstances, which have generally disadvantaged them. They have had and continue to have linkages with the wider society, including other countries. They are aware of, but feel they have little control over, the political and economic relationships within which Lebanon is embedded and which effect their life chances.

The study also demonstrates that technology transfer, as advocated by modernisation theorists to achieve development and in evidence in the development projects in the villages, is not as simple as it sounds. In practice, participants in these activities have mixed and, may be, incompatible motives. As a result, execution is flawed, projects are unsuccessful and

dissatisfaction follows. This top down approach to development activity, with minimal consultation and community participation, persists in Lebanon despite abundant evidence against its utility.

The Islamic theory of development is more comprehensive than modernisation theory with which it shares some elements; there is, for example, a similar emphasis on economic production and the use of technology. However, unlike modernisation theory, it does explicitly include social or human development. From a modernisation theory perspective, social development is assumed to occur automatically following economic development but, as we have seen, without specific redistributive mechanisms, this is not the case.

The inclusion of a spiritual dimension in the Islamic theory marks it off from all other development theories. In a homogenous society this may be seen as a strength and as a force for cohesion, but in a country with many confessional allegiances and a recent history of conflict, it may instead be a force for division. None the less, with its focus on spiritual renewal and moral values, it can act as a useful corrective to some of the assumptions of modernisation theory, which still tends to be accepted uncritically within the professional development community.

The feminist critiques of development are also useful both as a corrective to the assumptions of modernisation theory and, potentially, as pertinent guides to the successful planning and implementation of projects in the field. The incorporation of feminist insights into village level projects, with the focus not just on women as an 'add-on' but on the relationships between men and women as a key area for consideration, would at the least prevent the entrenchment of women's disadvantage. Seeking women's views is a necessary but not sufficient part of that. As feminist critics have pointed out, and this study has demonstrated, men are disempowered too if gender is not taken into account. However, although I would argue that much may be learned by a gender analysis of development policies and practices in



Lebanon and although there is abundant literature available, it is seldom consulted by development professionals.

#### 8.8.2 Implications for development practice in Lebanon

The implications point to state issues at a national planning level and to community issues involving development practice for NGOs. At a state level, there is a need for integrated infrastructure development for villages. Adequate water supplies and sanitation have still not been achieved and these are basic for health. Long term planning to accommodate changing needs as the villages grow and including plans for maintenance is necessary for equitable benefits and sustainability. It is clear that ad hoc programs are not successful as their benefits reach a few and are open to manipulation by individuals with their own agendas in the village. The absence of a state development plan encourages the role of *wasta*. *Wasta* allows some men to further their social and political ambitions and to influence project outcomes. This in turn also renders NGOs ineffective in bringing about positive change.

There is a need for more focus on social development. Access to education continues to be a problem for children of poor families, particularly girls. Although education is highly regarded by the villagers, and is considered a priority in social development by the state and development professionals, it will not benefit the community if it is not equally accessible to all. Rebuilding war affected facilities as a means to improve educational status of the population is necessary but not sufficient. Structural problems, such as financial capabilities and priorities, as well as gender biases play a role in preventing children from continuing their education. If the plan for improving education does not address the factors affecting children's enrolment and drop out rates, it will not improve the country's educational status.

Women's access to basic education is important for women's well being and self esteem. The literature cites the benefits of education on

women's health and their children (Bhuiya and Streatfield, 1991; Caldwell, 1979). Education also increases women's potential for employment and improves their conditions in general (UNICEF, 1996). As economic hardships for men increase, it is likely that more women will be forced to seek ways to increase family income and, if they are educated, their choices are wider. With the decline in men's formal work opportunities and the increasing importance of women's economic role, men's reluctance to accept female work may change. Consequently, women's views of themselves may change. It may then be possible for them to become more involved in development initiatives for their communities.

Another aspect of social development which needs to be provided equitably is health services. For the villagers, health services are not sufficient as they are provided by the private sector which caters for the more affluent in the Lebanese society. The services are also more oriented towards medical services rather than prevention and health promotion. The mobile clinics are not effective as their schedules are not planned to give enough time for each village. Furthermore, a typical rural health centre is usually overcrowded. The physician must see many patients in a limited time. Improvement here requires a comprehensive public health care policy endorsed by the state as part of its health reform strategy, to include a review of health centre operations in the country.

The villagers are facing financial hardships as a result of their inability to gain profit from selling their crops and to find employment, because of the competition from the unregulated cheaper foreign labour and crops. This income insecurity is worse for those who do not have access to sufficient land or where tenure is insecure. Buying or selling land is impossible given the ownership titles are not legally in the villagers' names. To address these issues, more income generating projects are needed which involve better access to markets and employment. Regulation of markets and land reform are areas to be looked at. These conditions point to uncertainty for villagers

whose basic needs are not met. They do not have what Ne'meh (1996) calls safety nets such as medical insurance or family allowances provided by the state. As long as this part of social development does not exist for the general population and for those who cannot afford private insurance schemes, one may expect that economic fluctuations in the country will continue to adversely affect its people's financial conditions. The ability of local people to be involved in development initiatives will be limited as long as they are more involved in seeking employment and meeting daily needs including accessing adequate water, health care and education. Only if these basic needs are secured can the villagers become creative in development initiatives.

The findings of the study suggest that development professionals are not demonstrating effectiveness at least in these two villages as the projects they were involved in failed to produce desired outcomes. This points to the need for better planning and training in participatory approaches and gender awareness. The project cycle used in project design still follows linear paths although it has been criticised for its rigidity (Pottier, 1993; Gardner and Lewis, 1996). The evaluation stage, which is assumed to be at the end of a project, is not carried out to assess benefits against predetermined objectives. Evaluation needs to be reintroduced at all stages of the project and participants from the community need to be included as well. Another missing evaluation tool is the assessment of hazards to the environment before the start of the project, as Shepherd (1998) points out.

The findings show how the complex relationships in the village are overlooked by development agencies who follow strict procedures and have predefined requirements. Given the lack of gender awareness among professional agencies in Lebanon as Hussein (1997) points out, development has been a male concept and activity. Men are the only ones involved in the projects while women are excluded as they are traditionally located in the private sphere. It is not likely that men will be successful in meeting women's

needs when women are not a part of development planning. So projects should accommodate men's and women's views but take care not to focus on women only which may alienate men.

The findings show that the village is not a homogeneous entity. The term 'community' is still stressed in development discourse although it has been questioned by many critics of development. Community is not a static variable as portrayed in 'women's community' or a 'poor community'. Gardner and Lewis (1996) argue on the contrary that communities contain various groups of people who may have different interests, needs and different power. As a result, development professionals need to treat communities as heterogeneous in order not to marginalise or stereotype some of their members or overplay the roles of others.

Not all the village leaders in the study are true representatives of their communities, nor are they capable of acting on their behalf. Factors such as kinship and political affiliation play a role in power at a village level, but leaders do not necessarily enjoy the support of all the villagers. For example, community 'leadership' led in fact to the exclusion of other villagers from the development project in Ain Zeitoun. Development professionals must be aware of the role of leadership in village communities. This is a difficult issue. Involving the obvious leaders in projects will not always ensure that all the villagers' views are represented but, given their ability to manipulate funding and project outcomes, their support is also crucial.

Analysing people's perceptions about development shows that lay people are not opposed to change *per se* especially if it involves improvements to their conditions. However, the pace of change and its direction is another issue. Sudden change is disruptive of people's lives and top-down change opposed. They are concerned about who is responsible for projects and who undertakes them. The majority of the villagers have witnessed project failures and become sceptical of development projects coming from the state or involving *wasta*. Ideally, people would prefer

development without *wasta*, top down approaches or sudden changes, all of which are characteristics of the development projects they have experienced.

There appears to be an implicit desire to see development take place, to see their lives improved. But the less powerful are not able to take the initiative. The powerful minority are unlikely to give up the benefits which come from their ability to access *wasta*. Whenever power status or control are challenged, those adversely affected attempt to resist or undermine this change. If development agents are not aware of these issues of power, their projects may increase existing conflicts.

Finally, small scale individual development projects by themselves will not be useful unless they are well planned and integrated to meet the perceived needs of the people in question. This requires people's involvement and the coordination of development agencies. This may not be an easy task for the development agencies due to conflicting interests and competition for funding. Nevertheless, it is important to overcome overlapping efforts.

### 8.9 Further research

The present research identifies development issues at both the local level and at the national level which impact on people's lives and which require further research:

1. Evaluation of health care needs and the effectiveness of health care services which the rural people access, mainly village health centres and mobile clinics.

These have been described by the villagers as not meeting their needs. Research which evaluates the existing health services provided by these facilities would be valuable in identifying areas for improvement and the appropriate role of private welfare organisations.

2. Evaluation of access to education and educational outcomes from village schools including:

- obstacles to access and how to overcome them;
- standards in public schools and the relevance of the curriculum to all, but especially girls.

Education is seen as primary importance for personal development in the villages, but not all access basic education due to social and financial obstacles which favours schooling for males. Education in public schools in the villages is limited to primary education and, therefore, requires the villagers to seek high school education elsewhere, which incurs expenses they may not have.

3. Investigation of NGO training needs including participatory approaches. The professionals have described their need for appropriate training for their work in development practice and the case study shows they lack participatory skills and gender awareness. Participatory appraisals will identify in-depth community needs and improve development planning.

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Appendices

Appendix A	Letter of Introduction
Appendix B	Information Sheet
Appendix C	Arabic Introductory Letter
Appendix D	Arabic Information Sheet
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Appendix F	Questions on Development

## APPENDIX A : Letter of Introduction

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Jihad Makhoul and I live in Bterram El Koura. I am visiting your village as a student from University of Wollongong in Australia to carry out research. This is a requirement for my degree, the Doctor of Public Health.

I am interested in Lebanese rural villages and their community development. My research aims at exploring how villagers in North Lebanon (Akkar) value their lives in the village and what aspirations they hold for the future.

I will carry out my research by visiting people in the village (name) and holding group discussions and individual interviews with them over a period of 12 months. Before the discussions, I will explain the details of my study and that the information I collect will be used only for academic purposes. All participants will be given a consent form telling them about the research and asking them to take part. During the discussions and interviews I will use a tape recorder that will help me retrieve all the information. At home, I will listen to the tapes to write down the conversations for analysis. If any of the participants say they do not want the tape recorder to be used, I will not use it.

All the data collected from the village will be seen only by me. No one in the village will be named or identified in any way. I will also exclude the name of the village when I write my thesis.

I will send a copy to you when it is completed.

I look forward to your support.

Sincerely

Jihad Makhoul

APPENDIX B : Information Sheet

University of Wollongong  
Department of Public Health and Nutrition

Research : Development from Below

Dear Participant,

My name is Jihad Makhoul and I live in Bterram El Koura. I am visiting your village as a student from the University of Wollongong in Australia. I am doing research for my degree to become a doctor of public health. I want to discover how villagers describe their lives, what community activities they think are important and what inspirations they have for the future. To do this, I will spend much time in the village talking to people to learn from them.

If you would like to participate in an interview for my study, you can be sure that anything you tell me will be kept confidential and your name will not be revealed in any way to anyone. Your name will not be used and you will not be identified in any way. You may answer as many questions as you want and you are free to stop when you want to. The information you tell me will be just one part of many discussions and will be used only for my study. You will be free to leave at any time with no obligations.

If it is all right with you, we will use a tape recorder. The tape will help me in writing down all the details of our discussion for analysis.

So if you have the time and agree to these conditions, I would appreciate your participation.

التاريخ: ١٦/٤/١٩٩٧

مختار ..... المحترم

أدعى جودي مخول من بطرام الكورة.

جئت لزيارة قريتكم ..... كطالبة جامعية من جامعة ولفونغ في  
أستراليا وذلك لتنفيذ بحثي الجامعي الذي أقوم به لنيل شهادة الدكتوراه .

أنا مهتمة في القرى الريفية في لبنان وبناء على هذا الاهتمام يهدف بحثي  
إلى إكتشاف كيفية تقييم أهل القرى لحياتهم القروية ورؤيتهم للحاضر  
والمستقبل.

سأنفذ بحثي هذا بزيارة أهل القرية وسأقيم محادثات فردية وجماعية وذلك  
على مدى أشهر عدة. وقبل البدء بهذه المحادثات سوف أعرض تفاصيل عن بحثي  
وعن المعلومات التي سأجمعها وبأنها ستستخدم للأهداف الأكاديمية. كما أنني  
سأريهم نصا مكتوبا طالبة منهم المشاركة قدر ما يمكنهم.

إن كل المعلومات التي سأجمعها من أبناء هذه القرية هي لي فقط وكل الذين  
سيشتركون معي سيقون مجهولي الهوية.

أمله منكم الدعم والمشاركة.

تفضلوا بقبول الاحترام

## APPENDIX D : Arabic Information Sheet

### جامعة ولنغونغ كلية الصحة العامة

#### طلب المشاركة في البحث

#### بحث في آراء الناس حول التنمية

الباحثة: جودي مخول

حضرة المشترك /المشاركة:

جئت لزيارة قريبتكم ، كطالبة جامعية من جامعة ولنغونغ في  
أستراليا حيث أدرس لنيل شهادة الدكتوراه. المشرفة على بحثي هي د.  
لينزي هاريسون.

يهدف بحثي الى اكتشاف حياتكم القروية ونشاطاتكم اليومية وتفسيراتكم  
لها. ولكي أقوم بذلك علي أن أمضي وقتا في قريبتكم وأتحدث الى أهلها  
للحصول على المعلومات المطلوبة.

إن كنتم تودون المشاركة في البحث كونوا على ثقة بأن كل المعلومات التي  
ستصرحون عنها أكون الوحيدة المضطلة عليها وبأنكم ستبقون مجهولي  
الهوية في التحليل النهائي.

كما يمكنكم الاجابة على قدر ما تريدون من الاسئلة وأن تعتذروا عن عدم تكملة  
المقابلة ساعة تشاؤون.

يكون الحوار جزءا من سلسلة المقابلات التي تستعمل فقط لغرض البحث. وإذا لا  
مانع لديكم سنستخدم آلة تسجيل لحفظ التفاصيل للتحليل فيما بعد.

إذا كان لديكم الوقت ووافقتم على هذه الشروط الرجاء التوقيع ادناه.

شاكرة لكم تعاونكم.

## APPENDIX E: Interview Schedule

What is valuable to you in your village life?

What needs changing or improving? What is the best way of doing that?

What needs preserving? How can that be done?

Who would best be able to do this?

How do you see life for your children?



## APPENDIX F: Questions on Development

What does development mean to you?

How do you describe your village in regards to development?

What development projects has the village had?

Where did they come from?

Who was involved?

How have they changed people's lives?