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EFFECTS OF SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS ON THE  
EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND  
EXPECTATIONS OF THE LEBANESE ARMENIAN  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by  
LORY HARBOYAN

Approved by:

Dr. Ahlam Klailat

Advisor

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
to the Department of Education  
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
at the Haigazian Univeristy

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Beirut, Lebanon  
June 2001

Date of thesis defense: June 2001

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# HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY

## THESIS RELEASE FORM

I would like to thank the following who followed my thesis preparation and writing closely, provided professional guidance, and never ceased to encourage me. Special thanks are to my two readers, Dr. David Tawil and Rev. Dr. Paul Haddad, who accepted to offer their sound advice and suggestions for my research.

I am also deeply grateful to Miss Najwa Naar, for helping me out on statistical computations and interpretations.

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I am also deeply grateful to Miss Najwa Nasr, for helping me out on the data entry, statistical computations and interpretations.

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## ABSTRACT

The current study examined the effects of socioeconomic status on high school students' educational aspirations and expectations. Two other variables, academic achievement and significant others' influence, were studied as influential factors in students' post-high school destinations. The arguments were based on Hyman's class-differentiated value system, and Sewell's social-psychological model for educational attainment. The target sample was the Lebanese Armenian youth attending Armenian schools in Lebanon. The instrument used to collect the data was a 30-item questionnaire that was answered by 211 Lebanese Armenian eleventh grade students. Results of the stepwise regression analyses showed that socioeconomic status had some significant predictive power over students' general and educational values, and was an influential determinant of the subjects' educational expectations but not aspirations. A highly significant difference was obtained between students' educational aspirations and expectations. Reported academic achievement—mainly the official Brevet examination scores—and significant others' influence were also related to the subjects' post-high school plans.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **A. Specification of the Problem and Its Background**

The issue of social stratification has been a major field of interest for the Social Sciences. Although theorists have not reached a consensus about the topic, they nevertheless all agree on the indisputable role that socioeconomic status (SES) and education play in the process of social stratification. The fields of Education and more specifically Sociology of Education have reflected immensely on the relationship between education and social stratification on the macro level. The result has been a huge body of research in support of one or another of the few theoretical conceptualizations on social stratification, mainly those pertaining to the Functional or the Conflict theories of education. Such attempts have been carried out by studying various aspects of education on the micro level—mainly the classroom—in order to support respective theories on the macro level of education. The present research study is such an attempt, aiming at examining closely the relationship between SES and educational aspirations/expectations of Lebanese Armenian high school



students attending Armenian schools in Lebanon, guided by hypotheses postulated by different educational sociologists.

During the past decades, the attainment of higher education has increasingly acted as the prerequisite for occupational achievement, which in turn has served as the medium for upward mobility (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Mizruchi, 1964). In the meantime, educational requirements have increased at all levels of the occupational hierarchy (Collins, 1971). The present paper is not concerned with the question of whether or not better-educated people perform any differently. Instead, the focus is on the feasibility of the attainment of higher education for students coming from all social strata. If college/university education is responsible for upward mobility, then any individual with a college/university degree will have the opportunity to move up the social ladder. But to what extent do high school students coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds share common educational values? To what extent do they aspire and expect to achieve higher education? What are the external/environmental variables that influence students' future educational plans? These are the main questions that this paper addresses.

Literature is rich with research conducted about the interrelationships between such variables as student social class,

school social status, educational expectations/aspirations, achievement, and performance evaluation (Brantlinger, 1992; Haller & Butterworth, 1960; Herriott, 1963; Mare, 1981; Rehberg & Westby, 1967; Sewell, Haller, & Straus, 1957; Teachman, 1987). According to these studies, compulsory education does not necessarily pave the way for post-high school education, since the latter is open to those who are already “destined” for college (Brantlinger, 1992). In a study focusing on low-income teenagers, Brantlinger concludes that her subjects expect and are tolerant of second-class status, as they blame themselves for their lack of success in school. Lower-class individuals seem to be valuing college education relatively less than middle-class individuals. Others (Keller & Zavalloni, 1964), however, believe that motivation to realize success goals cannot be measured as a constant, since these same goals are not equally accessible to all the social classes. In other words, each social stratum has its own class-specific strains and difficulties that shape and influence an individual’s future orientation.

Class differences in vertical mobility are often explained from a psycho-cultural dimension of stratification, focusing on the differences in motives and values of individuals coming from different social classes. Rosen (1956) has carried out an attempt

to find data on differential value orientations, by studying the achievement motivation and value orientations of high school sophomores. According to his findings, members of the middle and upper classes have higher need achievement and value scores than those from lower classes. His data also reveal a significant relationship between achievement motivation and value orientation on the one hand, and grades and educational aspirations on the other.

Keller and Zavalloni (1964) and Rosen (1956) are among many whose conclusions reflect Hyman's class-differentiated value system. According to Hyman (1953), individuals internalize beliefs in differentiated opportunities, goals, and strivings and expectancies for success, all depending upon the social class to which one belongs. As for the value placed on formal education in specific, Hyman concludes that the value on higher education increases with higher-class positions. The opposing side of the argument comes from those who believe that any given society reflects a system of common values. Merton (1965) states that because human beings behave according to common shared basic values, one can speak of the existence of societies. In other words, it is this common value system which is responsible for what we call a "society". Unlike Hyman who believes in class-differential

expectancies for success, Merton (1965) postulates that striving for success “is regarded as appropriate for everyone, irrespective of his initial lot or station in life” (p. 167).

In attempts to resolve the contradictions between the above-mentioned two value systems, Rodman (1963), and later on Han (1969), come up with their own propositions. Rodman agrees with both Hyman’s and Merton’s views, stating that one complements the other. According to him, when studying value systems, one should focus on the reactions of the lower-class individuals in order to understand the existing contradictions between the common values and class-differentiated value systems. All individuals in a given society share common values, nevertheless, members of certain social classes tend to “stretch” these values in order to come up with alternative sets of values which help them adjust to their specific social contexts (Rodman, 1963). Thus, Rodman’s “lower-class value stretch” suggests that members of different classes possess neither different nor common values, but that they develop different forms of the same values—a wider range of values, depending on the strains and difficulties faced by their own specific social class. Han’s (1969) reconciliation attempt is based on his distinction between circumstance-free wishes and circumstance-bound expectations. He asserts that individuals in

society tend to have both, wishes and expectations, with the latter being strongly influenced and affected by perceptions of restricted reality. Thus, Han, like Rodman, supports both the common value and class-differentiated value systems, based on the distinctions drawn between wishes and expectations respectively.

Returning to the field of social stratification as related to education, research in the field has gone even further and identified specific family factors which may influence adolescents' future educational plans. Although variables vary from one research to another, according to Rehberg and Westby (1967) four common factors can be identified among the hundreds of studies conducted on this topic: father's occupational level, parents' educational level, intensity of parental educational pressure/encouragement, and family size. Each of these factors has proven to influence students' post-high school plans either negatively or positively, and to different extents. In their discussion, Rehberg and Westby (1967) draw a connection between the adolescents' internalized values and their parents' expectations. Parental encouragement, as one form of socialization, links the social structure of the individual to the individual himself/herself. Through this socialization process,

parents convey their values and goals to their children, who in turn translate these as their own and internalize them.

Along with parental motivation and aspiration level, Bell (1963) has studied the possible influence of different reference groups on male adolescents' aspirations. He concludes that interaction with higher status reference groups is positively associated with youth aspirations. Nevertheless, a distinction is drawn again between upper-middle and lower-middle prestige groups; the former are considered a source of high aspirational motivations, while the latter are found to be satisfied with their positions in life (Bell, 1963).

In a similar study, Herriott (1963) focuses his attention on reference groups, stating that status variables such as family income and family education have some predictive power because of their association with other social variables. Two sources of influence on an individual's level of aspiration are isolated: "the level of his self-assessment relative to others, (and) the level of the *expectations* which he *perceives significant others* hold for his behavior" (Herriott, 1963, p.162). Thus, self-assessment and expectations are responsible for the shaping up of different aspirations. Naturally, these two variables are closely tied to one's



social context and social network with which an individual identifies and feels part of.

Hearn (1991) has dealt with the same issue of academic and nonacademic influences on adolescents' future plans, by studying a pool of thirty thousand 1980 U.S. high school graduates. His findings lead him to conclude that patterns of college destinations have not undergone much change between the 1960's and 1980's. SES related inequalities have continued influencing academic choices. Students with equal abilities and achievement, but coming from higher and lower socioeconomic strata have enrolled in different kinds of higher educational institutions. Thus, meritocracy is once again brought into question, with SES related factors functioning as major barriers for its realization.

All the above-mentioned research makes one think of the educational process as a little understood mysterious black box, considering the different non-academic factors which interfere with students' post-high school destinations. In an attempt to explain the educational process in a more scientific manner, Sewell and his colleagues (Sewell, Haller, & Ohlendorf, 1970; Sewell, Haller, & Portes, 1969; Sewell & Shah, 1967) have conducted extensive studies and come up with a social-psychological model of the educational process. In an early research, Sewell et al. (1957)

study the relationship between family social status and students' educational and occupational aspirations, independent of intelligence. They conclude that class-specific values are a major source of influence in educational and occupational aspirations of the youth. Later, effects of socioeconomic status and measured intelligence are examined on college plans, attendance, and graduation (Sewell et al., 1967). Both, SES and intelligence are found to be influential factors throughout the process of selection in higher education. The most critical point in this process is considered to be the actual decision to plan on and enter college. It is at this specific stage where socioeconomic origins are found to have powerful effects on the decisions of the youth.

Empowered by all the rich data collected, Sewell et al. (1969) propose a causal sequence of the educational occupational process, commencing with parents' social stratification position, the individual's mental ability, moving on to academic performance, significant others' influence, educational and occupational aspirations, and ending with educational and occupational attainment. Based on this social-psychological model, it is concluded that the significant others' influence is an extremely influential factor, and that aspirations act as mediators between anterior factors and subsequent behaviors. Nevertheless,



Sewell et al. (1969) question whether such a model is culture-bound. Therefore further studies are conducted (Sewell et al., 1970) to apply this model to diverse residential backgrounds. Results support the view that the Sewell-Haller-Portes model for the educational occupational attainment process is adequate for various community categories.

## **B. RATIONALE**

The current paper aims at applying a social-psychological model similar to Sewell's and his colleagues' to the Lebanese Armenian high school students' educational attainment process. The subjects studied are the Armenian students attending Armenian high schools in Lebanon, and not those in public or non-Armenian private high schools. Among all the available research studies in this area, only one, Klailat's (1981), sheds some light on a Middle Eastern educational system, that of the Palestinians and Jordanians. Therefore, this paper is a modest attempt to enrich the existing literature in this field, using the Lebanese Armenian high schools as the target communities. It takes into account the current economic situation in Lebanon, the prevalent financial difficulties faced by a large percentage of the Lebanese population, with 63% categorized as having low income (UNDP, 1997), and the increasing rates of emigration, especially among the youth.

According to “The National Human Development Report Lebanon” (UNDP, 1998), the highest proportion of those who migrated in recent years fall in the age group 25-29 years followed by the 20-24 year age group, and conclude that the potential for the Lebanese youth to emigrate remains high.

Bearing all of the above in mind, we would like to get some substantial data about where the Lebanese Armenian adolescents fall in this reality, and how, if ever, socioeconomic status reinforces educational/social stratification in the Lebanese Armenian community. We hope to get a clearer picture about the extent to which Lebanon’s current financial and labor market situations are influencing the coming high school graduates’ post high school plans, if SES is actually a decisive factor in students’ post high school destinations. In analyzing the conclusions, one has to bear in mind that this study reflects the situation of a specific sector of the Lebanese Armenian high school population, one which excludes all those Armenian students attending non-Armenian high schools in Lebanon. Thus, the questions raised: in this specific sector studied, is SES a determining factor for higher educational aspirations and expectations among the Armenian youth? How are these aspirations and expectations formed? What are the factors responsible for bringing about different college

plans or lack of them? Answers to such and similar questions will help all those responsible in the field of education in their future educational policy making, mainly to minimize numbers of lost potentials talents and to create healthier educational systems.

### **C. HYPOTHESES**

Five hypotheses were proposed aiming at providing answers and clarifications to the above-mentioned questions. The first three proposed hypotheses tend to favor Hyman's class-differentiated value system, as opposed to Merton's common class value system. Thus, the first hypothesis was:

*H1* Lebanese Armenian high school students from different SES will reflect different values in general, and different educational values in specific.

The following two hypotheses relate to the distinction made between aspirations and expectations. Remaining loyal to Hyman, we expected to find unequal aspirations and unequal expectations according to SES.

*H2* Educational expectations will vary according to SES. Lebanese Armenian high school students with a low SES will have lower educational expectations than those with higher SES.

*H3* Educational aspirations will vary according to SES. Lebanese Armenian high school students with a low SES will have lower educational aspirations than those with higher SES.

The final two hypotheses are related to Sewell's social-psychological model for educational attainment.

*H4* The higher the Lebanese Armenian high school students' academic performance, the higher their educational expectations and aspirations will be.

*H5* The stronger the significant others' (parents', teachers', peers', older siblings') positive influence on the students' attainment of higher education, the higher the Lebanese Armenian high school students' educational aspirations and expectations will be.

#### **D. Definition of Variables**

The different variables mentioned in the above five hypotheses are defined as follows:

- Socioeconomic Status (SES) The subjects' socioeconomic status was categorized into high, medium, and low based on measures obtained about both parents'/guardians' highest education levels and their occupational prestige scores. The availability of three educational resources at home: an encyclopedia, a computer, and a daily newspaper, were also used as measures for SES.

- General Values (GV) Seven different factors were used to obtain a measure of GV. The seven factors taken from Cassidy and Lynn (1989) were: work ethic, acquisitiveness for money, dominance, pursuit of excellence, competitiveness, status aspiration, and mastery.
- Educational Values (EV) Educational values were given a value based on four statements to which the subjects were supposed to either agree or disagree. The statements taken from Klailat's (1981) study reflected different perceptions about higher education and its value as a means for achieving success in life.
- Students' Educational Expectations (SEE) Educational expectations were defined as realistic goals as opposed to idealistic ones. In other words, when mentioning their educational expectations, students were required to take into consideration the different financial and academic restrictions they could encounter when making their post-high school educational/occupational decisions.
- Students' Educational Aspirations (SEA) Students' educational aspirations reflected the idealistic dimension of their educational career orientation, as defined by Rehberg and Westby (1967). In other words, measures of SEA are

adolescents' wishes for their future, which transcend their awareness of limitations, as opposed to their more realistic expectations.

- Reported Academic Achievement (RAA) Four questions targeted students' academic achievement: their official Brevet examination scores, their last available grading period's general average, and whether or not they had repeated any grade levels in the elementary and/or intermediate cycles.
- Significant Others' Influence (SOI) Parents/guardians, teachers, peers and older siblings constituted the significant others' list. SOI was measured by the students' perceived encouragement of their significant others to attend some kind of a post-high school educational institution.

## **E. Methodology**

The sample of the current study constituted 211 eleventh grade students attending Lebanese Armenian high schools. The instrument used to collect the data was a 30-item questionnaire, which the subjects were asked to complete. The reliability and validity of the instrument used was measured by Cronbach's alpha, chi square tests, and different cross tabulations. The above-



mentioned five hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression analyses.

#### **F. Significance of the Study**

The focus of the current study is the possible impact of students' socioeconomic status on their values and their post-high school plans. The findings will provide significant information about two different areas concerning Armenian secondary students attending Armenian schools in Lebanon: the internalization of their different general/educational values and the feasibility of the application of a social-psychological model to their future educational plans. Thus the results obtained will

- provide some objective measure of the extent and kind of influence that SES has on students' general/educational values,
- give a clearer picture of the determinants of students' future educational aspirations and expectations,
- provide all those concerned individuals in the field of education with some kind of preventive and diagnostic guidelines to help minimize lost talents and potentials in our selected sample,

- most probably pave the way for further research in this specific field, in order to study the application of the current hypotheses on samples covering a broader area.

## A. SES AND VALUES

The existence of social stratification in human societies is prevalent. One area of research interest for social scientists has been the study of the various characteristics, such as values, of the different classes. Two major themes prevail concerning the value system: common values and class-differentiated values. The main proponent of the first is Robert K. Merton (1957), and the latter's, Herbert M. Hyman (1959). Following these conflicting value systems, there have been various attempts to reach some kind of reconciliation between the two.

### 1. A Common Value System

According to the common value system, values are shared in societies independent of social classes. Merton (1957) and Parsons (1959) state that people form certain likes and dislikes for values irrespective of their socioeconomic backgrounds. There is "a single more or less integrated system of values" (Parsons, 1959, p. 8) in any society. Merton (1957) takes this idea further and blends it with Durkheim's concept of "consensus". According to him, societies



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### **A. SES AND VALUES**

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have certain norms—standards and models, and mores—traditional rules and customs, which are accepted and internalized by all members in that society. Nevertheless, these same societies may not be providing the legitimate means to all its members for the attainment of these shared and approved values. Such a social structure, Merton (1957) concludes, leads to anomie and deviant behavior.

## **2. A Class-Differentiated Value System**

Hyman (1953) begins his argument with the basic assumption that the major interfering factor between low social status and upward mobility “is a system of beliefs and values within the lower classes which in turn reduces the very *voluntary* actions which would ameliorate their low position” (Hyman, 1953, p. 427). The existing value system among the lower classes is the result of realistic appraisals of reality. An individual from a lower SES cannot be expected to view success values in the same manner as an individual from a high SES. The former knows that the means for achieving some kind of success are farfetched and rarely attainable. Hyman (1953) uses data from the National Opinion Research Center to reflect on the value placed on formal education in specific, and concludes that whatever measure of stratification employed, the lower groups are found to emphasize higher

education much less than the higher groups. Mizruchi (1964) reports similar results of differential preference among the social classes for college education. Kahl (1953) as well, in his study of "Common Man" boys, concludes that after the ninth grade, low-status adolescents "aspired to much lower levels than high status boys of equal intelligence, even though they had been similar in early school accomplishment" (Kahl, 1953, p. 189). Hyman (1953) also uses further data to suggest, "the lower class individual holds values of such a nature as to reduce his striving towards those ends which would result in his moving up the class structure" (Hyman, 1953, p. 432). In other words, according to the class-differentiated value system, individuals coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds have a value system different from higher-class individuals, and this specific value system is responsible for reducing chances of upward mobility.

The idea of a class-differentiated value system is also supported by Alex Inkeles (1960) who uses the "industrial man" as an example to support his hypothesis. He argues that any form of society, such as an industrial society, fosters among its members of different positions certain patterns of perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and values. Nevertheless, these may not necessarily correspond to the previously accepted societal norms, to those

norms internalized prior to the adaptation to a new society, and in this case, the industrial society. Inkeles reaches his conclusions after testing his hypotheses in several countries, and winds up his arguments by stating that within all industrial societies, the type or structure of response concerning attitudes and values is the same, depending on similar social status ladders.

### **B. The Functionalist Theory of Education**

During the 1950's, the Functionalist Theory of Education was most dominant in research, as a result of the prevailing economic and political situations. During the cold war, both super powers of the time, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, were engaged in a fierce competition in different areas. Education served as the medium for guiding this competition, each side trying to prove its superiority on the other. Education was put in the spotlight since it was responsible for the preservation and efficient use of human resources (Karabel & Halsey, 1977). Furthermore, since technology was advancing rapidly at the time, functionalists claimed that educational systems should be structured such that they guarantee the availability of the necessary skilled work force required by the technological advancements.

Functionalists such as Martin Trow (1961) believed that all educational selection processes were necessary for the right choice

of the most highly technically skilled personnel. This led them to view the educational system as a means for social mobility, as opposed to one which reinforces social inequality.

At the core of the functionalists' philosophy lies their belief that different types of socialization processes, including educational ones, are part of a value system which holds society together (Karabel & Halsey, 1977). Thus, equilibrium and consensus in society are emphasized, where changes in the demands of the labor force are responsible for changes in the social order. Therefore, seen from the perspective of the functionalist theory of education, society is more prone to have a system of common values, rather than a class-differentiated one, one that holds society together and maintains the status quo.

### **C. THE CONFLICT THEORY OF EDUCATION**

Hyman's hypotheses about class-differentiated values fall under the umbrella of the conflict theory of education—the Neo-Weberian and Neo-Marxist theories. Randall Collins (1971), a Neo-Weberian conflict theorist, stresses on the idea of existing “status groups”, which are formed and maintained through a struggle for wealth, power, and prestige. This struggle exists in different forms and intensities based on the respective status groups, “which distinguish themselves from others in terms of categories of *moral*

*evaluation* such as 'honor', 'taste', 'breeding'..." (Collins, 1971, p. 1009).

Bowles and Gintis (1977) represent the Neo-Marxists' point of view. According to them, class specific values are developed at the workplace, relative to the different sub-cultures and the hierarchical division of labor. Children, being members of different sub-cultures, end up internalizing class-specific values and personality traits which are required for the attainment of future positions available to them in this hierarchical division of labor (Bowles, 1977).

Thus, the conflict theory of education supports Hyman's class-differentiated value system. Both Neo-Weberians and Neo-Marxists stress on differential socialization according to social class, resulting in class-specific values brought about by underlying class-specific interests.

#### **D. THE "NEW" SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION**

In turn, the "New" Sociology of Education has much to contribute to the paradigms on which the class-differentiated value system is based. Two educational sociologists falling in this category are Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu. Bernstein's (1977) concepts of particularistic, restricted codes as opposed to universalistic, elaborated codes are the direct results of one's



immediate environment. Bernstein posits that since in society knowledge is distributed based on a class system, only a small percentage of the people experiences the process of intellectual change. It is this specific process that brings about the above-mentioned differences in speech codes, and further widens the existing gaps of knowledge, values, language, etc. between the various strata in society. Therefore, Bernstein follows the Marxist tradition of placing the class structure in the spotlight and considering it the driving force behind all types of socialization, specifically the distribution of knowledge within society.

Pierre Bourdieu (1977), on the other hand, makes an attempt at explaining the relationship between cultural reproduction and social reproduction. According to him, both types of reproduction can be and are brought about by the educational system, which reinforces the already existing differences in cultural and social capitals between various classes. Bourdieu (1977) argues that in modern societies the importance of cultural capital in perpetuating existing social classes through generations is increasing, but not necessarily replacing the importance of economic capital. In other words, Bourdieu believes in the existence of a society divided into different social classes, each having its own social and cultural characteristics and constantly striving to reproduce itself.

Therefore, although Bernstein and Bourdieu do not reflect upon Hyman's ideas directly, their concepts of class specific speech codes and cultural reproduction join the quest for a class-differentiated value system.

### **E. COMPROMISE BETWEEN COMMON VALUES & CLASS-DIFFERENTIATED VALUES**

Several studies have made suggestions for some kind of a compromise between the common value and the class-differentiated value systems (Della Fave, 1974; Han, 1969; Rodman, 1963; Takei, Bock, & Warland, 1973). Rodman's (1963) concept of the lower-class value stretch and Han's (1969) distinction between wishes and expectations are the most prominent.

#### **1. The Lower-Class Value Stretch**

Hyman Rodman (1963) suggests that the contradiction between common values and class-differentiated values can be eliminated by concentrating on the lower-class's reactions to their deprived conditions. The value stretch, which is such a natural reaction, takes place when "the lower-class person, without abandoning the general values of the society, develops an alternative set of values" (Rodman, 1963, p. 209). With respect to any value, individuals tend to develop a level of preference and tolerance. The former is



the preferred or ideal end of the value range, and the latter is the minimal or acceptable end of the same specific value range. In other words, lower-class individuals simply have a wider range of values than others in society. They do share the general common values of others, but because of their deprived situation, they stretch these values to fit their own realities. This stretch, or alteration, helps individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds to minimize frustrations due to failing to live up to unattainable values. Sharing middle class values and at the same time developing unique class-specific values helps such individuals to adapt to their circumstances, without having to experience any form of deviance or anomie, in Merton's words. For example, a lower-class person, without abandoning the generally accepted high values placed upon success, such as high educational and occupational attainment, stretches these values so that lesser degrees of success also become desirable. Thus, both statements that societies share common values and that values differ from class to class are correct (Rodman, 1963).

## **2. *Wishes vs. Expectations***

Han (1969) takes Rodman's lower-class value stretch a step further and introduces the concepts of "circumstance-free *wish*" and "circumstance-bound *expectation*". Han takes the examples of

success and equality values, and goes on to explain that such general social values are accepted by all, nevertheless, the application of these values in real life is constrained by specific situations. Therefore, wishes reflect the societal acceptance of certain values and expectations reflect the specific class acceptance of these same values. After conducting his research, Han (1969) states his findings, which mostly support his initial hypotheses; American high school students' wishes are independent of socioeconomic influences, while their expectations are inversely related to awareness of socioeconomic limitations. In other words, individuals coming from different social strata share common wishes, but, the more a person is aware of his/her socioeconomic limitations, the lower his/her expectations are. Thus, Han ends up supporting both Merton and Hyman; the first when measuring values as wishes, and the second when measuring them as expectations. With such a conclusion, Han appears to be in agreement with Rodman about equal aspirations but unequal expectations of individuals from different social classes.

### **3. Further Studies**

Based on the above-discussed ideas about the different types of value systems, various studies (Della Fave, 1974; Hanson, 1994;

Kahl, 1965; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Klailat, 1981; Sewell et al., 1957; Takei et al., 1973) have been conducted to either support or reject the above stated hypotheses.

The studies of Kahl (1965), Kao & Tienda (1998), and Sewell et al., (1957) all support the idea of class-differentiated values. Their research findings claim the existence of a positive correlation between SES and educational aspirations. "Status makes an independent contribution to these aspirations" (Sewell et al., 1957, p. 73). Nevertheless, these studies do not make a distinction between wishes/aspirations and expectations.

In studying lost talent in the U.S., Hanson (1994) focuses on the reported gaps between high school students' educational aspirations and expectations. Since a considerable number of lost talent is reported, the idea of common values is once again jeopardized. Nevertheless, Hanson's results do not provide enough evidence to either accept or reject Rodman' and Han's concept of equal aspirations.

In his study, Della Fave (1974) tests Rodman's lower-class value stretch through six hypotheses and hopes to find common values in terms of preferences, and class-differentiated values in terms of expectancies. His findings though fail to support the notion of the existence of universal non class-differentiated values.

Thus Della Fave provides further support for Hyman's class-differentiated value system and rejects Rodman's and Han's proposition for equal aspirations.

Takei et al. (1973) have conducted a similar research outside of the U.S., and have tried to study the different suggested value systems in Malaysia. Their results confirm the existence of some kind of a class-differentiated value system, since they have reported gaps between expectations and aspirations. Unlike in Della Fave's (1974) research, educational and occupational aspirations for the Chinese and Malay youth in Malaysia have been found to be existing independent of SES, thus supporting Han and Rodman.

A similar study has been carried out by Klailat (1981) who has studied the Palestinians' and Jordanians' educational aspirations and expectations, aiming at finding support for Han's hypotheses. Her results show a positive correlation between SES and educational expectations, but fail to confirm the prevalence of equal aspirations among the various social classes, as in Della Fave's (1974) study.

## **F. A SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL FOR EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

One of the most prominent educational sociologists who has devoted his studies to the relationship of socioeconomic status with the different aspects of education is William Sewell. In his earlier research, Sewell has studied the differential values existing in different socioeconomic backgrounds. Controlling for the effects of intelligence, Sewell et al. (1957) conclude that educational and occupational aspirations are influenced directly by values specific to different social strata. In a later study, Sewell and Shah (1967) focus on the effects of SES and intelligence in the attainment of higher education. Their findings cite the direct effects of SES and intelligence on planning on, attending, and graduating from college. Their most important assertion is that independent of intelligence, SES "never ceases to be an important factor in determining who shall be eliminated from the contest for higher education" (Sewell & Shah, 1967, p. 22).

Following these findings, Sewell and Shah go on to concentrate on the factors influencing educational aspirations and later attainment. After numerous studies (Sewell et al. 1970; Sewell et al. 1969; Sewell & Shah, 1968a; Sewell & Shah, 1968b), a social psychological model for educational attainment is proposed, trying

to shed some light on the variables, which translate people's different social class characteristics into differences in aspirations and attainment. According to this model, the attainment process begins with the family's position on the social ladder and the student's mental ability. From there one moves to performance in school, significant others' (parents', teachers', peers') influence, educational aspirations, and finally educational attainment (Sewell et al., 1969). Sewell and Shah (1968a) report different values according to social classes in a previous study, stating "the higher the level of SES, the higher the level of educational aspirations (are)" (p. 570). It is in this same study that parental encouragement is put in the spotlight as a powerful intervening variable between SES and educational aspirations. Still in another research, Sewell and Shah (1968b) concentrate on parents' education as an intervening variable in determining perceived parental encouragement. According to their results, parents' educational attainments are positively and significantly related to perceived parental encouragement.

Returning to the social-psychological model of educational attainment, Sewell et al. (1970) conduct further research, trying to test the adequacy of applying the model to non-farm communities, since the initial model was based on farm-reared adolescents.



They conclude that the Sewell-Haller-Portes model is applicable to a variety of urban and rural residential communities, and further stress the role of the influence of significant others in the status attainment process.

Various other research studies have been conducted similar to Sewell's and his colleagues' (Cassidy, 1991; Hearn, 1984; Hossler & Stage, 1992; Klailat, 1981; Rehberg & Westby, 1967; Simpson, 1962; Stephenson, 1957), all stressing the class-related factors and parental encouragement as determinants for educational aspirations. Stephenson (1957) and Klailat (1981) also include hypotheses distinguishing between educational aspirations and expectations, considering that "class may or may not differentiate orientation depending upon whether one is considering the aspiration or the expectation aspect of mobility orientation" (Stephenson, 1957, p. 212).

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### A. Sample

During the past few years the number of Armenian secondary schools in Lebanon has decreased due to financial difficulties. Presently, there are 11 Armenian secondary schools: four are Armenian "National" schools run under the auspices of the Armenian Apostolic Prelacy, three are Armenian Evangelical schools, two are Armenian Catholic Schools, one falls under the umbrella of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, and one belongs to the Hamazkayin Cultural and Educational Association. Nine of the 11 schools are located in Beirut and its suburbs, and two are located in the Bekaa Valley, Anjar. All of the 11-th grade students attending these schools were asked to participate. Total participants numbered 211 ( $S=211$ ). This particular grade level was chosen, because students in the 11-th grade start thinking about their post-high school plans. 12-th grade was avoided, considering the fact that many students drop out of school for various reasons before sitting for the official 12-th grade examinations.

## **B. Procedure**

The questionnaire and its administering mode were finalized following a pilot study. The pilot study was conducted three weeks prior to the actual administration of the instrument, for the researcher to acquire practical feedback about the organization of the questionnaire and its administration. The pilot study was run in one of the Armenian secondary schools, using the 10-th grade students as subjects. This grade level was chosen in order to prevent the occurrence of carry-over effects during the actual administration of the questionnaire to the 11-th grade students. A second reason for the choice of our pilot study sample is the fact that their age level is very close to the target sample's and thus subjects were expected to react similarly to possible occurrences of misunderstandings. Based on the pilot study, certain decisions were taken, which will be discussed in the next section.

After the completion of the pilot study, letters were sent to the 11 Armenian secondary school principals explaining the nature of the current study. Following the receipt of their approval, the researcher visited each of the schools in person and requested the 11-th grade students to fill out the questionnaire. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, the students were provided with some basic information by the researcher about available

post-high school educational and career-oriented choices. After being reminded about the incognito nature of the questionnaire, as mentioned on its cover page, the subjects were given an explanation for each of the questions separately, allowed a few seconds to answer, then moved on to the explanation of the following question. The administration of the questionnaire lasted between 10-15 minutes. Copies of the letters addressed to the principals and the students are found in Appendix A.

### **C. Limitations**

The main limitation of this study is the fact that it relies completely on students' answers. The data collected is all based on students' responses, whether it be the measure of their academic achievement, their parents' highest educational achievements and current occupations, or significant others' encouragement. Nevertheless, most of the research conducted on this topic rely on student reported information. Next, some of the statements used to get measures for general and educational values are directive, however it was decided to use those items in their original wording, since they are taken from other sources and tested for their reliability and validity. Another limitation to be noted concerns our sample. Naturally, a sample made up of students of only one grade level is not as representative as one

including all of the three secondary classes. The latter was not feasible due to time and cost constraints. As for the recoding of the SES into low, mid, and high, it was based on reports from the UNDP (1997) which used monthly income and employment sectors for categorization. Similar data including educational level was not available. Nevertheless, when the current study's SES factor—which included educational level—was recoded, similar results were achieved. Finally, the fact that this study limits its sample to the Armenian student population attending Armenian schools could be a limitation on its own, since attending private Armenian schools as opposed to public or non-Armenian private schools may be, in itself, an indication of the sample's specific socioeconomic status. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to all of the Lebanese Armenian secondary school students.

#### **D. Instrument**

The 30-item questionnaire, which is found in Appendix B, was formulated based on Cassidy and Lynn's (1989), Klailat's (1981), and Rehberg and Westby's (1967) studies. Since some of the 11 Armenian high schools teach English as a first foreign language, and others French, and in order to prevent bias due to the use of English and French versions of the instrument, it was decided to administer the questionnaire in Armenian. Further, in order to

prevent bias in the English-Armenian translation, the Armenian version was once again translated to English by an individual who was unfamiliar with the original English version. Based on the reversed translation, some minor changes were made in the Armenian version of the instrument. Both translations, English-Armenian and Armenian-English, were completed by individuals fluent in both languages and involved in the field of Education.

The Armenian version of the instrument was finalized following the pilot study, in which 27 tenth grade students participated. Based on the pilot study, the following decisions were implemented during the actual administration of the questionnaire to the 11-th grade subjects. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher discussed the different possibilities of post-high school plans/degrees for 2-3 minutes. Instead of reading the whole questionnaire, explaining it, and then asking the subjects to answer, the researcher read each question, explained it, provided time for that specific question to be answered, then went on to the next question. The students were given 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. One of the questions, "Do you have a quiet study area at home?", was omitted due to lack of clarity on behalf of the students. On the significant others' list, "older siblings" was added to parents, teachers, and peers, since the pilot study



subjects inquired about whether older siblings fell under the category of parents or peers. While reading and explaining the questions about parents' occupations, the researcher stressed on the importance of being extremely specific in the stated occupations and provided examples of expected acceptable answers.

The questionnaire is designed to get measures for student's socioeconomic background (questions 3-8), values in general (questions 9-15) and educational values (questions 16-19) in specific, academic achievement (questions 20-23), educational aspirations (question 24) and expectations (question 25), and lastly significant others' influence (questions 26-30). The questions measuring socioeconomic background, educational values, and significant others' influence were taken from Klailat's (1981) study, those measuring general values from Cassidy and Lynn's (1989), and the ones targeting students' educational aspirations and expectations from Rehberg and Westby's (1967). The seven items chosen from Cassidy and Lynn's for tapping general values were the ones with the highest factor loadings in their specific categories. The seven categories were: work ethic, acquisitiveness, dominance, excellence, competitiveness, status aspiration, and

mastery. Thus, one item was chosen for measuring each one of these factors falling under general values.

As mentioned earlier, the reliability and validity of the questionnaire was tested by using Cronbach's alpha. Furthermore, the following factor analyses identified common factors among the different variables, the chi square tests among all the variables were highly significant, and the different cross tabulations provided evidence to support the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

Considering the length of the questionnaire and the participants' age, and in order to minimize boredom and maintain the students' motivation levels, each set of questions measuring one of the variables was presented on different colored papers.

### **E. Testing the Hypotheses**

*H1* Lebanese Armenian high school students from different SES will reflect different values in general, and different educational values in specific.

The criterion variable in the first hypothesis is SES, and the predicted variables are the general values (GV) and educational values (EV). SES was computed by a factor-weighted combination of both parents' highest educational levels and occupations. Along with the factor, the other three SES related questions which were

taken separately aimed at the presence of educational resources at home: having an encyclopedia at home, having a computer at home, and receiving/buying a daily newspaper on a regular basis. Parents' education was coded into eight categories, depending on the reported highest educational level achieved, ranging from illiteracy to having a doctorate degree. To rate the reported occupations, initially, it was decided to use Duncan's (1961) socioeconomic index for occupations. Later on, after a comparison between Duncan's socioeconomic index and Treiman's (1977) standard international occupational prestige scale, the latter was adopted mainly for the following reason: "the Standard Scale measures the relative *prestige* of occupations as popularly evaluated, [while] the Duncan scale measures their *socioeconomic* status, that is, a combination of the education and income levels of incumbents" (Treiman, 1977, p.208). Thus, considering the fact that the current study's questionnaire does inquire about education and other SES related factors separately, the use of the standard scale was supported. Moreover, Treiman's scale is more recent than Duncan's, and the former's ratings reflect more of the Lebanese reality than Duncan's.

The sample was divided into three social classes: high, middle, and low, based on the SES factor which was computed by using

both parents educational and occupational levels. Subjects in the first 63-rd percentile of the factor were categorized as Low SES, those in the second 33-rd percentile as Middle SES, and the ones in the last fourth percentile as high SES. The decision for the division of the percentiles was based on a report from the UNDP (1997) which included the distribution of families in Lebanon based on monthly income and sector of employment. The percentages used in the current study were rounded.

As for the H1 predicted variables, questions 9-15 tapped the students' general values (GV), and questions 16-19 their educational values (EV). For each value statement, students were required to either "disagree" or "agree". The statements related to GV were taken from Cassidy and Lynn's (1989) study, and the ones measuring EV from Klailat's (1981) study.

*H2 Educational expectations will vary according to SES.*

Lebanese Armenian high school students with a low SES will have lower educational expectations than those with higher SES.

*H3 Educational aspirations will vary according to SES.*

Lebanese Armenian high school students with a low SES will have lower educational aspirations than those with higher SES.

For the second and third hypotheses, the criterion variable remains the same as in the first hypothesis—SES, and based on

the same computations. Students' educational expectations (SEE), the H2 predicted variable, was measured from the students' answers to question number 25. Their educational aspirations (SEA), the H3 predicted variable, was based on the answers to question number 24. Both of these questions (24 and 25) were taken from Rehberg and Westby (1967). Responses to these two questions were coded from 1-6, based on the reported highest level of education expected/aspired by the students. During the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher emphasized on the difference between educational *aspirations* and *expectations*, considering the fact that the current study is mostly based on this distinction.

*H4* The higher the Lebanese Armenian high school students' academic performance, the higher their educational expectations and aspirations will be.

The new criterion variable for the fourth hypothesis is the student's reported academic achievement/performance (RAA). RAA was computed based on the official brevet exam score, the general average for the last available grading period, and whether or not the student had repeated any grade levels in the past (questions 20-23). The official brevet exams were scored and reported over 200, and the reported general averages for the last

available grading period were later standardized by the researcher and converted to scores over 100. The predicted variables SEE and SEA were scored as mentioned above for H2 and H3.

*H5* The stronger the significant others' (parents', teachers', peers', older siblings') positive influence on the students' attainment of higher education, the higher the Lebanese Armenian high school students' educational aspirations and expectations will be.

Significant others' influence (SOI), the H5 criterion variable, is represented by the sum of four variables: perceived parental, teachers', peers' and older siblings' influence. Questions 26-30, which provided the necessary data for the SOI measure, were taken from Klailat (1981). As mentioned earlier, it was decided to add "older siblings" to the list of significant others, following the pilot study. The predicted variables remain the SEE and SEA computed for the earlier hypotheses.

Stepwise linear regression analyses were adopted for the computation of the statistics for the five hypotheses, using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 10. Different descriptive statistics were also run in order to obtain a clearer picture of the results.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Prior to testing the hypotheses, descriptive statistics were run for all the variables to check for incorrect entries. Next, tests were run to check for multi-collinearity among the different questions targeting the three criterion variables: socioeconomic status, reported achievement, and significant others' influence. The only four variables which indicated the possibility of the existence of multi-collinearity were the SES variables: both parents'/guardians' highest educational levels and their occupational prestige scores. Thus, it was decided to reduce these four variables tapping SES into a single factor. Table 1 shows the correlations among the seven SES variables, four of which are highly correlated.

#### **A. Respondents' Profile**

Out of the 211 subjects who participated in this research, 128 were females (60.7%) and 83 were males (39.3%). Subjects who had older siblings amounted to 57.3%, and 62.8% of whom had attended/attend university. For parents'/guardians' highest education levels achieved, the elementary classes got the highest

percentage for the fathers, 30.3%, and the secondary classes got the highest percentage for the mothers, 31.8% (See Tables 2 and 3).

Table 1

Correlation Matrix for the SES Variables

	Father's highest education level	Mother's highest education level	Father's occupational prestige score	Mother's occupational prestige score	They have an encyclopedia at home	They have a computer at home	They receive newspapers daily
Father's highest education level	1.000	.650	.661	.334	.286	.303	.353
Mother's highest education level	.650	1.000	.560	.469	.326	.276	.310
Father's occupational prestige score	.661	.560	1.000	.243	.291	.303	.400
Mother's occupational prestige score	.334	.469	.243	1.000	.121	-.012	.005
They have an encyclopedia at home	.286	.326	.291	.121	1.000	.460	.207
They have a computer at home	.303	.276	.303	-.012	.460	1.000	.187
They receive newspapers daily	.353	.310	.400	.005	.207	.187	1.000

For the presence of educational resources, 82% of the subjects

Table 2

Frequency Table for Father's Highest Education Level Achieved

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Illiterate	3	1.4	1.4	1.4
	Elementary	64	30.3	30.3	31.8
	Intermediate	55	26.1	26.1	57.8
	Secondary	41	19.4	19.4	77.3
	Some University	15	7.1	7.1	84.4
	B.A/B.S.	21	10.0	10.0	94.3
	M.A./M.S.	6	2.8	2.8	97.2
	Doctorate	6	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table 3

Frequency Table for Mother's Highest Education Level Achieved

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Illiterate	1	.5	.5	.5
	Elementary	34	16.1	16.1	16.6
	Intermediate	53	25.1	25.1	41.7
	Secondary	67	31.8	31.8	73.5
	Some University	27	12.8	12.8	86.3
	B.A/B.S.	22	10.4	10.4	96.7
	M.A./M.S.	6	2.8	2.8	99.5
	Doctorate	1	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	211	100.0	100.0	

As for the occupational prestige scores, the majority of the fathers scored a 3 (25.6%) or a 4 (39.7%) on Treiman's standard international prestige scale. On the other hand, 74.6% of the mothers received a score of 0, since the majority was unemployed. For the presence of educational resources, 82% of the subjects

reported having an encyclopedia at home, 61% reported having a computer, and 34% received/bought a daily newspaper.

The general values reflected the following picture: 6.6% of the subjects agreed that they can sit easily for a long time doing nothing, 29% were willing to work for a low salary if the job was pleasant, 45% believed that they are a leader in their group, 95.7% believed that there is satisfaction in a job well done, 61.1% gave importance to performing better than others, 49.3% liked to have an important job where people looked up to them, and 34.1% preferred to learn easy fun games rather than difficult thought games. As for their educational values, 73% believed that more education gets better paying jobs, 73.9% of the subjects agreed that skilled laborers make as much money as university graduates, 87.1% believed that higher education paves the way for higher positions, and 51.4% thought that success depends on knowing the right people and not on education.

The mean of the subjects' official brevet score was 112.12/200 with a median of 108.50. The general averages of their last available grading period had a mean of 68.41/100 and a median of 70. Of the sample, 7.2% reported repeating a grade level in the elementary cycle, and 16.2% in the intermediate cycle.

More than half of the subjects, 58.1%, aspired for a doctorate degree and 8.1% expected to get one, while 47.4% expected to receive a B.A./B.S. degree. None of the subjects aspired for a technical degree, and 3.8% expected to receive one (See Tables 4 and 5). According to the subjects, 35.2% of the parents expected their children to get a M.A./M.S. degree, 29.5% a B.A./B.S. degree, and 28.6% a doctorate degree.

Table 4

Frequency Table for Students' Future Educational Aspirations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	11th grade	1	.5	.5	.5
	12th grade	1	.5	.5	1.0
	B.A./B.S.	22	10.4	10.5	11.4
	M.A./M.S.	64	30.3	30.5	41.9
	Doctorate	122	57.8	58.1	100.0
	Total	210	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.5		
Total		211	100.0		

Table 5

Frequency Table for Students' Future Educational Expectations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	11th grade	2	.9	.9	.9
	12th grade	23	10.9	10.9	11.8
	Technical	8	3.8	3.8	15.6
	B.A./B.S.	100	47.4	47.4	63.0
	M.A./M.S.	61	28.9	28.9	91.9
	Doctorate	17	8.1	8.1	100.0
	Total	211	100.0	100.0	

The results for the significant others' influence were as follows:

62.1% of the students reported that they *often* discuss their educational plans with their parents, 40.3% *sometimes* have such discussions with their teachers, and 48.3% and 50.4% *often* discuss this topic with peers and older siblings respectively. Of the subjects, 48.8% believe that their parents have *a great deal* of influence on their educational plans, while 45.2% reported that teachers have no influence at all, although 55.7% believe that their teachers have *tried* to influence their educational plans. 51.7% and 41.7% report that friends and older siblings respectively have somewhat influenced their educational plans. Finally, the majority of the subjects, 78.6%, have friends who plan to continue school next year and graduate 12-th grade.

## B. Findings

All of the findings in the following sections are reported with a 95% significance level,  $\alpha=0.05$ .

H1 Lebanese Armenian high school students from different SES will reflect different values in general, and different educational values in specific.

Prior to running the regression analysis for testing H1, a Chi-Square test was run on all the GV variables in order to test for the significant difference between those individuals who agreed and



those who did not agree on the general values. The results, shown in Table 6, indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups, except for two variables: being a leader in one's group (dominance) and having an important job (status aspiration). Nevertheless, both results were non-significant, with p-values of 0.148 and 0.836 respectively. A similar test was run on the four EV variables (see Table 7), where a non-significant difference was found between those who agreed and those who disagreed for only one of the variables: success depends on knowing the right people and not on education, p-value=0.679.

Table 6  
Chi-Square Tests for the GV Variables

	General Values: Can sit easily for a long time doing nothing	General Values: Willing to work for a low salary	General Values: A leader in my group	General Values: There is satisfaction in a job well done	General Values: Importance of performing better than others	General Values: Having an important job	General Values: Learning easy fun games vs. difficult thought games
Chi-Square	158.716	36.876	2.090	174.550	10.469	.043	21.275
df	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.148	.000	.001	.836	.000

- a 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 105.5.
- b 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 105.0.
- c 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 104.5.

Table 7

Chi-Square Tests for the EV Variables

	Educational Values: More education gets better paying jobs	Educational Values: Skilled laborers make as much as university graduates	Educational Values: More education gets higher positions	Educational Values: Success depends on knowing the right people
Chi-Square	44.592	48.346	115.886	.171
df	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.679

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 105.5.

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 105.0.

In order to check whether or not the SES variables have a common target, Cronbach's alpha was computed, which yielded a very high result,  $\alpha=0.7690$ , thus showing that all of the SES variables do have a common factor. As mentioned earlier, when testing for collinearity, it was decided to factorize father's/guardians' and mothers'/guardians' education and occupation into a single factor, since these four variables were highly correlated. Whenever results indicated a significant relationship involving the SES factor, the same tests were run taking the four variables constituting the SES factor separately, in order to see which one of the SES factor variables was responsible for the significant results. As for the recoded SES into low, middle,

and high based on data received from the UNDP (1997), it was crosstabulated with the presence of the three different educational resources at home. The resulting Pearson Chi-Squares were highly significant, further contributing to the reliability of the SES variables (See Table 8).

Table 8

Crosstabs Between Recoded SES and the Three Different Educational Resources

They have an encyclopedia at home \* Recoded SES Crosstabulation

Count

		Recoded SES			Total
		Low SES	Middle SES	High SES	
They have an encyclopedia at home	No	33	2		35
	Yes	91	64	8	163
Total		124	66	8	198

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.252	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	23.108	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.668	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	198		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.41.

## They have a computer at home \* Recoded SES Crosstabulation

Count

		Recoded SES			Total
		Low SES	Middle SES	High SES	
They have a computer at home	No	60	13	2	75
	Yes	63	53	6	122
Total		123	66	8	197

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.014	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	16.845	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.357	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	197		

a 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.05.

## They receive newspapers daily \* Recoded SES Crosstabulation

Count

		Recoded SES			Total
		Low SES	Middle SES	High SES	
They receive newspapers daily	No	98	27	3	128
	Yes	26	39	5	70
Total		124	66	8	198

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.079	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	30.003	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	27.219	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	198		

a 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.83.

Stepwise linear regression analysis was run to check the relationship between socioeconomic status and general values. Out of the seven variables targeting GV, only two were entered: willing to work for a low salary, WLS, (acquisitiveness) and being a leader in one's group, L, (dominance). Table 9 indicates that willingness to work for a low salary if the job was pleasant is related to having an encyclopedia at home (E). The expected value of  $WLS = 1.843 - 0.301E$ . In other words, having an encyclopedia at home decreases the chances of having students to agree to work for a low salary, even if the job was pleasant. Being a leader in one's group (L), on the other hand, was related to father's highest education level (FEDL). Expected value of  $L = 1.226 + 0.06205FEDL$  (See Table 9), meaning that if father's highest education level achieved goes up by 1 point, then the value of L will increase by 0.06205; the more educated the fathers are, the more their children believe that they are the leaders in their groups. SES variables were not able to predict any of the remaining five GV variables.

Similar statistics were used to test for the possible existence of a relationship between socioeconomic status and educational values. Results showed that SES was a significant predictor for two of the four EV variables: skilled laborers make as much as

university graduates (SLUG) and success depends on knowing the right people (SRP). Father's highest education level (FEDL) was responsible for predicting SLUG, and having a computer at home (C) was responsible for predicting SRP; in both cases the variables were negatively related. The expected values were as follows:  $SLUG = 1.973 - 0.0642FEDL$ , the higher the father's education level, the less the students believed that skilled laborers make as much as university graduates;  $SRP = 1.748 - 0.163C$ , if a student does have a computer at home, he/she will believe less that success depends on knowing the right people rather than on education (See Table 10).

Table 9

Results of the Variables Entered for the Linear Stepwise Regression  
Analysis Between the Criterion Variable SES and the Predicted  
Variable GV

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.843	.154		11.962	.000
They have an encyclopedia at home	-.301	.083	-.252	-3.631	.000

a. Dependent Variable: General Values: Willing to work for a low salary



## Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.226	.084		14.614	.000
Father's highest Education level	6.205E-02	.021	.203	2.899	.004

a. Dependent Variable: General Values: A leader in my group

Table 10

### Results of the Variables entered for the Linear Stepwise Regression

#### Analysis Between the Criterion Variable SES and the Predicted

#### Variable EV

## Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.973	.074		26.797	.000
Father's highest Education level	-6.642E-02	.019	-.245	-3.535	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Educational Values: Skilled laborers make as much as university graduates.

## Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.784	.124		14.422	.000
They have a computer at home	-.163	.073	-.158	-2.226	.027

a. Dependent Variable: Educational Values: Success depends on knowing the right people.

Simple regression analyses were also run between the recoded SES (Low-Middle-High) and the GV and EV variables. From the variables testing general values, being a leader (L) was entered; from the educational values' variables, the belief that skilled laborers make as much as university graduates (SLUG) was entered. In other words, being a member of low, middle, or high SES proved to have a significant predictive power on L and SLUG. The expected value of  $L=1.248+0.143$  recoded SES, meaning the higher one's socioeconomic status, the more he/she thinks to be the leader of one's group. The expected value of  $SLUG=1.968-0.163$  recoded SES, meaning the higher one's socioeconomic status, the less he/she believes that skilled laborers make as much money as university graduates. See Table 11 for details.

Table 11

Results of the Variables entered for the Linear Stepwise Regression

Analysis Between the Recoded SES and GV/EV Variables

Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.248	.094		13.280	.000
Recoded SES	.143	.062	.163	2.316	.022

a. Dependent Variable: General Values: A leader in my group

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.968	.082		23.905	.000
Recoded SES	-.163	.054	-.211	-3.025	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Educational Values: Skilled laborers make as much as university graduates.

H2 Educational expectations will vary according to SES.

Lebanese Armenian high school students with a low SES will have lower educational expectations than those with higher SES.

Based on the results of linear stepwise regression analyses, socioeconomic status was found to be a significant predictor of students' educational expectations (SEE). Initially, the SES factor was used in the analysis (See Table 12), and later on, after obtaining the significant results, all the SES variables were taken separately; results showed that father's highest education level (FEDL), in specific, was responsible for the significant relationship (See Table 13).

Table 12

Results of the Regression Analysis between SES and SEE—Using the SES factor

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.172	.074		56.731	.000
REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	.305	.074	.285	4.149	.000

Therefore, the expected value of  $SEE=4.172+0.305SES$  factor; if the SES factor increases by one, SEE will increase by 0.305. When the SES variables are taken separately, the expected value of  $SEE=3.526+0.182FEDL$ ; when father's highest education level increases by one point, student's educational expectation will increase by 0.182. In other words, the higher the father's educational level, the higher the student's educational expectations will be.

Table 13

Results of the Regression Analysis Between SES and SEE—Using the SES Variables Separately

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.526	.177		19.872	.000
Father's highest Education level	.182	.045	.276	4.009	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Future educational expectations

Further, the same statistics were run using the recoded SES (low, middle, and high SES) to be regressed with students' educational expectations (SEE). Once again, as shown in Table 14, results showed that belonging to a specific SES is a significant predictor for SEE. The regression equation for the expected value

of student’s educational expectations was  $SEE=3.593+0.402$   
recoded SES.

Table 14  
Coefficients of the Regression Analysis Between Recoded SES and SEE

Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.593	.202		17.787	.000
Recoded SES	.402	.133	.212	3.034	.003

a Dependent Variable: Future educational expectations

H3 Educational aspirations will vary according to SES.  
Lebanese Armenian high school students with a low SES will have  
lower educational aspirations than those with higher SES.

As opposed to student’s educational expectations, results did  
not provide evidence for the educational aspirations being affected  
by socioeconomic status. None of the socioeconomic variables  
entered the stepwise regression analysis run between SES and  
student’s educational aspirations (SEA). Results remained the  
same when recoded SES was regressed with SEA; recoded SES did  
not have any significant predictive effect on SEA.

Since socioeconomic status showed to have significant effects  
on students’ educational expectations but not on their aspirations,  
thus accepting H2 but rejecting H3, it was decided to run a paired

sample’s t-test between SEE and SEA. Results were highly significant (See Table 15). Students’ educational expectations differed from their educational aspirations significantly.

Table 15  
Results of the T-Test Between SEE and SEA

Paired Samples Test								
	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Future educational aspirations - Future educational expectations	1.27	1.07	7.41E-02	1.12	1.41	17.091	209	.000

In order to provide further information about the factors related to students’ educational expectations and aspirations, regression analyses were run between SEE/SEA as the predicted variables, and GV/EV as the criterion variables. Through these results, we hoped to get some feedback about the values which play significant roles in the shaping of adolescents’ future educational plans. When regressing the general values with the students’ educational expectations, none of the GV variables entered the analysis. In other words, none of the general values had a predictive effect on SEE. Educational values, on the other hand, presented a different picture. One of the EV variables,



success depending on knowing the right people and not on education (SRP), was significantly and negatively related to SEE. The expected value of  $SEE=4.799-0.423SRP$ , meaning that the more the students agree that success is more dependent on connections than on education, the less their educational expectations will be. See Table 16 for details.

Table 16  
Results of the Stepwise Regression Analysis Between EV and SEE

Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.799	.232		20.664	.000
Educational Values: Success depends on knowing the right people	-.423	.145	-.198	-2.906	.004

a Dependent Variable: Future educational expectations

As for the values related to students' future educational aspirations (SEA), one of the general values, learning easy fun games as opposed to difficult thought games (EGDG) had a negative significant effect on SEA (See Table 17). The more the students agreed to learning easy fun games, the less they aspired. In other words, those students who preferred to learn difficult thought games had higher aspirations than those who preferred easy fun games. The expected value of  $SEA=5.921-0.355EGDG$ .

When regressing the educational values with the students' educational aspirations, none of the EV variables entered the stepwise analysis. The educational values had no significant effect on SEA.

Table 17

### Results of the Stepwise Regression Analysis Between GV and SEA

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.921	.160		36.918	.000
General Values: Learning easy fun games vs. difficult thought games	-.355	.113	-.215	-3.152	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Future educational aspirations

H4 The higher the Lebanese Armenian high school students' academic performance, the higher their educational expectations and aspirations will be.

As mentioned previously, four variables targeted a subject's reported academic achievement (RAA): the official Brevet exam score (BS), the general average for the last available grading period (GA), and whether or not the student had repeated a grade level in the elementary/intermediate cycle (RE/RI). Again, stepwise linear regression analyses were used to test the fourth hypothesis. When

regressing academic achievement with the predicted variable SEE, two of the RAA variables entered the analysis as having a predictive effect on students' educational expectations. The two variables were the students' Brevet scores (BS) and whether or not they had repeated a grade level in the intermediate cycle (RI). As shown in Table 18, the expected value of  $SEE=3.242+0.01228BS$ . The higher the students' official Brevet scores, the higher their expectations are. More specifically, if BS increases by one point, SEE will increase by 0.01228. The second RAA variable entered, repeating a grade level in the intermediate cycle, is negatively related to students' expectations.

Table 18  
Results of the Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis Between RAA and SEE

Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.369	.649		3.647	.000
Official Brevet Score / 200	1.550E-02	.006	.197	2.685	.008
(Constant)	3.242	.775		4.183	.000
Official Brevet Score / 200	1.228E-02	.006	.156	2.066	.040
Repeated a grade level in the intermediate	-.440	.217	-.153	-2.024	.044

a Dependent Variable: Future educational expectations

In this case, the expected value of  $SEE=3.242-0.440RI$ . In other words, having repeated a grade level in the intermediate cycle lowers students' future educational expectations.

As for students' educational aspirations (SEA), when regressing it with the RAA variables, it showed to have a negative significant relationship with having repeated a grade level in the intermediate cycle (RI). The expected value of  $SEA=5.873-0.403RI$  (See Table 19). Repeating a grade level in the intermediate cycle lowers students' educational aspirations.

Table 19

Results of the Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis Between RAA and SEA

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.873	.196		29.965	.000
Repeated a grade level in the intermediate	-.403	.160	-.186	-2.521	.013

a. Dependent Variable: Future educational aspirations

H5 The stronger the significant others' (parents', teachers', peers', older siblings') positive influence on the students' attainment of higher education, the higher the Lebanese Armenian high school students' educational aspirations and expectations will be.

Eleven different variables gave measures for the significant others' influence (SOI) through five questions (numbers 26-30). When running the regression analyses for H5, parents, teachers, peers and older siblings were each taken separately as the SOI variable and regressed with students' educational aspirations (SEA) and expectations (SEE) respectively. To begin with, parents' influence (PSOI) was regressed with students' educational aspirations. The stepwise linear regression analyses resulted in having parents' educational expectations entered as a significant predictor for SEA. The expected value of  $SEA = 4.685 + 0.156PSOI$ . See Table 20 for details.

Table 20

Results of the Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis Between PSOI and SEA

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.685	.270		17.377	.000
Parents' educational expectations	.156	.055	.195	2.855	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Future educational aspirations

According to this equation, if parents' educational expectations for their children goes up by one point, students' educational aspirations will increase by 0.156; the higher the parents'

expectations, the higher their children will aspire for. The excluded variables were discussion of educational plans with parents, and influence of parents on educational plans.

When using the teacher as a significant other (TSOI), the discussion of educational plans with the teacher showed a significant effect on students' educational aspirations (SEA), as opposed to the influence of teachers on educational plans and whether or not teachers have *tried* to influence students' educational plans. The expected value of  $SEA = 5.150 + 0.131TSOI$ ; the more the students discuss their future educational plans with their teachers, the higher they aspire for (See Table 21).

Table 21

Results of the Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis Between TSOI and SEA

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.150	.152		33.947	.000
Discussion of educational plans with teacher	.131	.064	.142	2.037	.043

a. Dependent Variable: Future educational aspirations

Close friends' next year's plans was the variable which entered the stepwise regression analysis between friends' influence (FSOI)



and SEA, where the expected value of  $SEA=5.578-0.0691FSOI$ .

The reason for the relationship being negative is because the variable “close friends’ next year’s plans” was coded inversely, thus the relationship is not actually negative; the more the students’ close friends’ plans have to do with furthering education, the higher the students themselves will aspire (See Table 22).

Table 22

Results of the Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis Between FSOI and SEA

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.578	.077		72.649	.000
Close friends' next year's plans	-6.915E-02	.029	-.167	-2.422	.016

a Dependent Variable: Future educational aspirations

Finally, where older siblings are concerned as significant others (SSOI), results showed that it is the discussion of educational plans with older siblings which has a positive significant predictive power over student’s educational aspirations (SEA), meaning that the more students discuss their educational plans with their older siblings, the higher they will aspire. The expected value of  $SEA=4.815+0.194SSOI$ . See Table 23 for details.

Table 23

Results of the Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis Between SSOI and SEA

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.815	.244		19.723	.000
Discussion of educational plans with older siblings	.194	.074	.239	2.639	.009

a Dependent Variable: Future educational aspirations

The results for students' educational expectations (SEE) as related to SOI provided interesting data to be compared with the results obtained from regressing SOI with SEA. When taking parents as the source for SOI (PSOI), significant results were obtained for two variables having a positive relationship with student's educational expectations. The two variables were parents' educational expectations and discussion of educational plans with parents. Parents' educational expectations was the only variable which showed significant results when regressed with SEA, as discussed in the previous section. Returning to students' educational expectations (SEE), as shown in Table 24 the expected value of  $SEE = 1.866 + 0.334PSOI$  for parents' educational

expectations, and the expected value of  $SEE = 1.866 + 0.196PSOI$  for discussion of educational plans with parents.

Table 24

Results of the Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis Between PSOI and SEE

## Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.516	.355		7.093	.000
Parents' educational expectations	.342	.072	.313	4.749	.000
(Constant)	1.866	.468		3.988	.000
Parents' educational expectations	.334	.071	.306	4.678	.000
Discussion of educational plans with parents	.196	.093	.138	2.105	.036

a. Dependent Variable: Future educational expectations

In other words, when parents' educational expectations increase by one point, students' educational expectations increase by 0.334.

When the value for discussion of educational plans with parents increases by one point, SEE increases by 0.196. Thus, students who have parents who hold high expectations for them and who discuss their children's educational plans with them, report to have higher educational expectations.

When teachers were taken as significant others (TSOI), none of the variables related to TSOI entered the stepwise regression analysis. In other words, teachers showed to have no significant effect on students' educational expectations (SEE), as opposed to their aspirations, where discussion of educational plans with a teacher showed to have some significant predictive power.

Next, significant others' influence (SOI) was regressed with SEE taking friends as a source of influence (FSOI). Discussion of educational plans with friends was found to be positively related to students' educational expectations (See Table 25).

Table 25  
Results of the Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis Between FSOI and SEE

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.449	.323		10.668	.000
Discussion of educational plans with friends	.219	.095	.159	2.315	.022

a Dependent Variable: Future educational expectations

This result as well differed from the ones obtained when regressing FSOI with SEA, where another variable, close friends' next year's plans, was entered in the analysis. With students' educational

expectations, the expected value of  $SEE=3.449+0.219FSOI$ ; the more students discussed their future educational plans with their friends, the higher their reported educational expectations were.

Using older siblings for SOI (SSOI) was similar to using parents, since here again results showed that one of the two variables entered for the stepwise regression analysis between SSOI and students educational expectations (SEE) was the same as the one entered when regressing SSOI with students' aspirations (SEA). The two variables entered, the only SSOI variables, were discussion of educational plans with older siblings—as when regressing SSOI with SEA—and influence of older siblings on educational plans. As shown in Table 26, the expected value of  $SEE=3.652+0.368SSOI$ , where discussion of educational plans with older siblings is concerned. In other words, the more students discuss their future educational plans with their older siblings, the higher their expectations will be, along with their aspirations, as mentioned above. The second variable entered, the influence of older siblings on educational plans is negatively related to students' educational expectations. In this case, the expected value of  $SEE=3.652-0.362SSOI$ , meaning that the more students believe that their older siblings have some influence on their educational plans, the less they expect to attain in the future, while simply discussing future

educational plans with them increases expectations. Thus, where there is some influence on the students by the older siblings, it is a negative influence on the students' educational expectations.

Table 26  
Results of the Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis Between SSOI and SEE

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.410	.285		11.966	.000
Discussion of educational plans with older siblings	.205	.086	.217	2.397	.018
(Constant)	3.652	.295		12.370	.000
Discussion of educational plans with older siblings	.368	.106	.389	3.464	.001
Influence of older siblings on educational plans	-.362	.145	-.280	-2.492	.014

a Dependent Variable: Future educational expectations



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main purpose of the current study was to investigate the effects of socioeconomic status has an effect on adolescents' post-high school destinations. The target subjects were the Lebanese Armenian students attending Armenian schools in Lebanon. The arguments were based on Hyman's (1953) class-differentiated value system and Sewell and his colleagues' (1970) social-psychological model for educational attainment. The five hypotheses suggested that students differ in the general and educational values that they hold, along with their educational expectations and aspirations, according to the specific SES they belong to; furthermore, that students' academic achievement and their significant others' influence have a significant effect on the subjects' level of educational aspirations and expectations. Results showed that socioeconomic status was one factor influencing students' post-high school destinations, through its influence on educational expectations. Along with SES, academic achievement and significant others' influence had their effects in the formation

of adolescents' expectations. Nevertheless, a distinction was drawn between expectations and aspirations, as suggested by Rodman (1963) and Han (1969).

The results of the first hypothesis postulating that the subjects from different SES will reflect different values in general, and different educational values in specific, showed that father's highest educational level, and having a computer and encyclopedia were the accountable variables for SES having a significant influence on the general and educational values. More specifically, the two GV factors, acquisitiveness and dominance, were most affected by one's socioeconomic status. As for the educational values, the higher one's SES, the less they believed that skilled laborers make as much as university graduates, and that success depends on knowing the right people and not on education. Thus, as Hyman's (1953) class-differentiated value system proposes, the subjects of the current study did differ in their values according to the specific socioeconomic status they belonged to; the lower classes in our sample tended to see their objective chances for success a lot more limited than the higher classes, and they did not view education as a high value and a means for success as much as members of the higher SES did.

The first hypothesis leads to the second and third; if values do differ from one social class to the other, then educational expectations and aspirations should too. Therefore, the hypotheses accept the distinction between expectations and aspirations, but expect to find differential educational expectations and aspirations according to SES; individuals may aspire for one thing but expect another, nevertheless both of their ideal and realistic goals are influenced in one way or another by the specific social class they are members of. Results supported part of the just mentioned arguments. There was a significant difference between students' aspirations and expectations; nevertheless, socioeconomic status was able to predict only educational expectations and not aspirations. In other words, subjects from different social strata did not differ significantly from one another in their aspirations, but did in their expectations. Thus, results supported Rodman's (1963) lower-class value stretch and Han's (1969) distinction between wishes and expectations. In other words, the common value system was justified when focusing on aspirations, while the class-differentiated value system found support in the study of expectations. Unlike in Della Fave's (1974) and Klailat's (1981) studies, the current research was not able to find significant support for class-differentiated aspirations; in our

target sample, subjects did not seem to be affected by the difficulties and restrictions imposed on them by their specific social classes when reporting their future educational aspirations. Students' aspirations went beyond their awareness of any financial or academic hindrances, while their expectations were significantly affected by them.

As for the general and educational values and their connections with educational expectations and aspirations, findings showed that both GV and EV could have significant predictive power on students' educational expectations and aspirations. More specifically, when students attributed success to factors outside of their control, rather than on their own educational achievements, they tended to have lower expectations. Those students who were not challenged to try out difficult thought games, but went for easy fun games instead, had lower aspirations than others. Therefore, one may argue that although SES was not a significant predictor of students' aspirations, through its influence on general and educational values, it could be affecting SEA. In other words, students may have set aspirations transcending their class-specific restrictions; nevertheless, these SES related factors could be influencing students' aspirations indirectly, through their effects

on values, since SES proved to be a significant predictor of general and educational values.

The current study also found support for the social-psychological model for educational attainment proposed by Sewell and his colleagues (1970). As mentioned earlier, according to this model, the attainment process begins with one's SES and mental ability, moves on to academic performance, significant others' influence, educational aspirations, and finally educational attainment. Two variables from this model, academic performance and significant others' influence, were studied to examine their influence on SEA and SEE, in order to provide further data about the factors shaping adolescents' expectations and aspirations, other than their socioeconomic status. As expected, and as the model suggests, both academic achievement and SOI were significantly related to SEA and SEE. The higher the subjects scored on their official Brevet exams, the higher expectations they set, and if they reported having repeated a grade level in the intermediate cycle, the lower expectations *and* aspirations they had. Thus, the subjects' reported achievement had a significant influence both on their educational expectations and aspirations.

As for the significant other's influence, parents, teachers, peers, and older siblings showed as having an important role in shaping



the subjects' educational aspirations and expectations. Parents' expectations, discussion of future educational plans with teachers and older siblings, and peers' next year's plans, were all significantly and positively related to students' educational aspirations. These results are similar to Krauss's (1964), who identifies two major sources of educational aspirations: certain family conditions (whether or not any family members have had post-high school education and father's occupational status) and the nature of the students' peer associations. Subjects' educational expectations, on the other hand, were influenced positively by their parents' expectations, and their discussion of future plans with parents, peers, and older siblings.

Two interesting results in this category were: first, teachers showed no significant influence on their students' future educational expectations, neither by having discussions, nor by influencing or *trying* to influence their future plans. It is worth reminding at this point that all of the data used in the current study were based on student reported information. In other words, the results reflect only the subjects' opinion about the various variables in question. Second, influence of older siblings on future educational plans showed to have a significant negative influence on students' educational expectations; the more students believed



that their older siblings had some kind of influence on their plans for the future, the lower expectations they set for themselves, while having discussions with them about their future destinations brought about higher expectations. The wording of the question targeting this variable may have some responsibility for the negative result; the students may have interpreted the word “influence” with a negative connotation, meaning that when students got the impression that their older siblings did not value education too highly and did not encourage them to pursue any further education, they reported to be influenced highly—but negatively, by their siblings. Simply having discussions about the topic in question, on the other hand, increased their expectation levels. Another way to interpret this result is to state that the only times students believed that their older siblings had influenced their future plans, it had been a negative influence. The subjects did not believe that their siblings had any positive influence on their future destinations, leading to higher educational expectations; the resulting significant influence was one which lowered students’ educational expectations.

The results of the five hypotheses altogether provide evidence that socioeconomic status is an influential determinant of the sample’s general and educational values, and future educational

expectations, that Sewell's and his colleague's (1970) social-psychological model for educational attainment is applicable to the Lebanese Armenian students attending Armenian schools in Lebanon, and that socioeconomic status is the starting point of this process, having significant influential power over students' post-high school destinations. As for the distinction drawn between expectations and aspirations, results did not support the hypothesis postulating that SES is a significant predictor of students' future educational aspirations. Therefore, when aspirations are viewed as circumstance free wishes and goals, Hyman's (1953) class-differentiated value system is jeopardized, and instead Rodman's (1963) and Han's (1969) propositions for reconciling the common value and class-differentiated value systems gain support.

In light of the above discussed findings, the following conclusions are made: Lebanese Armenian adolescents attending Armenian schools in Lebanon have class-differentiated general and educational values; their socioeconomic backgrounds are influential in shaping up their value systems. Socioeconomic status is also an influential factor in determining their educational expectations; subjects from middle and high SES have much higher expectations than their peers coming from low

socioeconomic status. Nevertheless, the same cannot be said about their aspirations. Students' reported educational aspirations transcend their class-specific characteristics and restrictions; thus, the subjects' expectations and aspirations differ significantly from one another. Two other factors influencing the Lebanese Armenian adolescents in their post-high schools plans are their academic achievements and significant others' influence; these two variables are significant predictors of their future educational aspirations and expectations. Thus, the findings demonstrate the still prevailing indisputable effects of socioeconomic status on the educational attainment process, beginning from the internalization of differential class-values.

These conclusions bear with them certain implications for the target Lebanese Armenian community. Since results showed that socioeconomic status is an influential factor affecting adolescents' educational attainment process, one may fear a general lowering of students' future educational expectations, considering the financial difficulties parents have been facing during the past few years. Although the current paper did not aim at collecting such data, and many times was not given access to them, based on the testimonies of the school principals involved in this research, it can safely be stated that schools have been facing more difficulties

than ever in getting parents to pay their children's tuitions fully; the number of applicants for financial aid have increased significantly, while the number of parents paying full tuitions has decreased significantly. Thus, if this is the case, what trend will the coming generations' educational expectations follow? How drastic will the change be? How will this affect their future educational attainments?

Next, when focusing on the discrepancy between students' educational expectations and aspirations, lost potentials come into the picture. Since there is a highly significant difference in the reported expectations and aspirations, it implies that there is a significant number of students who believe that they could be achieving much higher, if they weren't faced by different class-specific obstacles. Thus, one observes educational expectations that fall short of educational aspirations. In other words, SES related restrictions are responsible for the created lost potentials or talents in our target sample, or as Hanson (1994) puts it, socioeconomic status is one of the major selection criteria in the educational arena; upper SES adolescents are less likely to experience lost talent than are lower SES adolescents. With the high percentage of our sample, 63%, having a low SES, the study

of the amount of lost potential in the target Lebanese Armenian community is worth the effort.

Since academic achievement showed to be a source of positive influence on educational expectations and aspirations, schools should concentrate on early interventions for academic success; the implementation of the new Lebanese curriculum, which calls for child-centered classrooms and rejects the idea of “failures” in the elementary cycle, may serve as a helping hand in this mission. As for the significant others’ influence, it was evident that students did not perceive teachers as much of a source of significant influence as their parents, peers, and older siblings. This finding should be brought to the attention of teachers; it is a disconcertment for students to report that they believe their teachers have had no influence on their educational expectations. Serious measures should be taken to involve teachers in their students’ post-high school plans, since teachers are the ones who guide their students’ academic orientations, whether directly or indirectly. As for parents, it should be brought to their attention as well the extent of influence their expectations have on their children’s. According to Hao and Bruns (1998), high levels of parent-child interactions not only increase parents’ and children’s expectations, but these shared family expectations also enhance



later achievement and attainment. Hossler and Stage (1992) state that since parental educational expectations have strong positive effects on their children's, research should concentrate on how these parental expectations are communicated. When parents are aware of such realities, they may further show interest and faith in their offspring's future educational plans, and adapt healthy means of communication.

Based on the results and implications of the current study, the following suggestions are made for further research. First, it is recommended that other sources, along with the students, be used for collecting data. Such a study will minimize bias and provide opportunities to compare and contrast student reported answers with others'. Second, conducting a similar research on all of the Lebanese Armenian students, attending both Armenian and non-Armenian private/public schools, will give a clearer picture about the Lebanese Armenian community, and it would also be possible to conclude whether attending Armenian schools is, in itself, an indicator of socioeconomic status. Further, it would also be interesting to conduct a comparative study between the Lebanese Armenian students and non-Armenian Lebanese students, in order to see if there is any cultural element functioning in this educational attainment process. Such a research will shed some



light on the cultural identity and personality of different groups and how these function as influential factors in adolescents' future destinations. Third, the current study did not examine the relationship between SES and academic achievement, and SES and significant others' influence. This attempt will further reflect on Sewell's and his colleagues' (1970) social-psychological model, along with a closer examination of gender differences operating during the educational attainment process. Fourth, and still related to Sewell's work, including IQ as a variable influencing students' educational attainment process will provide a more complete and comprehensive picture of students' educational journey. Finally, running a similar study, but longitudinally, will provide extremely valuable results and information, especially when including later educational attainment as the end variable of the social-psychological model. Such a research will also provide data about the long-term effects of socioeconomic status on high school graduates.

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## APPENDIX A

### SAMPLES OF THE LETTERS ADDRESSED TO THE PRINCIPALS AND STUDENTS

Dear Principal,

The following questionnaire aims at collecting data about Lebanese Armenian high school students' future educational plans. The results could help parents, teachers, administrators, and educators in general to get a better picture of the determinants of students' educational aspirations and expectations. We sincerely appreciate your help, cooperation, and participation in this research, which is part of a requirement in the completion of my Master's thesis in Educational Administration. Thank you in advance.

Lory Harboyan

(Graduate student at Hajjarian University)

Dear Principal,

The following questionnaire aims at collecting data about Lebanese Armenian high school students' future educational plans. The results could help parents, teachers, administrators, and educators in general to get a better picture of the determinants of students' educational aspirations and expectations. We sincerely appreciate your help, cooperation, and participation in this research, which is part of a requirement in the completion of my Master's thesis in Educational Administration. Thank you in advance,

Lory Harboyan

(Graduate student at Haigazian University)

## APPENDIX B

## SAMPLE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student,

The following questionnaire aims at collecting data about Lebanese Armenian high school students' educational background and expectations. Please fill out this anonymous questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. It should require approximately 15 minutes of your time. We sincerely appreciate your help and participation in this research and thank you in advance.

Lory Harboyan

(Graduate student at Haigazian University)

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following questions and try to answer them as accurately as possible.

## APPENDIX B

### SAMPLE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you a male or a female? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you have any siblings? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No  
If yes, do they attend/have they attended college/university?  
\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
3. What was the highest level of education your father and mother completed? If you are not sure, please give your best guess. (Check only one for each of your parents.)
 

	Father/ Male Guardian	Mother/ Female Guardian
Illiterate (no schooling)	_____	_____
Completed the elementary cycle (6 years)	_____	_____
Completed the intermediate cycle (9 years)	_____	_____
Attended or completed secondary school	_____	_____
Completed some university classes	_____	_____
Received B.A./B.S.	_____	_____
Received M.A./M.S.	_____	_____
Received some Doctorate Degree	_____	_____
4. What is the work that your father does? Please be specific. For example, if your father works in an office, what exactly does he do there? If your father does not work, write "unemployed".  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the work that your mother does? Please be specific. If your mother does not work, write "housewife".  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you have an encyclopedia at home? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
7. Do you have a computer at home? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
8. Do you receive/buy a daily newspaper at home? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Read the following questions and try to answer them as accurately as possible.*

1. Are you a male or a female? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you have older siblings? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No  
If yes, do they attend/have they attended college/university?  
\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
3. What was the highest level of education your father and mother completed? If you are not sure, please give your best guess. (Check only one for each of your parents.)

	<u>Father/ Male Guardian</u>	<u>Mother/ Female Guardian</u>
--	----------------------------------	------------------------------------

Illiterate (no schooling)	_____	_____
Completed the elementary cycle (6 years)	_____	_____
Completed the intermediate cycle (9 years)	_____	_____
Attended or completed secondary school	_____	_____
Completed some university classes	_____	_____
Received B.A./B.S.	_____	_____
Received M.A./M.S.	_____	_____
Received some Doctorate Degree	_____	_____

4. What is the work that your father does? Please be specific. For example, if your father works in an office, what exactly does he do there? If your father does not work, write "unemployed".  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the work that your mother does? Please be specific. If your mother does not work, write "housewife".  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you have an encyclopedia at home? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

7. Do you have a computer at home? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

8. Do you receive/buy a daily newspaper at home? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by ticking the corresponding boxes. ( **1** if you agree, **2** if you disagree)

9. I can easily sit for a long time doing nothing.

1(agree) ☐ ----- ☐ 2(disagree)

10. I would be willing to work for a salary that was below average if the job was pleasant.

1(agree) ☐ ----- ☐ 2(disagree)

11. I think I am usually a leader in my group.

1(agree) ☐ ----- ☐ 2 (disagree)

12. There is satisfaction in a job well done.

1(agree) ☐ ----- ☐ 2 (disagree)

13. It is important to me to perform better than others on a task.

1(agree) ☐ ----- ☐ 2 (disagree)

14. I would like an important job where people looked up to me.

1(agree) ☐ ----- ☐ 2 (disagree)

15. I would rather learn easy fun games than difficult thought games.

1(agree) ☐ ----- ☐ 2 (disagree)

16. I think more education gets better paying jobs.

1(agree) ☐ ----- ☐ 2 (disagree)

17. I think skilled laborers make as much as university graduates.

1(agree) ☐ ----- ☐ 2 (disagree)

18. I think the more education one gets, the greater the chance of higher positions.

1(agree) ☐ ----- ☐ 2 (disagree)

19. I think success in life depends on knowing the right people, not on education.

1(agree) ☐ ----- ☐ 2 (disagree)



Kindly answer the following questions about your past academic performance and future educational plans.

20. What was your official brevet exam score? \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

21. What was your general average for the last quarter or grading period?  
(Please state your average score/the total maximum score) \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

22. Have you repeated any grades in the elementary cycle?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

23. Have you repeated any grades in the intermediate cycle?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

24. **SUPPOSING** you had the necessary abilities, grades, money, etc., what is the highest level of education you would **LIKE** to complete? (Check one.)

- \_\_\_\_ 11-th grade
- \_\_\_\_ 12-th grade
- \_\_\_\_ Technical/Vocational degree
- \_\_\_\_ B.A./B.S.
- \_\_\_\_ M.A./M.S.
- \_\_\_\_ Doctorate Degree

25. **CONSIDERING** your abilities, grades, financial resources, etc., what is the highest level of education you **EXPECT** to complete? (Check one.)

- \_\_\_\_ 11-th grade
- \_\_\_\_ 12-th grade
- \_\_\_\_ Technical/Vocational degree
- \_\_\_\_ B.A./B.S.
- \_\_\_\_ M.A./M.S.
- \_\_\_\_ Doctorate Degree

26. How much education do your parents/guardians want you to complete? (Check one.)

- ☐ 11-th grade
- ☐ 12-th grade
- ☐ Technical/Vocational degree
- ☐ B.A./B.S.
- ☐ M.A./M.S.
- ☐ Doctorate Degree

27. How often have you discussed your post high school plans with each of the following people? (Check one for each of the four categories.)

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>
Your parents/guardians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friends your own age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older sibling(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

28. How much has each of the following influenced your post high school plans? (Check one for each of the four categories.)

	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>A Great Deal</u>
Your parents/guardians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friends your own age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older sibling(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

29. Have your teachers ever tried to influence your educational plans for after high school?

☐ Yes      ☐ No

30. What do most of your close friends plan to do next year? (Check one.)

- ☐ Graduate 12-th grade
- ☐ Leave this school and enter a technical/vocational school
- ☐ Leave school and get a full time job
- ☐ Stay at home and not work
- ☐ Leave school and enter apprenticeships or on the job training programs
- ☐ I don't know