

Patrons, Clients And Civil Society: A Case Study Of Environmental Politics In Postwar Lebanon

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WHY HAVE POLITICAL ELITES in Lebanon, not known for their public-mindedness, begun to show interest in questions of the environment? Certainly, their wartime activities provided no hint of an interest in 'green' politics. Indeed, save for the truly 'green line' that separated East and West Beirut, Lebanon suffered untold environmental devastation during the war. Moreover, with the return of peace to the country, the overwhelming priority of the government has been to promote the reconstruction process, an imperative that has relegated many environmental issues to the backburner. Industrial pollution remains a serious issue virtually untouched by government regulations, quarrying has gone on with impunity carving out whole sections of Lebanon's beautiful mountain heritage often to be dumped into the sea as part of the many private sector-led land reclamation projects, and Lebanon's Mediterranean coastline, ostensibly publicly owned, has been increasingly encroached upon by private developers. Yet, it is also undoubtedly true that environmental concerns have become a more prominent part of the 'public domain'. Lebanon now has a Ministry of the Environment, created in 1993; in response to the emergence of local environmental NGOs in the postwar world, the government has also sanctioned the creation of the Lebanese Environmental Forum (LEF), a national NGO environmental coordinating committee; and, in partnership with many of those NGOs, it has also become increasingly involved in issues of conservation through the creation of numerous protected areas. Further distinguishing Lebanon from its neighbors has been the establishment of a local office of Greenpeace, the only one in the Arab region to date.

The most prevalent explanations for movement on environmental issues revolve around the advocacy role of civil society, both local and global. Certainly, since the end of the civil war, Lebanon has seen the rise of a whole host of local NGOs, often supported by international partners, concerned with various aspects of environmental protection. This has been complemented by the increased availability of capital for environmental work from both foreign bilateral and multilateral donors. Hence, both the pressure on and incentives for political elites to become more interested in environmental issues have been present. Yet, this reliance on civil society to explain the emergence of more prominent environmental politics is problematic in Lebanon, not only because civil society is weak and divided, as is the case in many developing countries, but also because the paradigm itself raises more questions than it answers. John and Jean Comaroff, for example, noting its lack of clarity with respect to both its make-up and dynamics, wrote that "the idea of civil society has proven impossibly difficult to pin down. The more its advocates have sought to make it a mantra of sociomoral regeneration and social analysis, the more elusive and ambiguous it has become" (1999, p. 5). Moreover, given the fluid political contexts that exist in many developing countries, it has also proven difficult to locate civil society within the standard state-society frameworks. Rather than witnessing the emergence of clear distinctions between the state and civil society, for example, Chabal and Deloz, in the context of Africa, have observed a more prominent dynamic characterized by "the constant interpenetration and straddling of the one by the other" (1999, p. 17).

To overcome these problems of definition and location, this paper seeks to examine civil society politics in Lebanon within a patron-client rather than a state-society framework. This has two immediate advantages. First, while recognizing that patron-client relations exist in conditions of structural inequality and are often generated by more underlying class dimensions (Gilsenan, 1977), most authors also recognize the resilient and enduring quality of patron-client relations in the developing world, notably in the context of democratization in Latin America (See Hagopian, 1994; and Oxhorn, 1995). Eisenstadt and Roniger, for example, have argued that patron-client networks are "a central mode of regulating socio-political order in many developing societies" (Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1980, p. 42). Moreover, a redirected focus on patron-client relations carries the added advantage of adopting a framework that embodies precisely those features of fluidity and interpenetration that so characterizes politics within many developing societies. As Gellner (1977) has pointed out, patron-clientelism thrives in contexts of transition in which the state, unable to emancipate itself from society, is penetrated by an ever widening, complex, and centralizing series of patron-client networks whose particularistic logic co-exists with and often predominates over the more universalist logic that emanates from states, markets, and civil societies.

At the heart of patron-client relations are a series of exchanges, both generalized and particular, that form the bond between patrons and their

clients (Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1980 and 1984). These clientelist exchanges are entered into freely by both parties with the patron gaining compliance in exchange for protection and resources. The result is the emergence of what James Scott has called "vertical structures of deference" that can perform the useful function of integrating societies in the throws of transition (1977, p. 21). As in any system of domination, however, the stability of these bonds is highly variable. Patrons, for example, will seek to maintain and consolidate their positions of dominance both by controlling as many sources of patronage as possible and by limiting, often coercively, the degree to which they need to redistribute those resources back to their clients. Demands emanating from civil society, on the other hand, while couched in terms of expanding the size of the public realm, are better understood in the context of politics in transition as attempts to expand the scope of clientelist exchanges -- seeking either a greater redistribution of resources within clientelist networks or greater freedom of action outside the terms of the compliance agreements. The result, especially in highly transitional periods such as the postwar era in Lebanon, is a constant series of negotiations both between and within patron-clientelist networks designed to redefine bonds that, although resilient and strong, are never fully legitimated. (Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1980, p. 59).

It is precisely within the framework of these shifting, fragile, and increasingly more complex bonds between patrons and clients that this paper will examine the rise of environmental politics in postwar Lebanon. The paper, first, provides an historical overview of the evolution of patron-client networks during Lebanon's transition from war to peace. After briefly introducing the environmental issues and actors, the paper then examines the ways in which these expanding postwar patron-client networks worked to absorb initiatives in the environmental field both, focusing on two examples: the creation of protected areas financed by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the establishment of national environmental advocacy networks. The final section focuses on a case study of a challenge to these attempts to limit and demobilize environmentalists in Lebanon -- one that emanated, not from civil society, but from the relatively disadvantaged patron-client network. The paper will conclude with some reflections on the emerging relationship between patrons, clients, and civil society in postwar Lebanon.

THE RISE, FALL AND RENEWAL OF PATRON-CLIENT NETWORKS IN LEBANON

Patron-clientelism has deep roots in Lebanon. Indeed, Samir Khalaf has written, "much of the socio-political history of Lebanon may be viewed as the history of various groups and communities seeking to secure patronage" (1977, p. 186). Although formally a consociational democracy with a constitution, a parliament, and regular elections, real political power in Lebanon derives from the informal networks that are governed by the various sectarian elites. These networks have proven incredibly resilient as political elites have adapted with remarkable agility to the ebbing and flowing of opportunities created by the modernization process. The electoral system, based as it is on decentralized confessional representation, works to entrench the local power of elites and makes it very difficult to build cross cutting, nationally based opposition movements (Hudson, 1985; and Richani, 1998). Lebanon's commitment to being a "merchant republic" has also facilitated the accumulation and concentration of vast amounts of wealth amongst its political elite without any institutional obligation for its redistribution, creating the kind of iniquitous conditions upon which patron-clientelism thrives. Finally, elites have responded to the mobilizing and, hence, potentially destructive, dynamic of the modernization process by creating a vast and complex array of social and religious institutions designed to protect and reinforce more particularistic social and political bonds (Khalaf, 1987; and Salam, 1998). Hence, as the more formal political and economic realms have grown and seemingly consolidated themselves, so too have the increasingly complex array of patron-client networks and institutions that underpin them.

This expansion and transformation of patron-client networks in Lebanon came to a halt with the descent into civil war in 1975. With the breakdown of the state, patrons were forced to scramble to consolidate networks at more local and decentralized levels -- grabbing whatever remnants of state power remained within their own regions. Patron-client networks consequently narrowed and returned to their pre-modern territorialized roots. As the scope of patron-client relations was reduced, so were the clientelist bargains that underpinned their cohesion. Security became the overriding commodity in exchange for which the localized elites -- often young militia leaders who had successfully wrestled control of their communities away from the more traditional sectarian leadership -- were granted enormous leeway. Corm, for example, describes the militia leaders as having "a blank check for violence" (1994, p. 226). These highly inequitable and coercive patron-client networks, however, were able to maintain their legitimacy in the early postwar years due to an intensified sense of communal identity, symbolized by the numbers of youth who volunteered for militia service. Further enhancing the freedom of action of wartime communal leaders was their recognition of the political utility of promoting the delivery of social services although as Harik has well pointed out, "there is no doubt that the end games of the various elites were important factors in determining the scope, variety, and vigor with which social action was pursued" (1994, p. 51).

As the war dragged into the mid to late 1980s, however, militia networks increasingly began to be stripped of their legitimacy, revealing what Corm has described as a "war system" whose particularistic economic logic overshadowed any lingering broader political agenda (1994). Looting, extortion, involvement in the trade of drugs, toxic wastes, and contraband, and the theft of foreign humanitarian assistance -- all contributed to a dramatic deterioration of socio-economic conditions for the average Lebanese for which the militias had few answers (Harris, 1997, p. 205-209). This weakening of the bonds of solidarity, stripped even of their utilitarian benefits, led to an increasing number of attempts by nascent elements within Lebanese society to rally under the nonsectarian banner of 'civil society'. The summer and fall of 1987 was the heyday for such demonstrations -- typified by the cross-canton march of the disabled from Tripoli to Tyre in October. Yet, the coercive militia apparatuses proved powerful and resilient, cultivating "an environment of terror" that kept the Lebanese people "besieged and silenced" (Khalaf, 1989). Despite subsequent outbursts of public support for the Aounist populist campaign of national liberation in the late 1980s, these pent-up aspirations on the part of the Lebanese people were further frustrated by Syria's increased hegemony within Lebanon, tacitly backed up by the United States, that tended to work through and, hence, buttress Lebanon's traditional and militia-run clientelist structures (Harris, 1997).

Syria's defeat of Aoun in 1990 and the passage of amendments to the constitution by the Chamber of Deputies as set out in the Ta'if Accord of 1989 brought Lebanon's sixteen year long civil war to an end. As Lebanon entered its postwar phase, it was hoped that the rules agreed to at Ta'if, that included not only a rebalancing of the confessional equation and a redistribution of executive power within the state but also a call for the eventual dissolution of the confessional system itself, would help to stabilize if not reduce sectarian tension. The facade of formal agreement that facilitated the return of the Lebanese state, however, hid a much more unstable reality below. With the dissolution of militia structures (save for Hizbullah), the war between previously warring networks simply moved to the political arena with each trying to secure access to resources at the reconstituted political center -- vital in the reconstruction and expansion of clientelistic structures of power. The stakes were particularly high given the likelihood of increased resource flows to finance the reconstruction program. Yet, with a much more heterogeneous political elite -- now made up of an emerging bourgeoisie with stronger links to the regional and global marketplace than to Lebanon, and militia leaders given a blanket amnesty for their wartime activities in addition to the resilient *zu'ama* and old administrative elites -- the political consensus needed to distribute these resources was extremely fragile, unstable and full of contradictions. (Krayem, 1997). Competition between the various expanding networks of patronage has, thus, been intense and, had it not been for the hegemonic arbitration of Syria, it is likely that this would have spilled over into violence.

Complicating this process of reconsolidation, however, was the bursting forth of pressure from below from the Lebanese client population that had suffered at the hands of the militia-run entities and whose socio-economic positions were fast deteriorating in the immediate postwar world. Symbolized by the public demonstrations and protests in 1992 that brought down the Karami government and brought in that of Rafik Hariri, the Saudi-backed entrepreneur, it was clear that the Lebanese wanted a better redistributive bargain. The response by Lebanon's elites to these demands -- combining policies of cooptation and repression -- reveals much about how clientelist networks have been reconstructed in postwar Lebanon and what their relationship is to Lebanon's fledgling civil society. These battles took place within a number of regions of the country and concerned a variety of functional areas of concerns. They were further fueled by the emergence of international assistance, often channeled to NGOs, which tended to heighten the political stakes between patronage networks and their clients. It is to these battles between patrons, clients, and civil society over the state of Lebanon's environment that we turn to now.

ENVIRONMENT ISSUES AND ACTORS IN POSTWAR LEBANON

Environmental activism came late to Lebanon. Despite the global rise of a 'green' agenda in the 1980s, environmental action in wartime Lebanon was restricted to limited and local campaigns of tree planting and the collection of solid waste. With the immobilization of state organizations nominally concerned with environmental issues and the splintering of nationally focused environmental NGOs such as the Friends of Nature (FON) -- which saw its prewar position of 37 branches and over 3,700 members virtually evaporate (Interview with Ricardo Haber, 8 April 1999) -- Lebanon was left with few advocates for the environment at the national level at the end of the war.

The international donor community has tried to fill this vacuum. The World Bank, the UNDP and its affiliate Global Environment Facility (GEF), USAID in addition to many international environmental NGOs such as Greenpeace and IUCN -- all have become involved in providing funding and advice to Lebanese environmental policy makers. The Lebanese state has responded in part, creating in 1993 its first Ministry of the Environment

(MOE). But, the institutional apparatus and policy framework remains woefully inadequate. The MOE has little capacity or power in the area of monitoring and environmental impact assessments, its enforcement powers are non-existent, and its budgetary resources are miniscule (UNDP, 1998, p. 32-34). Moreover, the MOE must compete with nine other ministries and eight other governmental institutions in trying to carry out its mandate (Masri, 1999). This fragmented policy making structure leaves the Lebanese government inadequately prepared to deal with the numerous environmental problems that face its reconstruction efforts -- ones that include inadequate waste disposal systems especially for toxic industrial and hospital waste, increased pollution of air, water and sea resources, and the total absence of any land use planning regime that can deal with the severe problems of soil erosion, deforestation, and urban and coastline sprawl. The UNDP estimates that Lebanon loses up to \$300 million/year in social costs as a result of environmental degradation (UNDP, 1998, p. 19).

In an attempt to fill this void, NGOs have emerged as Lebanon's most active environmental players. They have been involved in a wide range of campaigns and issues most of which have been at the local level. Indeed, the 1990s are full of stories of individuals, communities, and NGOs campaigning against environmentally destructive activity. From nadi al-tadamun's and Greenline's campaign against the extraction of sand from the Tyre beaches in 1991, to the early activism of the Lebanese Society of Environment in the Metn region -- now Green Forum -- against the unregulated opening of quarries in the area, to the Greenpeace supported campaigns against the unresolved issue of wartime dumping of toxic waste, to the outbreak of what one environmentalist described as the Arab world's "first environmental intifada" in the Beirut suburb of Hey al-Sollum that destroyed a waste incinerator polluting the area in 1997 (Interview with Fuad Hamdan, 4 March 1999) -- Lebanon has seen a relative explosion of local environmental activism in the postwar period.

Yet, periodic successes in environmental activism at the local level have produced little comprehensive, national change. Even Greenpeace, whose links outside of Lebanon have given it an autonomy that local NGOs lack, was at best able to describe its successes in Lebanon as tactical. "The big things", remarked Greenpeace's first representative in Lebanon, Fuad Hamdan, "are still moving in the wrong direction" (Interview, 4 March 1999). As we shall see, much of the explanation for this constrained success lies in the political arena. Yet, Lebanon's environmental NGO community by no means has its own act together. Apart from the endemic problems relating to inadequate funding, Lebanon's 'greens' have had a difficult time reaching a consensus on what their own environmental agenda or 'frame' should be. Much of this difficulty is inherent to environmentalism and revolves around the ambiguity of slogans such as 'sustainable development' which allow both for accommodation with and challenges to the kind of growth oriented agendas that are embodied in Lebanon's postwar reconstruction program (Adams, 1993). Torgeson has argued, for example, that the green movement faces a problem of identity because it has no "well-defined center" and "lacks a clear oppositional stance" -- all of which makes it very difficult to formulate an effective "strategic posture" (1999, p. 2).

It is not that the range of diversity within Lebanese environmentalism is all that great. There are few deep ecologists or eco-socialists of any note, for example. Nonetheless, the fissures in Lebanon's environmental movement are real, differing over the degree to which environmental work should be linked to broader issues of development. The tendency with the deepest roots in Lebanon places greater emphasis on issues of conservation -- an agenda that goes back to the work of George Tome in the NSRC in the 1960s who successfully pushed for the creation of some of Lebanon's first natural reserves. In the latter years of the war, this call was reinvigorated by Ricardo Habre, a former botanist at the American University of Beirut, who actively worked to revive interest in creating and managing protected areas in order to preserve Lebanon's remarkable biological diversity. In the late 1980s, Habre convinced Suleiman Franjeh, the patron of Zhgorta region, along with seven other leading families in the region, to assist in the protection of Horsh Ehden -- which he described as "a paradise" consisting of over 39 species of trees alone -- and by the early 1990s, he had also cultivated interest among local groups in Tripoli for the protection of the Palm Islands. By 1992, Habre's efforts culminated in the formal establishment of Horsh Ehden and the Palm Islands as protected areas by the Council of Ministers.

The second tendency in Lebanon's environmental movement was more concerned to link issues of the environment with broader issues of development. It included local citizen groups concerned about the destructive effect of reconstruction related activities such as quarrying and waste disposal, scientists and academics concerned to apply their knowledge in more socially-active ways, and those with more explicitly political inclinations that saw in environmentalism "a new framework for political action" that could unify people across ideological and sectarian divides into a loosely knit "movement" structure (Interview with Mirvat Abu Khalil, 26 March 1999; and with Shade Hamadeh, 29 March 1999). These groups have come together in what Tarrow calls "an unplanned convergence of meaning" (1994, P. 124) to form an informal network which has campaigned on a number of sensitive environmental issues. However, while diverse in makeup, representing a variety of issues, localities, and

strategies, it is symbolically led by Lebanon's two most prominent national environmental NGOs, Green Line and Green Forum, both of which are made up of an alliance of professors, university students, and concerned citizens.

These two agendas were not necessarily contradictory. Indeed, one of Green Line's first projects was to promote a grass-roots reforestation network. Similarly, there are many conservationists in Lebanon who have proven to be outspoken critics of the government's exclusive emphasis on growth and reconstruction. Nevertheless, this potential symbiosis between the two tendencies within environmentalism in Lebanon -- vital if one is to see the emergence of a more powerful environmental movement in the country -- has not developed. Certainly, this spilt is in part the results of differences over ideas, interests, and identities within the environmental community as a whole. Yet, fractious as that community may be, one cannot understand the disabling of Lebanon's 'greens' without placing that divisiveness in what Torgeson calls "the hostile context of power" (1999, p. 20). What we turn to now is an examination of that context of power with respect to conservation and networking activities in postwar Lebanon -- one that will reveal the effective manner in which local political elites in Lebanon have captured donor funds, 'greened' their patronage networks, and cultivated clients within the environmental movement as a whole.

PATRONS, DONORS AND LOCAL CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

One of the more high profile environmental initiatives in Lebanon has been the establishment of protected areas. Reserves were not new ideas in Lebanon, as we have seen, but because they commanded few public resources, political interest in them was limited. This changed with the creation of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) at UNCED in 1992 -- a fund designed to provide seed capital for the creation of biosphere reserves. By 1994, an exploratory mission by an expert from the World Conservation Union (IUCN) -- one of the implementing agencies for the GEF along with the UNDP -- recommended that GEF fund the establishment of three protected areas in Lebanon: the Arz al-Shouf reserve in the Shouf mountains, the Palms Islands reserve off the coast of Tripoli and Horsh Eddin in the nearby Zghorta region. Concerned about the weak capacity of Lebanon's state, impressed by the apparent dynamism of Lebanon's nascent environmental NGO community, and influenced by global interest in community-based conservation techniques, IUCN also recommended that NGOs be given a prominent managerial role.

The formal emphasis on NGOs within a 'civil society' framework, however, obscured a more fundamental reality within postwar Lebanon -- that such territorially based development activities would also need the acquiescence of local political strongmen who would not tolerate autonomous activity within their own territorial spheres of influence. With respect to the GEF-funded reserves, however, their interest went beyond the mere prevention of independent activity. Their involvement also offered real advantages in the form of access to development capital, the provision of patronage opportunities, and perhaps most importantly, the solidification of de facto control over valuable pieces of territory. Patrons in whose spheres of influence GEF funded reserves were being established, thus, sought to ensure that the NGOs chosen to manage them operated, first and foremost, on the basis of political loyalty. Compliance would have to come before conservation.

The ease with which such informal regimes of compliance were established depended on a number of factors: the degree of territorial control exercised by the local za'im, the strength and commitment of the NGO, and the extent of public interest in and use of the reserve in question. The strongest regime of compliance was established in the Arz al-Shouf reserve by Walid Jumblatt who created his own NGO (the Arz al-Shouf Cedar Society) of which he is the chairman to manage the reserve and refused to allow the appointment of a local government committee to oversee its activities -- a stipulation that had originally been part of the legislation as passed in 1992 (Interview with Lamia Mansour, 25 May 1999). A looser regime of compliance has emerged with respect to the Palm Islands reserve off the coast of the northern city of Tripoli. Here, Omar Karami, while a less entrenched political strongman than Jumblatt, has gained important political capital by forcing the locally-based NGO, the Environmental Protection Committee (EPC), through the generation and manipulation of public sentiment, to compromise on the strict conservation-oriented parameters of the project by increasing the access of citizens and fishermen to the popular resource rich islands. While EPC has some degree of financial autonomy, given that it is supported by an independent benefactor, it has nonetheless not proved strong enough to resist the penetration of its 'functional' space by the Tripoli's expanding patron-client networks.

The extension of patron-client politics into the field of conservation, however, is most clear in the case of the reserve at Horsh Ehden. As was the case in Tripoli and unlike the situation in the Shouf, the Zghorta region has been a more open political field, characterized by competition between the Franjeh clan that has generally been the region's most pre-eminent, especially given its alliance with the Syrians, and a variety of lesser

families represented by the Mouawad clan. This competition has been intensified by the need for Suleiman Franjeh's son, Suleiman Jr. who has inherited his father's position as clan leader, to reassert if not extend his network of control within the region. With the injection of GEF finance, Horsh Ehden became an attractive if seemingly easy target -- especially given that his wife was a member of the local implementing NGO called the Friends of Horsh Eddin (FoHE). However, blocking effective co-optation of the FoHE was the work and reputation of Ricardo Habre. It was his negotiations with the Franjiehs and the various families in the more immediate vicinity of the forest that resulted in the initial regime of protection in the latter years of the war; it was also due to his initiative that the FoHE was first established -- indeed, some of the founding members were his former students at the AUB; and it was his intensive public awareness raising and lobbying efforts that facilitated the official designation of Horsh Ehden as a reserve in 1992. Indeed, when the government moved to create the first local supervisory committee, Habre's wife and fellow botanist, Myrna, was appointed as one of its members. Moreover, Habre was a committed botanist, first and foremost, willing to use political influence to promote his interests yet unwilling to compromise on his goals for the sake of political expediency. It is unlikely, for example, that Habre would have made the kind of compromises in the face of political pressure that EPC has in the case of the Palm Islands.

In order to reassert his own authority with respect to the reserve, Franjeh has used a variety of means to 'clip Habre's wings' and have all traces of his influence removed from the reserve. Pressure, for example, has been exerted on the FoHE to ensure that those hired on to the management team with GEF finance were chosen on the basis of their loyalty to Franjeh, not on their professional competence. The result has been the emergence of huge splits within FoHE and the virtual absence of any progress on the ground. It was also apparent that pressure was exerted on the MOE not to appoint Myrna Haber to a second term on the local committee in 1995, thus neutralizing its influence. Finally, Habre's appointment as Project Manager for the entire GEF project, despite his having been initially offered the job by the MOE, ran into 'political' obstacles and was rescinded. (Interview with Ricardo Haber, 8 April 1999; and Najib Saab, 19 April 1999).

Complicating the politics surrounding the reserve at Horsh Ehden, however, has been the dangerous mixing of the above issues of political loyalty with those of economic opportunity. The forests of Ehden are at the foot of an isolated mountain top region called the Makmel -- the development of which could have serious and negative implications for the forests and the communities that lived around them. When rumors surfaced of plans to develop resorts there -- plans that could not have gone ahead without the approval if not participation of the Franjiehs', divisions already apparent within the FoHE between 'loyalists' and 'conservationists' became intractable. With those under "the Franjeh umbrella" refusing to allow the FoHE to be used as a platform for discussion, the latter have launched a variety of independent campaigns outside the confines of the FoHE aimed at blocking the Makmel development -- distributing petitions within the area, openly supporting candidates in the municipal elections of 1998 that spoke out against the development of the highlands, and forming their own separate NGO called the Committee for the Protection of the Ehden Highlands and Makmel Mountains (Interview with Tony Saade, 24 May 1999; and Pierre Mouawad, 25 May 1999; Haddad, 2000). The 'loyalists' have fought back, working to have the more independent members of the FoHE expelled from the NGO and continuing to reject the appointment of qualified but potentially disloyal candidates to key positions within the management team of the reserve. So disruptive have these attempts been to 'cleanse' the project of those with a wider environmental agenda and pull the reserve of Horsh Edhen into Franjeh's patron-client network that it has been in danger of losing its GEF funding.

None of this is surprising to those caught up in the politics of Horsh Edhen. As Pierre Mouawad, part of the 'conservationist faction within the FoHE, remarked, "a za'im's interests are political; they are not ecological and you're not going to have sustainable protection of the forest if you're dependent on Franjeh" (Interview, 25 May, 1999). Facilitated by the decentralized NGO-focused nature of the project that has weakened the ability of international donors, the MOE, or the local committees to play an effective policy-making role, patrons, through careful and deliberate interventions, have been able to ensure the appointment of compliant figures at a variety of levels--the MOE, the local committees, and the NGO themselves. While conservation work has gone ahead, particularly in the Shouf where the process of absorption has been most smooth, the overall effect of IUCN's NGO-focused project was the provision of an opportunity for locally based sectarian leaders to set up their own externally-funded 'environmental monopolies' in their self-declared areas of control. It goes without saying that these run contrary to IUCN's stated goal of promoting the creation of sustainable systems of grass-roots conservation.

PATRONS, CLIENTS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY NETWORKS

The greater threat to the power and status of political elites in Lebanon, however, has not come from the local but the national arena. At their root,

patron-client networks rely on a mix of resources, symbols, and violence to sustain themselves. Certainly, patrons have proven adept at co-opting modern agendas, such as environmentalism, to bolster their symbolic power. They have also shown their willingness to use violence, or the threat of violence, to enforce the implicit terms of relations between clients and citizens. However, the most underlying source of power, especially in the context of modernization where ascriptive symbols lose their salience, revolves around the accumulation of what the literature on patron-client relations terms 'first order' resources -- those directly generated and controlled by political elites as distinct from 'second order' resources that emanate indirectly from such sources as the state and foreign donors. What is clear with respect to Lebanon's postwar political-economy is that its neo-liberal oriented reconstruction program -- one that translates in the Lebanese context into the virtual absence of any meaningful state regulation of economic activities -- has facilitated the unchecked accumulation of enormous wealth by the political elites. Malik has referred to this phenomenon as the "politics of tycoonism" and its results are readily visible with respect to its environmentally destructive activities (Malik, 1997). Quarrying, the illegal dumping of waste, some of it toxic, and the unregulated projects of reclamation and construction along Lebanon's Mediterranean coast -- all of this has contributed to the emergence of "islands of the 'super rich' among the vast expanses of the poor" (Malik, 1997, p. 64) and has certainly served to replenish the stock of 'first order' resources upon which Lebanon's patron-client system ultimately depends (See also Denoeux and Springborg, 1998; Haddad, 1996).

As a way of challenging this unrestricted and environmentally destructive accumulation of economic resources by Lebanon's political elite, environmentalists recognized the importance of supplementing their local activities with advocacy campaigns at the national level. Indeed, within a year of the end of the war, the leading players in Lebanon's emerging community of environmental NGOs established the Lebanese Environmental Forum (LEF) -- an officially sanctioned NGO coordinating committee that, at its outset, included members from both environmental tendencies. By the late-1990s, membership in the LEF had grown to over 50 NGOs (Interview with Assad Serhal, 1 April 1999). LEF, however, has never fulfilled its promise of generating common and forceful stands on environmental issues. Indeed, as we shall see, its existence has proven more of a divisive than a unifying force within Lebanese civil society -- divisions which political elites have both generated and capitalized on to keep its advocacy work at bay.

Most of the original members of LEF, for example, were of an older generation -- steeped in a more conservative and confessional mindset; "it is like an archive!" commented one of LEF's original foreign backers (Interview with Samir Farah, 13 April 1999). They seemed generally wary of taking 'political' stances on issues and preferred to cooperate with rather than agitate against the reemerging government. When the Greenline representative suggested at LEF's first organizational meeting in Tripoli that they, as a group, make a statement against the extraction of sands from the beaches in Tyre, an enterprise that would have brought them into confrontation with the Jumblatt and Berri empires, the majority of the representatives vetoed the suggestion and turned their attention to the more pressing proposal of sponsoring the creation of a series of environmental stamps (Interview with Mirvat Abu Khalil, 23 May 1999)! While Greenline has maintained its membership in LEF in the eventual hope of reforming it from within, many of Lebanon's more active environmentalist -- notably Ricardo Habre and Abdullah Zakia, a leading environmental lawyer in the country -- packed up and left (Interview with Ricardo Haber, 2 April 1999; and Abdullah Zakia, 23 May 1999).

A more serious factor contributing to LEF's ineffectiveness as a forum for advocacy has been, paradoxically, its success as a channel for development finance. It was clear from the start, for example, that LEF's main focus was to lobby for and determine how to distribute GEF funds for the creation of protected areas. Indeed, given that many of its members have benefited or are slated to benefit from the creation of protected areas, LEF has performed this part of its de facto mandate with great efficiency. Assad Serhal, for example, who as IUCN's local representative was instrumental in both bringing the protected areas project to Lebanon and in setting up LEF -- being elected its second president -- has gone on to become the project manager of the Arz al-Shouf reserve and has subsequently spent time in jail on charges of corruption. Not only does this serve to scatter the environmental movement in Lebanon as NGOs depart from the national scene and become bogged down in the day-today routine of project management, it also transforms LEF into a mechanism for particularistic rather than public gain.

However, the real concern among environmental activists is not that LEF has been instrumentalized by a number of self-seeking NGOs and individuals -- itself not a particularly surprising development. Rather, the main concern is that LEF has been penetrated by and absorbed into Lebanon's expanding postwar patron-client networks. While this process has been facilitated by the existence of NGOs eager to be part of a co-optive bargain, it is also the result of a deliberate decision on the part of interested political elites to plant their own NGOs within LEF itself. The most obvious one is Amwaj al-Bi'a established by Randa Berri, the wife of the speaker of the parliament, who has herself become a grand patron

within the development field within the south. Described by its first president as "an NGO without people" (Interview with Abbas Fawaz, 8 April 1999), Amwaj al-Bi'a has quickly established a dominant foothold within LEF and has jealously held the position of Secretary-General for the last few years. The effect of this penetration by patron-client networks into LEF is clear. In exchange for access to the financial spoils of environmental work, members of LEF have turned a blind eye to the environmentally degrading activities of Lebanon's entrepreneurial elite. It is what Abdullah Zakia has called "le compromis tabouli" (Interview, 23 May 1999). Be it with respect to industrial pollution, the discovery of toxic wastes in the country, or the campaign to prevent the privatization of the shoreline, LEF has either been silent on these issues or has been muted and late in its participation in advocacy campaigns begun by others. "They never take stands on anything", remarked Samir Farah, the head of the German funding agency Friedrich Eberhardt Stiftung, in explaining the decision of his agency to withdraw its support for LEF (Interview, 13 April, 1999). Moreover, attempts to create an alternative and more forceful official national environmental coalition have been blocked by the unwillingness of the Minister of the Interior throughout much of the 1990s, Michel Murr, who has his own connections within LEF and is heavily involved in the quarry business, to give it official authorization. It is clear that behind the 'civil society' facade of LEF lies a more deep-rooted patron-client reality. Hence, through both the capture of environmental surpluses at the local level as well as through the penetration of environmental advocacy work at the national level, Lebanon's political elites have proved successful in co-opting, fragmenting, and ultimately narrowing the scope of environmental activity in the country.

ENVIRONMENTALISM, CIVIL SOCIETY AND INTRA-ELITE POLITICS

The most sustained and forceful attempt to expand the scope of environmental activism in Lebanon has not emanated from civil society at all but from a rival but disadvantaged patron-client network of the Druze community under the leadership of Walid Jumblatt. While solidly in control of the Shouf region, the position of the Druze within Lebanon's confessional system of power as a whole has declined considerably from its heady prewar days in the 1960s and 1970s under the leadership of his father, Kemal Jumblatt. Prior to the war, the Druze community compensated for its small size by adopting a more progressive political position, much as the Alawites had done in Syria, that served to nibble away at the client base of rival networks -- a strategy that worked to dangerous perfection through the creation of both the Progressive People's Party (PSP) and the Lebanese National Movement. With the demise of the political left in the postwar Lebanon, Jumblatt, eager to expand his power base, was rumored to be considering environmentalism as a potential new political platform. With the appointment of a Jumblatt supporter, Akram Chehayeb, as Minister of the Environment in 1996 (in what turned out to be Jumblatt's consolation prize after having lost the Ministry of Health in the cabinet reshuffle of that year), Jumblatt already felt to have a personal interest in environmental questions, found himself with a chance to test the environmental waters in Lebanon and, if found suitable, to prepare "un terrain politique" (Interviews with Abdullah Zakia, 23 May 1999; and Hani Abu Fadil, 21 May 1999).

Chehayeb turned out to be an energetic and effective Minister of the Environment. Bolstered by the injection of finance and personnel from the UNDP's Capacity 21 program, Chehayeb emerged as a forceful proponent of the kind of broad environmental agenda that had hitherto been pushed off the table. Backed by Jumblatt's decision to close some of his own quarries, Chehayeb campaigned forcefully against the indiscriminant opening of quarries and called for the formulation and implementation of a master plan that could regulate their activities. He also gave his active support for the campaign by Lebanon's informal network of sustainable development-minded environmental NGOs against the attempt by the parliament to lease coastline property for 50 years. In fact, on the day of the vote, Chehayeb left his seat in the parliament and joined the NGOs in their demonstrations -- a gesture that ultimately helped to block the bill from passing and led his top adviser to comment that the MOE under Chehayeb's leadership acted more like an NGO than a government institution (Interview with Munir Abu Ghanem, 25 March 1999). Chehayeb also made efforts to create an administrative infrastructure that could outlast his stay in the MOE, establishing a broader legal mandate for the work of the MOE backed by the proposed formation of an inter-departmental Higher Council for the Environment and establishing contacts with both the private sector and with the newly emerging municipalities that many hoped would be able to fill the vacuum in environmental policy in the country.

However, what is particularly interesting about the Chehayeb ministry is the degree to which it received the support of Lebanon's informal network of sustainable development environmental NGOs. It was clear to them, for example, that Chehayeb was intimately connected to Jumblatt -- whose ultimate position in Lebanon was that of a sectarian leader eager to solidify his political power. Yet, they also saw in their alliance with Chehayeb a chance, not only to increase the degree to which resources might be redistributed toward environmental concerns; they also saw its potential to

broaden the frame around which debates about the environment were placed in Lebanon -- a frame that linked environmental questions to broader concerns about 'sustainable human development'. Hence, some of Lebanon's leading environmental figures and organizations -- Abdullah Zakia, Yusuf Tuq, Paul Abi Rashid and those associated with Green Forum and Greenline -- all gave Chehayeb their utmost support, transforming his ministry into one of the more dynamic and public-spirited ones in Hariri's government.

However, Chehayeb's -- and Jumblatt's -- environmental campaign turned out to be of limited significance. Apart from the success in preventing the passage of the law privatizing the coastline, Chehayeb left behind few lasting legacies. His campaign for a more systematic approach towards quarrying in Lebanon has met with little success; as one activist remarked, "the ones who have quarries are much stronger than Jumblatt" (Interview with Hani Abu Fadil, 21 May 1999). Neither was he able to promote a national program of waste recycling despite the considerable amount of time spent on the issue. Perhaps his greatest failure, however, was his inability to institutionalize the linkages between the (Druze controlled) MOE and the more progressive group of environmental NGOs -- crucial in testing the political potential of environmentalism in the country. The stumbling block proved to be the sectarian backed LEF who, at a series of conferences in 1998, were able to 'democratically' oppose, by virtue of their greater albeit politically induced numbers, a restructuring of the executive committee in such a way that would have given its sustainable development opponents an equal voice in policymaking. The proceedings, therefore, collapsed leaving one of the most important goals of Chehayeb's agenda in tatters. Challenged by the resistance of sectarian elites both within Hariri's cabinet and, more indirectly, through the channel of NGOs, Chehayeb's ministry, while active and dynamic, failed in the end to make any fundamental progress with respect to the promotion of a national approach to Lebanon's serious problems of environmental degradation. Perhaps even more damaging for environmentalism in Lebanon in the long run, Chehayeb's failure also signified the end, at least in the near future, of the Jumblatt's wider attempt to test the strength of Lebanon's network of environmental organizations to see whether they held any potential for the creation of a vibrant 'green' coalition that could challenge the existing distribution of power within Lebanon's confessional system.

Clientelist practices have proved resilient in Lebanon and have endured transitions both into war and now back into peace. This resilience has been fueled by the ability of patrons to control access to surplus and, hence, maintain a fundamental inequality within society. In Lebanon, these surpluses have emanated from a variety of sources: old feudal family wealth, wealth gained from entrepreneurial activities and connections outside of Lebanon, as well as the resources tied to the reemerging political arena. The viability of this system depends upon the ability of these competing patron-client networks to agree both to a formula for the distribution of these political resources amongst themselves as well as to their clients below. It is the bargaining around these latter mechanisms of exchange between patrons and clients -- targeting the field of environmental politics -- with which this paper has been concerned.

It is important to emphasize that patronage networks are inherently unstable and constantly need to be renegotiated and realigned in the face of the many demands and challenges that come their way from both within and below. This has certainly been the case in Lebanon, note Hudson's comment that, in Lebanon, "reform movements are as routine as corruption" (Hudson, 1968, p. 6) and this vulnerability has been particularly great in the immediate postwar period given the uncertain nature of the postwar settlement. With respect to the rise of environmentalism, this vulnerability has translated into concerted efforts to fend off demands from clients in two ways. First, patrons have successfully worked to monopolize control over the distribution of development finance for environmental activities within their own territorial spheres of influence. This is clearly seen in the case of the GEF funded protected area projects where local patrons have forced responsible NGOs into a working framework based, first and foremost, on compliance rather than conservation. At the national level, however, this kind of more direct control is more difficult to achieve given the complex and diffuse nature of patronage networks. Patrons, therefore, have sought to dilute and diffuse the threatening demands emanating from this less controlled environment, either through a process of co-optation and/or penetration of civil society groups below. In the context of environmental politics in Lebanon, both of these strategies have been executed successfully in the case of LEF. While this extension of patron-client networks into the environmental field in Lebanon has not been completely dysfunctional -- note the 'greening' of their locally based networks through their involvement in conservation activities -- these tactical successes do not add up to any fundamental forward progress. Indeed, in many ways, they serve to strengthen patron-client networks by providing them with a new veneer of legitimacy.

It is the argument here that civil society within Lebanon must be understood in the context of these negotiated relationships between patrons and clients rather than in a more conventional state-society framework. This helps to both clarify and reduce its analytical significance. Civil society, for example, emerges as one of three players in the environmental field. It seeks to eliminate altogether the constraining and dominating nature of

patron-client networks as opposed to the 'client' groups that merely seek a greater piece of the patrimonial pie -- a distinction symbolized by the differences between the informal network of NGOs huddled around Green Forum and the LEF. While civil society groups may create their own independent public spheres of activity and dialogue, it is also clear, however, that they have not been able to penetrate or transcend the patrimonial logic of environmental politics. Indeed, there is much evidence that their activities feed into that logic, providing client groups with greater bargaining power in their demands for a greater redistribution of resources. Hence, the efforts of civil society groups remain, at best, scattered and ineffective. That the most forceful attempt to promote environmentalism in Lebanon emanated from within the patron-client system itself attests to the weaknesses of civil society in countries dominated by resilient patterns of patron-client relations.

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