The Lebanese Diaspora: A Civil Solution for Extreme Choices

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I.   Abstract:

Global migrations have contributed, throughout the ages, to reinforcing the opportunities of trade, development and acculturation among peoples. The disintegration of political borders before commodities and ideas is the most salient manifestation of globalization in recent decades. This disintegration transformed into a filter for selecting the qualified and talented and rejecting the rest – even should they drown at sea in illegal immigration. This situation has played a part in choking poor countries with millions of young people in search of life, work and hope – a chokehold that will turn into deadly conflicts in several regions of the world and lead the hopeless to adopt extremist and desperate methods in a mock religious guise. Conversely, the Lebanese setting presents a promising model, whether due to the properties of Lebanese society in the home country or to the wide scattering across the world. It is a diametric alternative as it embraces integration, interaction and cooperation. This model deserves further examination given the marked accomplishments of expatriates in innovation, medicine, literature, business and more. People of Lebanese descent hold critical positions in host countries and international organizations, making them well-placed to play a key role in bridging between peoples and influencing the decisions touching on peace, development and human affairs. Such manifest or latent vitality constitutes what we call the virtual Lebanese-universal civil society – a society that was launched from the ancestral springboard without entirely leaving it, rather went into the world with confidence and passion. It is a society that sometimes took clear organizing frameworks, such as committees, associations and conferences, and often moved in host communities, as in Lebanon, in the shape of vibrant, regenerating energies seeking justice, freedom and better futures.

II.   Introduction: A Fragile Time

On a stone in Palmyra is etched a simple admonition that reads, "Do not revile an unfamiliar god". It is an eloquent expression that directly links to the idea of tolerance and the concept of human identity as an accumulation of thought and philosophy. An old Arabic proverb states, "Man is the enemy of what he ignores". The two statements seem contradictory but their complementarity is revealed upon reflection. Since the ignorant is his own enemy, man's instinctive tendency is to preserve his kind, i.e. to reconcile with himself, and to seek awareness, knowledge and discovery. By dispelling the expanses of ignorance, such seeking dispels the expanses of terror and fear. When man encounters an unfamiliar god, it would be better to embark on the experience of mutual introduction with an expression of goodwill, a "peace be upon you", i.e. that God is with you now, that God is peace and so you are in His keeping and care; or "marhaba" (greetings) which in Aramaic consists of two parts: "Mar", i.e. the Lord or God, and "Haba", i.e. love, literally expressing that "God is love". To revile them offhand defies all logic. It is astonishing that offhand revilement has been and continues to be practiced in the 21st

century – for are stereotyping, oversimplification and generalizations not revilement?

Any distancing leads us to false assumptions of what is happening on the other side. The preconceived images have been established in one's imagination, wrought in darkness and generalized in ignorance. The truth, however, exists where the parties can meet to negotiate their mental images and their different approaches to processing the world. A mere meeting dispels fears, and this weakens convictions.

The internet envelops the world like a spider web, and yet the world crumbles. People drift from each other and themselves despite the fact that man has conquered distances and time. The fundamental concepts that stir in the other's mind have been lost, and vision has been blurred to the extreme. The colossal advancements have also failed to create interaction between people and to prompt them to meet on common ground in order to debate their differences.

Recent decades have witnessed various forms of human and cultural interaction: outright conquests, colonization, mandates, flash invasions and the dismantling of military and state structures, sieges, military and economic alliances, etc. Nonetheless, the human race entered the new century under a heavy burden of uncertainty and anxiety regarding its fate. The number of democracies continues to grow, but this does not mean a growing number of democrats, i.e. those truly possessed by the substance of democracy and enjoying its manifestations in human dignity, in freedom, justice and aspiration.

Economic and political pressures tightened on human communities in several countries, and were contained by exporting surplus youth potentials to other societies. While such surpluses were assimilate in some societies, failure emerged in multiple places, and the marginalized and vulnerable amassed in ghettos on the outskirts of dozens of cities in Europe and America, but also in many cities of the Middle-East as a result of internal migration. Lately, these pent-up pressures erupted in brutality the like of which the world believed no longer existed outside cinematic fictions. And still the series of extreme scenarios unfolds in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Nigeria, Egypt and many, many more.

These horrifying scenarios have driven millions of people to beg safe passage through forced migration. We will not touch, in this paper, on the displaced millions within a single country despite the tragic circumstances assaulting them, and despite the fact that they are easy prey to the bloodthirsty who feed them into the maws of death… Nor will we address, other than in passing, cross-border demographic displacements (Kurds; Chaldeans, Assyrians and Middle-Eastern Christians in general; the exchange of Shiite and Sunni citizens, etc.), but will leave to the imagination the political scene that is forming according to sectarian, racial and tribal stripes.

The case we will expound is that of Lebanese expatriation, ongoing for centuries and rooted across the four corners of the world. It is a unique case in

many ways: there are twice as many Lebanese expats as Lebanese residents; the Diaspora is widely scattered over the globe; absence of concentration ghettos (except for Detroit, perhaps) and openness to the host environment; diverse social, professional and religious backgrounds; and the predominance of personal determining factors, such as the desire to succeed, perseverance, adventurousness and resourcefulness.

Given this unique quality, it is our belief that a deep examination of Lebanese expatriation and its impact on host countries, as well as the homeland, can reveal a model teeming with experiences and lessons, and useful for generalizing radical solutions in communities and societies facing the challenges of assimilating foreign migrants. Such a probing exploration can, moreover, bring into focus solutions to the dilemma of the clashing peoples of Middle-Eastern societies.

We will review the fomenting circumstances of extremism and desperation, and our conception of civil society in general, to finally arrive at the case of Lebanese expatriates: their dispersal, the impact they have made, and their contributions to enriching the civil societies they interact with as well as the universal civil society which we look to as an anticipated solution for the current crises – extremism, terrorism, marginalization and oppression – plaguing human civilization.

III.   Marginalization, Oppression and Extreme Choices

An Attempt to Unravel Tangled Complexities

Our modern vocabulary has been invaded by a set of words almost devoid of significance given their intensely conflicting meaning. Globalization, terrorism, minorities, cultural invasion and dominance, clash of civilizations, global warming and many more… Regardless of the potential outcome of our efforts to agree on a unified definition for these symptoms /phenomena /concepts, the crisis of the 21st century calls on us all to agree on a modicum of a common language to be used not only to listen to one another, but also so that none would be tempted, in listening, to hear themselves speak and believe that the other no longer exists.

While optimists worked hard and staked their wagers on the information revolution, on the dissolution of distances and the opportunities this creates for the meeting of and dialogue between different orientations, interests and beliefs, skeptics sounded the alarm and warned about the magnitude of tensions and the danger of suffocation in several places. Although we cannot tell how right either party is, the other – whoever that might me – holds a share of the truth. And what is the absolute truth if not a compendium of the partners in human civilization – those partners being humanity as a whole?

In our opinion, most conversations or debates have been marred by the following observations which may be disaggregated into two perspectives:

- Eastern perspective of the West:

- The Middle-East has always rushed towards the West in eager amazement, or withdrawn in grudging fear;

- The Middle-East has sought to shape its opinion of itself through the lens of Western opinion in its regard;

- Western perspective of the East:

  - The West has long treated the Middle-East as a topic of study rather than a participant in the conversation;

  - The stereotype is somewhat condescending and patronizing;

  - The West often complains of the absence of a Middle-Eastern interlocutor due to the lack of proper democratic representation, and weaves projects of dialogue with expatriates who have shed their Middle-Eastern origins but failed to be Westernized;

  - Middle-Easterners reprimand the West for its support of dictatorships which would not have endured or dared to crush their peoples without foreign support;

  - They also reprove the West's leaking or exporting many of its despotic problems and shortcomings to the Middle-East;

  - They reprove its invisible clout, acting through the media, finance or intelligence;

  - They finally demand compensation for part of their mismanaged resources or a lifting of oppression from the Middle-East to remedy oppression and ills, namely famine, poverty, discrimination and social injustice;

Another link in this chain is the classification of human beings into first- and second-class citizens, and the classification of societies into good and evil, etc. Whereas the majority of these observations reveal varying degrees of objectivity, our overall dissatisfaction with them is the fact that they are governed by binary oppositions or false dichotomies where the Middle-East and the West are pegged against each other using the language of Orientalists, while ignoring the influence of the Middle-East on the West through religion and expatriates, and the permeation of the West into the Middle-East through material, cultural and other products. Islam and Christianity are similarly compared to or set up opposite Judaism, in a dismissal of the common truths from which these religions emerged and which, if taken to heart, can help us agree about, set aside or look past our differences. Moreover, observers can note the wealth of literature and research currently endeavoring to dismantle the clichés that associate the Diaspora with terrorism (Patchett E., 2015).

While telecommunications have transformed the world into a consumerist village, the patterns of consumption are eroding the underpinnings of the environmental village (overpopulation and water scarcity, destruction of the ozone, toxic waste, biodiversity, etc.). We will not go into the threat this poses to the human right to survival and life; our reference to environmental risks was meant to highlight their impact on the concepts of sovereignty, national borders and human migration. It is well-known that the phenomena of desertification, deforestation, pollution and the like are closely connected to human displacements, whether they lead to exodus (deteriorating rural environments) or congestion (urban noise and air pollution).

The human community is aware of these risks and has organized to mobilize and create agreement in order to prevent the worst. Observers can find dozens, nay hundreds of agreements and protocols on migration, communications and the environment. But the train of globalization roars ahead, unrestrained, and people persist, at a growing pace, in hijacking the rights of future generations to resources, while agreements and their ratification and regulatory mechanisms lag way behind: no sooner do they arrive to the implementation phase than they are faced with a new reality that requires new modes of response. To date, competition and the quest for the maximization of profits dictate the rules of the game, leaving no solution other than coalition through further integration and merging.

With their weight and size, titanic coalitions tower over states so that the latter buckle, their authority over local communities crumbles and their sovereignty in the traditional sense gives way. But these coalitions have viscous properties, are almost nameless and, lacking an identifier, cannot be held accountable or be regulated. Our last resort is universal sovereignty founded on international law whose institutional framework is embodied by the United Nations and its organizations and agencies. It can be noted that human rights tend toward globalism, and that the origin and the legitimacy of rights are gradually transcending the local and steadily shifting to the global. This is obviously the case in several countries where voices rise in petitioning recourse not only to generalizing principles for human rights but also to their mechanisms and institutions. And these are the very same voices who demand the strengthening and independence (specificity) of national identity.

Whereas the concept of citizenship in the absolute rests on two cornerstones: identity and rights, those two components are quickly drifting apart, as evidenced by contemporary realities. While identity tends toward differentiation and specificity (i.e. exclusivity), rights tend toward generalization and globalism (i.e. inclusivity). Among these realities is the fact that we call for the support of the international community, and all it represents in terms of the globalism of values and interests, to champion our local rights, represented in sovereignty, independence and national identity. Overall, despite cases of blatant self-isolation (extreme choices), the general trend foregrounds the concept of the "global citizen" from the perspective of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration, in founding charters, special conventions and high-level conferences, consider the freedom of belief and religion, as well as the freedom to express these individually and collectively, as absolute individual rights. Therefore, such freedoms are essential components of the irreducible human being. On their part, the majority of religions affirm their support of human rights and acknowledge their contribution, through their values and teachings, to the emergence of the spirit upon which were founded the international standards for the rights of humanity.

The correspondence of religious traditions, with their myriad and different specificities compared to the universality of human rights… the imperative of interpretation and diligence (ijtihad) in texts and traditions, and the need to separate religion and religious traditions from authority and political work… are all juristic (fiqh), cultural and political problems that still require crystallization, testing and configuring. Religious texts, and the diligence and interpretations (tafseer) that arise from them, are merely a tributary, though a major one, of the system of traditions, customs and cultural heritage. Heritage has always been and will forever be impossible to objectively quantify and describe, whereas religion has a clearer reference point, whether epitomized in conventional religious texts or in religious institutions and their leaders, organizations, seats and communication.

In general, an inquirer will find a list of human rights enshrined in the world's languages and described and reinforced by mechanisms for monitoring and verification, regardless of the effectiveness or comprehensiveness of such mechanisms. Conversely, there is a limitless range of beliefs, cultures, customs and traditions that cannot be reduced or classified. There are, nonetheless, two currents that dominate the scene by virtue of geographic proximity and clashes both current and historic. The first is labeled the European civilization, Western culture, the civilized West or the globalized world – these are associated with images of accomplishment, superiority, colonization, progress and urbanity. The other is labeled the Middle-East, West-Saharan Africa, Islamo-Arab culture or the Islamic World – these are associated with images of despotism, obscurantism, oil and the oppression of women.

From both perspectives, the scene is rife with distortion, generalizations and oversimplification, and requires much scrutiny and refining to bring it anywhere closer the truth. Certainly, sensitivity, reservations and prejudice against all that is foreign are human phenomena common to all communities. Generalizations are usually used to substantiate individual or isolated cases, and religious or cultural agendas are projected on them. Non-communication cancels the process of dialogue, which in turn solidifies negative assumptions through clichés that take form in the mind based on suspicions that were not addressed or discussed by others.

Behind the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, there are considerable reasons and circumstances that push people to the depths of desperation. That there should be at the head of our institutions or states a

lifelong president is the death of hope, the stifling of ambition, and a plot against aspiration and improvement. That there should be seated at the head of any political, social or cultural pyramid someone untouchable and unaccountable is to stymie their impulse for seriousness and hard work, and is indeed to incite them to neglect, corruption and hyperbole.

"The escape of many Arab citizens towards religion constituted the other side of the impasse of Arab legitimacy. People needed a safe haven as they were forbidden from open political work in the majority of Arab countries. And perhaps it is impossible to prohibit political work, since man by his very nature is a political being. People turned to mosques as a refuge and religiosity became an expression of society's aspiration for a better life, for a more honest and just political system, and for less corruption. People swarmed the mosques in droves and multitudes. They had found a place that offered them reassurance under the clouds of fear, anxiety and suboptimal living conditions. Many Arabs discovered the capacity for communion with what was stronger than their eternal rulers." (الغبرا, ٢٠١١)

None should expect the conditions of the populations in Arab countries to improve at the wave of a wand; the path is long and overarching, indeed exhausting at times. The problem of the rotation of power is a complicated one in our history and practice, and holds sway over all forms of government. In fact, and contrary to expectations, it is more pragmatic in hereditary systems, and is perverted by authoritarianism and artificiality in republican systems. Therefore, democratic accumulation will only take form in its natural womb, i.e. in educational institutions (at home and in schools) followed by civil institutions, i.e. in the nature of the ties that join associations and entities to their members and audience, and finally in political institutions: parliament, governments and presidency.

The challenges at the moment may be summarized in three salient phenomena:

- Violent activity has retracted from Western cities and is currently concentrated in Islamic arenas where expanses of poverty and marginalization are widespread and constitute a fertile ground for nurturing such groups. It should be noted that the activity of these groups is difficult to contain within a specific geographical area;

- Despotic and subordinated regimes were toppled in several countries, and the scene revealed civil harbingers and embryonic oppositions that have not yet organized under institutional alternatives with visions and platforms;

- Petro-dollar surpluses evaporated and real development did not bloom in any country of the Middle-Eastern region; these surpluses are rather contributing today to fueling existing tensions. (شرف الدين، ٢٠١١)

To conclude the first section of this paper: economic and social constructs in many, nay in almost all places are formed by the force of the status quo.

Response to the challenges of the new world order vary between positive acceptance and the concerted search for a role and place, to complete rejection and self-isolation either in bygone eras (while the times move forward), or in remote locations (while distances dwindle). On both banks of the Mediterranean (elsewhere, too), rentier systems fail to create jobs for millions of youths who seek refuge through legal and illegal migration. Hopelessness and frustration crop up here and there as a result of poverty and marginalization.

Meanwhile, optimists and militants endeavor to institute civil society organizations to arrive at a partnership government, i.e. democracy, to face the onslaught of the stateless and those with no fixed abode, and to resolve the problems of poverty, unemployment and tyranny. Is civil society the kernel of the modernizing society, and the guarantee against extreme choices? Are interdependence and cross-border networks the answer? What is the role of migrants and their organizations?

IV.   Civil Society

Civil society is the platform through which citizens express their rights and obligations and translate their dialogue in formulating the social contract they desire. This definition highlights the close connection not only between civil society and the social contract, but also between citizenship (rights and obligations) and democracy (dialogue mechanisms leading to the formulation of a contract, to monitoring its implementation and to its development).

Civil society as a platform for "intellectual construction" combines widely disparate components and represents social, intellectual and political visions that compete and coexist… These components are civil society organizations which, by enjoying a modicum of civility towards the different other, are eligible to be members of civil society, regardless of how "traditional" or "liberal", "spiritual" or "secular" they are. Their common denominators are the values of tolerance and participation. They are, then, the voluntary social frameworks mediating between the state and its essential components (individuals, the family), expressing the values and interests of their members, and concerned with issues of public interest.

Perhaps the key indicator, indeed the chief feature of civil society is the extreme disparity of its components, which cannot not be dismissed by reduction or by ostracizing some category or other, be it secular civil, i.e. connected to modern structures such as parties, syndicates and voluntary organizations, or spiritual traditional such as religion, ethnicity, tribe and family. (الجابري) If distinction is possible in European societies that saw the evolution of the Industrial Revolution, the subsequent technological revolution and assorted social and civil constructs, it is absolutely impossible in our Arab communities where old and new constructs interact – whether through dialogue or clashes. In the Lebanese situation, "coexistence" is more prominent for structural (confessions), geographical (point of contact and

interaction between cultures) and pragmatic (Lebanese expatriates and their interaction with those residing in the country of origin) reasons.

Another indicator of people's maturity for coexistence, for building a society, for organizing under the protection of the law and institutions, and for accepting the principle of sharing, alternation and rotation… an indicator that links back to the above··· Another characteristic is commitment to the management of difference in civil society components by peaceful means. I am convinced that this is the heart of the matter and the rest are extraneous details. I cannot expect recognition from the other unless I am willing to recognize them, too. The most prominent manifestations of mutual recognition are a honed proficiency in expression and listening, understanding that the arena is for rights and obligations, and admitting the existence of limitations. Indeed, there are limitations to power and to time and space. Good relationships might just consist of the recognition of borders, sharing of roles, alternation of giving and receiving, and rotation of property, authorities and powers. For instance, psychologists and sociologists affirm that successful family life is an endless series of instances of control and submission between spouses, which they cleverly, skillfully and automatically alternate depending on the situation, issue or context. Such smooth and voluntary alternation produces a balanced, durable and evolving relationship.

What does the experience of 7 million Lebanese expatriates who left during different periods teach us? What are the features of the Lebanese-universal (virtual) civil society that formed by their own will at times and spontaneously at others? What role did and does this society play in disarming contemporary time-bombs?

V.   The Diaspora

The concept of the Diaspora has evolved in recent decades. Its earliest uses were associated with forced migrations of human populations compelled to leave their ancestral homeland under the threat of violence, having experienced racial or religious persecution or the tyranny of a despot. In certain cases, ethnic cleansing accompanied this type of migration. Among the historical instances that immediately spring to mind: the Jewish Diaspora, deportation of Africans, Armenian exodus, and Palestinian refugees.

Waves of migration may result from natural factors in the wake of a devastating flood or earthquake. Demographic and economic (attractive and repellent) factors can also result in mass displacements, whether intense and temporary, or gradual, steady and persistent. The global population density, famine and poverty have acted as repellent factors that have driven people to more prosperous lands. A prevailing myth (utopia), welfare societies (Canada, Scandinavia) and the abundance of wealth and jobs (GCC) are attractive factors to individuals, especially for the qualified, resourceful and adventurous.

So the concept of the Diaspora gradually broke free from the shackles of victimized displacement to acquire features not necessarily connected to the tragedy of massacre or the nightmare of persecution. By reviewing modern literature on the concept of the Diaspora, an examiner of migrant groups falling under the heading of Diaspora can detect the following commonalities (Cohen, 2008):

- That they have dispersed from a specific homeland or country;

- They still possess a collective memory of that homeland, regardless of whether it is based on historical facts or a fiction;

- The homeland or ancestral home takes on surreal dimensions;

- Members of the group believe they are not exactly welcome in the host country and that they are incapable of assimilating;

- They believe that everyone should commit to allegiance and belonging to the homeland, indeed to returning there if circumstances allow it.

We will see that Lebanese expatriation is an updated version of the Diaspora, despite the fact that major waves of emigration occurred due to the World War I famine, then as a means for survival during the civil war and Israeli wars. We will also observe that the characteristics of the Diaspora apply most to Lebanese emigrants to African countries and the GCC.

VI.   The Lebanese and the Diaspora

In the above context, as geography and physical considerations lose their power, there is a geographically scattered community that has suffered for decades from civil war and intense clashes in an extremely unstable region: by which we mean the Lebanese model. It should be noted that Lebanon possesses all the characteristics that would make a case study a worthy and promising exercise, especially since some theorists insist today on linking current clashes to cultural differences, while others refuse all connection between terrorism and religion. We believe that the Lebanese model negates the theories of a clash of civilizations and cultures.

The main purpose remains the quest for better communication and for constructive interaction between the members of a multi-confessional and multi-group community. A plural society can be found today in Beirut, just as in London or New York. Conducting dialogue in the distinctively unique Lebanese society can benefit the global conversation aiming to disconnect armed conflict from religion and culture.
According to Dr. Bissat, "Every Lebanese person is deep down a potential expatriate". The statement is of extreme significance, and can be paraphrased as every Lebanese person has been sentenced to expatriation and is awaiting the opening of one of many doors in order to execute the sentence, which is

at times a life sentence or a mitigated one with the possibility of release on probation (a leave) pending the return to the land of expatriation as soon as the leave is over. Final repatriation is not spared tragic endings either. An observer can tally several funeral processions leaving the Beirut airport every day in the direction of the North, Mount Lebanon, Beqaa or the South (شرف الدين، ٢٠١١).

As an introduction to this component, we offer a few challenge: the challenge of identity, role, and citizenship. We will then examine some figures as a sort of DNA analysis, followed by a roundup of strengths and available opportunities, models and examples, and a quick overview of implications.

4-1 Sovereignty and National Selfhood: The Lebanese have proved themselves to be civil and civilized and deserving of a better life. Proof is in the stories of their brilliant success wherever they go, which fail to be replicated in their homeland. Their civil society exists in them and travels with them wherever they go. We cannot forget that the prototype in Lebanon is facing the very real threat generated by the fact that our intense focus on the uniqueness of the country has squandered the rights of the citizens. The present threat is underpinned by another dimension: disagreement about Lebanon's part in the tumultuous chaos and change sweeping through the region. But the region's crisis after all is a crisis of rights: the rights of individuals to life, to dignity and to freedom.

If our demand is to distinguish ourselves as a country with an identity and a standing among the nations, it would be very useful to agree on an identification card for our country, its functions and roles, and to agree on its fundamental values (plurality, tolerance, participation, etc.). Then we would agree on the norms that embody our values in practice, work on formulating them in laws and legislations, and ensure they are rigorously implemented.

On sovereignty, there are new implications and significations to the concepts of nationalism and globalism. The national and the global are intersecting variables and not necessarily separate stages that develop in opposite directions. If economic sovereignty is added to the definition, the overwhelming majority of world countries would fall outside the scope of sovereignty. As a Lebanese society we need a new political conception that stems from our definition of globalism (not to be confused with globalization) as a world order based on the principle of interaction, communication and proving individual and national selfhood at the international level through active and constructive engagement with the global community.

On national selfhood, It can be said with certainty that resident and expat Lebanese nationals have a mental image of national selfhood based on love for Lebanon, the home country, which is carried in the hearts of those who are eager to showcase and "market" their country in the best lighting. There is a general sense of the importance of Lebanon enduring as a society, message and idea – but this sense is not crystallized in a popularly agreed on project. This implies that the image is not a true copy but resembles the original from

certain angles only. The essential point is that we should define the essence of the original and its main features.

4-2 The role and the function: We have not found a clear definition of the nature and function of Lebanon. Claiming otherwise will not eliminate the details of difference, but will rather elevate them to the level of existential disagreement. Perhaps agreeing about the details of the past is more difficult than agreeing on the nature of the present and on a uniting vision for the future. Perhaps focusing on details occludes the uniting whole that others (the non-Lebanese) find it easy to take stock of, and beg us to realize and hold on to (Holy See, Lebanon the message), and perhaps the new world order would be an enabling environment for turning a new page for the future.

The real Lebanon is probably the universal Lebanon: what is certain is that rarely has there been a country whose expatriates outnumber its residents, while its human constituents, with their doctrinal, intellectual and humanist elements, make it a window of hope through which humanity looks onto salvation.

Lebanon as a function seems akin to the following:

- It is a resort where combatants on the fronts of production rest, although in recent years the range of visitors has dwindled due to security concerns and become limited to Lebanese expats. This is Lebanon the tourist, medical, university and recreational destination – which requires the safeguarding of all heritage, natural and service resources;

- It is an incubator for grooming and training youths before they are sent out into the job market;

- It is equipped to be a stage for assembly and a space for dialogue in the manner hoped for by Imam Sadr (Lebanon is a civilizing imperative that should be held on to…) and affirmed by the Holy See. (شرف الدين، ٢٠١١)

4.3. The citizenship, i.e. the rights: we observe that national legislations on individual rights repeatedly tend to narrow the expanses of singularity, oneness and domestication-localization, for the benefit of the absolute, the comprehensive and the global. This means that legislation and norms refer steadily back to human rights, to the rights of any and all human beings. Here we say with certainty that the viable Lebanon is that of citizens, i.e. of rights. The rights that we wish to foreground and recognize extend in space to reach the individual regardless of their doctrine, gender or nationality, and extend in time, too, to reach children and grandchildren through the preservation and development of environment and space to safeguard the rights of future generations. What can the Lebanese contribute in this area?

Every migration is an evolution of identity toward the dynamic blending between cultures. It is an evolution that rejects components steeped in their

localization and specificity. It is true that the Lebanese expatriate falls into the cycle of nostalgia for the past, but this nostalgia is destined to be dispelled in general, is very weak among young expatriates and is finally nonexistent in second and later generations.

On the other side, i.e. on the part of the residents, is something close to real schizophrenia. Citizenship, and the belonging, rights and obligations it entails, require substantial boldness, faith and hard work in order to be in line with Lebanese residents. This is not the time to cover all the confusion surrounding the concepts of identity, belonging and role, nor their manifestations in theory and practice.

4-4 The Challenge of Defining the Lebanese Diaspora
There are between 12 to 14 million expatriates according to the estimates of sources dedicated to Lebanese expatriation. The most common estimate is around 10 million (Lebanese Diaspora), below are the estimates of the General Directorate of Emigrants (القيسي، ٢٠١٥), 7 million in Central and South America; 1,275,000 in North America; 534,000 in the GCC; 466,000 in Europe; 457,000 in Australia; 226,000 in Africa; and approximately 3,000 in the rest of Asia. Eighty-five percent of those no longer hold the Lebanese nationality (passport), but this does not revoke their belonging to the Lebanese Diaspora. Neither does this mean that the ten million are still Lebanese. There are millions of people of Lebanese descent in the US, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, etc., who have never been to Lebanon, who do not speak the language, who have a hazy and inconsistent image of the country – and most importantly, who are unconcerned about returning.

Looking back at the fourth and fifth criteria of the definition of the Diaspora (belief that the expatriate group is not wholly welcome in the host country; belief in the imperative of belonging to the home country and returning there if possible), we see that expatriates to whom the five criteria apply are:

- The Lebanese based in the GCC (geographical proximity, frequent visits to Lebanon, investing in Lebanon, impossibility of full assimilation in host countries);

- The Lebanese based in Africa (frequent visits to Lebanon, investing in Lebanon, difficulty of full assimilation in host countries);

- The Lebanese who left for America and Europe in recent decades some of whom will probably return or who are still drawn to the home country through nostalgia, family ties and the possibility of return;

- The last or before last generation born of a Lebanese father or mother, those who own property in Lebanon or are part of a collective memory of the homeland that might bring them back or drive them to engage in initiatives and projects connected to their home country.

Diligence in proposing and agreeing on specific criteria is not merely an intellectual luxury; it is a critical duty falling to entrepreneurs, leaders,

Diaspora organizations and Lebanese legislators. Perhaps attracting 2 or 3 million Lebanese expatriates to contribute to rebuilding Lebanon might present a lifeline not only for the idea of Lebanon, but also for the idea of accepting difference and diversity, of promoting meeting and dialogue, and then actively participating in raising human civilization.

4-5 DNA: While borders evaporate before commodities, ideas and money, it is a different matter when it comes to people who will undergo a process of selection or filtration based on the circumstances. Whereas some countries encourage young immigrants (Canada, Australia) as a result of their own population policies, developed Western countries in general aim to draw the brightest young scientific or artistic talents (brain gain). These countries mostly enjoy many attractive qualities for the qualified. It can be noted that the majority of young people who pursue their graduate and postgraduate studies in these countries, strive to remain there and mostly succeed. Elsewhere in the world, emigration is predominantly young and male rather than female (KSA, for social reasons; or Africa). Given the poor interest invested by Lebanese embassies in conducting a census of Lebanese expatriates, the features of the phenomenon may be identified through an analysis of the resident demographic scene.

According to a study developed by the Université Saint-Joseph in 2009, (سمعان، ٢٠٠٩) 13.4% of the Lebanese left the country between 1975 and 2001, at a rate of 10 females for every 16.4 males. This difference is conspicuous in the age composition of the resident population in the 30-45 age group, where females clearly outnumber males. In 2001, the ratio of resident males to females was around 105 to 100 for ages below 25, and is more than 115 to 100 for ages over 60, although the rate drops to 87 males to 100 females in the 30-45 age group. As for the reasons for expatriation, the study cites the search for employment as the motivation for 41% of cases, followed by family reunification at 21%, political or social reasons at 17%, better living conditions at 11%, pursuing studies at 9% and war at 5%.

Emigrants during the same period included 274,000 university degree holders. Since the average cost for training a student exceeds USD 100,000, this implies that the national economy has spent approximately USD 30 million in training university students who ended up leaving the country in the final quarter of the last century. The researcher censures the use of money transfers since these are depleted in consumption and lead to the subjugation of the national economy to the exterior. This should not obscure the positive effects of the emigration in both hosting countries and the country of origin. Beside enhancing knowledge and science, they foster economy and trade, support their families, the charities and developmental projects. (لبكي ب)

The latest elections saw voting by only 11,000 of the 1,327,000 expats registered around the world, 200,000 of whom are based in Africa (فواز ٢٠١٥), meaning that a quarter of those holding the Lebanese nationality are abroad. Forty-six percent of recent emigrants are university degree holders, and 83% are young people (Information International). Demographically, we know that

Christians have been dispersed across Middle-Eastern countries since ancient times. But while they number around 5 million across Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Jordan without making up more than 5% of the general population, there are 8 million Christians in Egypt (10%) and 7.1 million in Lebanon (40%) (نبيل، ٢٠١٥).

4-6 Strengths and Potential Opportunities: We can confirm that Lebanon, in both its resident and expatriate constituents, possesses the majority of inputs (or basic elements, at least) that may be harnessed to implement its civilizing project, in Lebanon and abroad. Lebanon is capable of instituting a real partnership between citizens both resident and expatriate, in which civil society constitutes a bridge between the two groups:
Strengths include:

- Young and widespread human potentials, motivated and possessing linguistic, technological and management skills;

- Unique cultural pluralism coupled with geographic location, allowing, together, the communication and meeting with other nations;

- A tradition of civil action and a network of organizations in Lebanon and the Diaspora offering a framework for the Lebanese wherever they are, as well as coordination between their constituents on the one hand and with civil society organizations in countries of expatriation on the other;

- Leadership in communication work, in terms of human resources and institutionalization structures.

These strengths can interact with a favorable regional and global environment that presents a set of opportunities. Perhaps Imam Musa Sadr was a pioneer in anticipating this universal model as a laboratory for the one universal state of which he said, *"as a result of expanding transportation, it seems as though the world, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, were one country. The farthest distance between one country and another across the world is no greater today that the distance covered traveling between Beirut and Tripoli. Thus, this interconnected world, which comprises religions and coexistence between mankind in order for humanity to continue building the one universal state, is largely associated with and affected by the success of the Lebanese formula for coexistence."* (الصدر، ١٩٧٧)

These intrinsic strengths can interact with a favorable regional and global environment as they constitute a set of opportunities, including:

1. The need of the international community for an interactive model that challenges statements of clashing civilizations and the end of history;

2. The need of Arab and African neighbors for the human skills and competencies available in Lebanon;

3. The dwindling roles of governments in development processes in favor of non-governmental and civil society organizations in general; this creates a broad spectrum of work opportunities covered by civil society organizations in several places. CSOs enjoy a much wider margin of maneuver that governments which are hemmed in by limitations and engagements that restrict their work and its effectiveness domestically and abroad;
4. Telecommunications technology constitutes a massive resource with its supply of effective channels for networking and coordination.

4.7. Role Models

- The Lebanese expat poet, writer and painter Gibran Khalil Gibran was born in the northern town of Bsharri in 1883 and died in New York in 1931 from tuberculosis, at the age of 50. Gibran emigrated to the US when he was 12 years old and there he studied fine arts and began his literary career. He is celebrated for his book *The Prophet*, which was translated into fifty languages and was never been out of print. It is known to be one of the world's best-selling books in addition to those of Shakespeare and Lao -Tzu.

- At the same period, Hassan Kamel Al-Sabbah (born in 1895) emigrated from his southern hometown Nabatiyeh to the US at the age of 25. He first started working for General Electric. Sabbah died in a traffic accident in 1935. He had developed close to 50 inventions in the fields of solar energy, televisions, electrical power conversion and urban lighting, in addition to theoretical research in mathematics and electricity.

- Adnan Kassar is a pioneer of the national economy, and a prominent figure in Lebanon, the Arab region and the world. He excelled in every field he broached – trade, industry, banking, and Lebanese, Arab and International Chambers of Commerce. His long and diligent career included his appointment as the first Arab chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce in 1999 and earning the accolade of first Arab to enter the Chinese market six decades ago.

- In 2003, Ziad Sankari's father died of a heart attack on the way to the hospital. Five years later, 22-year-old Ziad was awarded a scholarship to the University of Ohio. Later on, Sankari received funding from the US State Department and worked on expanding his business network. In 2012, he established Cardio-Diagnostic, which became the leading provider of cardiac care and monitoring solutions and technology. On May 14, 2015, US President Barack Obama hosted a group of entrepreneurs and innovators including Ziad Sankari whose invention the president personally commended and whom he praised for his productive and vital efforts.

- The list is long and includes global innovators, like legendary CEO Carlos Ghosn, music giant Abdul Rahman El Basha, the savior of the

Swiss watch-making industry Nicolas Hayek, distinguished physicist Rammal Rammal, international fashion designers Elie Saab and Zuhair Mrad, literary master Amin Maalouf, open-heart surgery innovator Michael DeBakey, space scientist and astrophysicist Charles Elachi, leading chronicler of Arab history Philip Hitti, bionic vision inventor Mohamad Sawan, brilliant lawyer Amal Alamuddin, international actress Salma Hayek, artist and painter Paul Karagosian, winner of the Nobel Prize in Medicine Peter Medawar, businessman and art collector Salim Eddé, globally first-ranked boy genius Nazih al-Mir (11), and many more head of states, members of parliaments, heads of local governments, army commanders, corporate leaders, as well as saints.

···the list of expatriates who enriched human civilization and strengthened the course of cooperation between peoples is long. There are sufficient indicators to suggest that Lebanese expatriates create more advantages than disadvantages to their host countries, while their country of origin suffers from gaps and adverse complications exceeding the benefits generated from their money transfers. The link between the Lebanese Diaspora and the topic of study, i.e. international cooperation and bringing peoples closer, is proven and confirmed – and this we will illuminate in the following pages.

4.8 Effects: The disadvantages of expatriation on the home country can be summed under three headings:

- Decrease in the chances of economic growth due to the high rates of support and the absence of young and qualified potentials;

- Worsening of social problems resulting from age gaps, single older people, etc.;

- Dissipation of political vigor and opportunities for change, the banner of which is carried by the youth.

In terms of gains, expat money transfers take the lead. The Lebanese Central Bank encourages expat transfers through a series of measures, including: directing the banking sector to abide by international standards, inciting banks to use the latest technology, and promoting bank mergers to boost their capacity to open branches in the countries of expatriation.

Conversely, the Lebanese refrain from employment in many occupations that they deem degrading although they practice these with pride and confidence abroad. This results in resorting to foreign labor to fill positions in certain sectors (domestic work, sanitation, gas station attendants, farm labor, construction, etc.). It is worth noting that the vigilance of the Lebanese regarding the rights and dignity of their expatriate countrymen is not accompanied by a corresponding vigilance about the rights and dignity of foreign labor in their midst (double standards?). This evident reality cannot be overlooked when addressing the problems of citizenship and rights.

These facts offer a general idea about the nature and magnitude of the problem which we will not analyze in this paper, especially since it cannot be projected on the rest of the waves experienced by Lebanon under Ottoman rule, the French mandate and others. What we are concerned with is the fact that we are standing before a phenomenon of real depletion of the Lebanese workforce or brain drain, which is leaving a mark on all aspects of life, including its quality.

VII.   Conclusion

International migration at the present time is under immense pressure, especially from migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea, and the emigration of Arabs and Muslims in general to the West. Even the migration of Arabs in their own countries, not to mention their touring trips, are extremely diminished (Lebanon and the GCC). If this trend continues in the coming years and decades, its impacts on peoples and nations will have negative repercussions on the issues of acculturation and peace, and will conversely lend strength to the statements of the promoters of radicalism and isolation. International migration has always presented an opportunity for acculturation and for consolidating international peace and security, in addition to driving development and growth in host and exporting countries.

Certainly, this period will not be without substantial challenges, namely, at present, factors connected to the Middle-East and North Africa:

In the countries of origin: mass exodus based on ethnicity or religion, by which these countries lose an irredeemable cultural and human component; youth and brain drain that obstruct aspirations for development and socio-political change;

In host countries: the biggest challenge is the fear of drowning these countries in waves of illegal immigrants who complicate the mission of their integration and assimilation in the host community, knowing that immigrant ghettos have become a recruitment ground of youths by extremist factions.

Lebanese expatriation enjoys unique characteristics some of which we have already touched on. What we wish to emphasize here are characteristics connected to the existing and desired role in the challenges of extremism and marginalization, specifically the role of expatriation in host countries in particular and in reinforcing international cooperation and peace in general:

- Expatriate human capital is largely composed of ambitious, enterprising youths driven by a strong desire to excel. As a result, thousands and thousands of brilliant names can be listed in the world of innovation, business, arts, fashion and literature. It would be impossible to round up the contributions of the Lebanese, the value of their work in the world and the number of jobs they have created; but a sector or localized study can be developed to identify the impact of

the Lebanese community in a particular city, in the fashion industry for example, or during a specific period of time.

- Expatriates always have a positive influence on their home country. Other than money transfers, expatriates champion their national causes in the decision-making capitals of the world. Moreover, they help, through their funds or their personal presence, cool the hotspots of Lebanon, mend its fabric and safeguard its survival.

- For reasons associated with the mosaic composition of Lebanese society or weak governmental authority, Lebanese expatriates have not been known to organize in a cross-border political project. Of course, individual expatriates have sympathized with a current or option, and some have supported certain movements… but no programmed and institutionalized involvement in military or violent conflicts has been ascribed to the Lebanese expatriate body (like Irish immigrants in Boston during the Ireland war, for example).

- Also, expatriates carried with them to their new homes their diversity, doctrines and aspirations – and this should be preserved. This poly-faceted and multi-perspective human-geometric composition allows the Lebanese Diaspora to communicate with interlocutors from different races, classes and backgrounds.

- The Lebanese in their countries of expatriation organize in associations, bodies and networks that consolidate their capacities as engaged civilians (civil sector) aside from being successful in their businesses (private sector). There are thousands of civil organizations founded by the Lebanese worldwide (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website lists 90 organizations in France alone). There are, of course, Diaspora boards that connect expatriates across countries, as well as with host communities. Finally, there are expatriation conferences, the most recent of which was the "Lebanese Diaspora Energy" conference held in Beirut in late May.

Our primary concern is the virtual civil society that Lebanese expatriates are helping shape, meaning those individuals who aspire to justice, freedom and innovation, and who are brought together, in one way or another, by the attracting force that is the creation of a better tomorrow for everyone, wherever they may be.

It is a pizzazz that affects me personally everywhere I meet my fellow countrymen. It is an energy that I see shining through their eyes.

Thank you.

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