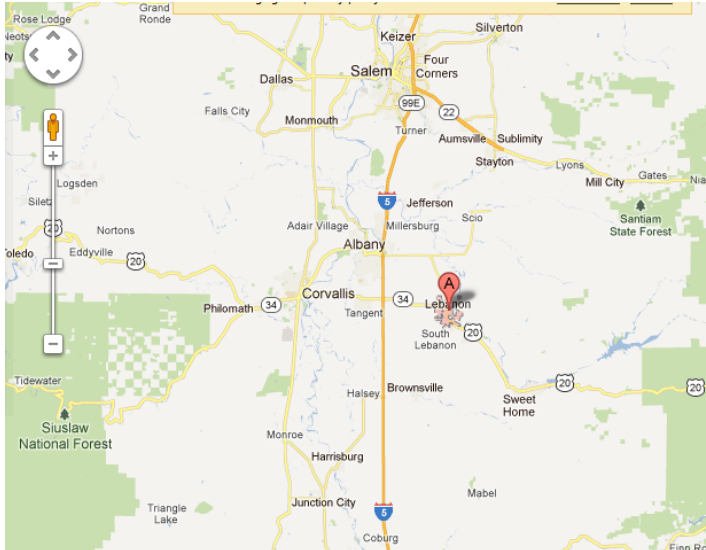


## Cultural Analysis of Lebanon, OR

The purpose of this analysis is to describe and understand the values of the culture in the small town of Lebanon, OR. Lebanon is a town made up of primarily mill workers, agriculture or medical workers. Lebanon has a wide array of small businesses but has also welcomed retail giants such as Wal-Mart. Within the city limits there are 16,000 people, the average age of the population is 36, within this population the average house hold size is 3 people which means that



the population consists primarily of families. (Census) Lebanon additionally has a large elderly population which is a direct result of the low turnover of citizens moving out of the Lebanon area. The towns claim to fame is being the holders of the “Worlds Largest Shortcake.” (Wikipedia) This gargantuan shortcake is celebrated in the towns annual “Strawberry Festival” which gathers all the Lebanites for fun, food and fireworks. As with any small town Lebanon is culturally unique. This paper will address my findings on the cultural values, behavioral examples

and give an explanation of the actions of this culture in hopes of enlightening ones understanding of the culture of this small town.

### Value Ranking:

#### Rank: 1

#### Value: *Family*

**Behavioral Example:** The major companies in town sponsor annual family picnics, the fairgrounds are utilized for family days throughout the year as well as having the atypical “Father-Daughter” dances that you may only hear about on television, these events are all centered around bringing family together in every aspect of their lives. Additionally, it is common place for families to ensure that they have dinner together as a family most nights of the week as well as enjoying quality game and movie nights together.

**Espoused Level:** The value of family is something that this community values both operant and espoused at the same level.

**Explanation:** The value of family ties into the cultural dimension of collectivism vs individualism (Trompenaar). Families are a unit that works together to perform an overall goal, this importance on family speaks to the community as being collective

#### Rank: 2

#### Value: *Community*

**Behavioral Example:** People within this culture view struggles of others within their culture as their own personal struggle. When a person cannot afford a medical bill for example members of the town come together to fundraise to help this person out. These people look at the members of the town as an extension of their immediate family, they are there for each other in times of need whether that be through prayer, fund raising or as a joint effort fighting off any negative impacts on the town and the people.

Lebanon offers many opportunities to come together as a community in the large amount of annual festivals it holds, community areas as well as fundraising and beautification projects throughout the year.

**Espoused Level:** Community both operant and espoused is very important, however, from an espoused stand point I would put community lower in the ranks surpassed by items such as hard work as the citizens like to portray more of a masculine front, and community is more a feminine trait. (Hofstede)

**Explanation:** Evaluating this value brings us to talk about two different value dimensions, firstly collectivism vs individualism and secondly specific vs. diffuse relationships (Trompenaar). Evaluating the first it is clear that the value of community speaks to a collective society, working together for an overarching community well being. On the latter, having a sense of community relates to allowing members within the community be involved in multiple parts of your life, treating your community like family. This idea of involvement in multiple aspects of your life ties into being a more diffuse culture.

**Rank: 3**

**Value: Hard Work**

**Behavioral Example:** Tying into the importance of skill and family is that of “Hard Work.” It is a huge importance in this culture to have the head of household be a good provider to protect the family. As the majority of the jobs in Lebanon are skilled labor jobs, it is required for one to put in long hours at the mill, on the farm or in the hospital to make the money it requires to protect the family. Most of the families have one head of household working while the spouse is a stay at home care taker.

**Espoused Level:** Both operant and espoused this value is important to the community, however, I would put this higher on an espoused level as once again it gives off more the masculine persona. (Hofstede)

**Explanation:** This value is evaluated by utilizing Trompenaars’ study on achieving status compared to ascribed status. Valuing hard work speaks to achieving status, actually working for your place in society rather than having it be part of something that is passed down to you. Truly, people of Lebanon value the fact that they put in the effort to create their own future, this additionally speaks to the future orientation of the Lebanon people. (Trompenaar)

**Rank: 4**

**Value: Religion/Faith**

**Behavioral Example:** The importance of faith is clear in just the sheer volume of places of worship this relatively small town has. On Sunday, the most common day of worship, many of the local businesses are closed, surely because the majority of the citizens participate in some form of religious services. Church youth groups play a big part of the social life for adolescents, additionally religious holidays are proudly celebrated in the majority of local businesses. The primary faith is Christianity, this faith follows through to home life in nightly prayer and saying grace at the dinner table

**Espoused Level:** This value would be espoused at roughly the same level as it is operant.

**Explanation:** Religion in the sense of a basic way of life, a guide to living, speaks to this idea of universalism vs. particularism. (Trompenaar) Having such a high importance on religion as guiding your life as in the case in Lebanon, speaks that the community is more universalist, in that they have a rule that can apply across all aspects of life and will not waiver from this foundation, this foundation plays a part in business, family and their social lives

**Rank: 5**

**Value: Loyalty/Pride**

**Behavioral Example:** People that live in Lebanon are typically very loyal in the fact that they are born here, raised here and die here. It is an abnormality for people to want to leave the town as the people of Lebanon are truly a community, it’s like you are choosing to leave a family

behind. This sense of loyalty and pride for the town is heightened during sporting events where all the local businesses decorate their windows with “Warrior Pride”, the local mascot being a Warrior.

**Espoused Level:** This value would fall higher from an espoused standpoint than this operant level

**Explanation:** In regards to loyalty, loyalty is exemplified by a collectivist society, loyal to the community members, family or co-workers, these people come together for the common good. Additionally, from the other side of this coin, pride which I think goes hand in hand with loyalty and therefore I grouped them together comes this idea of affective vs neutral societies. The tooting of the horn of Lebanon is a show of pride and loyalty to that community, this outward emotion speaks to the concept of an affective community (Trompenaar).

### **Rank: 6**

### **Value: Success/Accomplishment**

**Behavioral Example:** Competition and the awards of success are ingrained in the youth of the culture by way of inter-city sports and band competitions between the rival high schools and middle schools. This desire for accomplishment and success is continued through adulthood by the clear cliques that develop between the “haves and the have nots.” This is evident in the continuous drive for the residents to move up in class stature within the town. Being a small town it is clearly evident the successes of any of the citizens which drives the others to compete even more so.

**Espoused Level:** This value would be espoused lower than it is operant, once again, Lebanon people would say they value status quo as well as they would say they do not “toot their own horn”

**Explanation:** This value is one that goes against many of the other Lebanon values in the way that Lebanon for the most part is a community based, collective culture. This idea of success/accomplishment which leads to competition creates a paradox (Osland) of the afore mentioned values in that the people of Lebanon are working together and being collective yet individualist and competing one another at the same time. Here we again are privy to how the people of Lebanon are both achievement and future oriented in their drive towards success and accomplishment through their own skills and accomplishments (Trompenaar). Additionally, we are introduced to the dimension of power distance, have the success and drive to accomplish and recognize achievements and classes leads to a recognition of high power distance (Hofstede).

### **Rank: 7**

### **Value: Skill**

**Behavioral Example:** From the young age of a kindergartener up through high school, adolescents are taught the value of skill by doing site visits at dairies, taking wood shop, automotive and agriculture classes as part of their education. This value of skill follows through to adulthood as the primary market of jobs in the town are made up of skill-labored work, again in the dairies, farms, wood working fields and progressively medical field. Need for skill ties into the value of success/achievement as skill is required to be successful within the community.

**Espoused Level:** This value would be espoused higher than it is operant, the value of skill would fall closer to that of hard work.

**Explanation:** The value of skill again speaks to the dimension of being more achievement oriented vs ascription oriented. It is important to gain your way through life by having an important skill that will play a part in your achievement and status in the community and to your family (Trompenaar)

**Rank: 8**

**Value: Progress**

**Behavioral Example:** Population growth in Lebanon from 2000 to 2010 was nearly 20%, outpacing the Oregon average of 12% (Census). This growing city, opens its arms to progress in welcoming a medical college, big industry by offering tax discounts, new retail by being the first city in Oregon to open its arms to Wal-Mart in 1992 as well as the continuous change and evolution of Lebanon's historical buildings by demolishing and re-building new and improved community centers and businesses in its place. (West)

**Espoused Level:** If one were to ask a citizen of Lebanon if they valued progress and forward movement within the town, my guess is they would say no. From an espoused values standpoint a Lebanon citizen would say they were in favor of status-quo, this would not be an espoused value or if so very low ranked.

**Explanation:** This value of progress and forward movement speaks to the value dimensions of past/present/future orientation (Trompenaar). The citizens of Lebanon are always open and welcoming to the next big company to come into their town, however at the same time they are paradoxically (Osland) focused on protecting the small businesses of Lebanon which would be a more past/future orientation. Additionally, this value addresses the dimension surrounding relation to nature, truly this idea of progress in Lebanon in dominating the way that they manage business, destroying historical buildings and green spaces in the name of new business speaks to an inner direction relation to nature, the belief man can dominate nature and having themselves as the point for determining the right action rather than other communities (Trompenaar)

**Rank: 9**

**Value: Patriotism**

**Behavioral Example:** Throughout adolescence students are required to start the day with the pledge of allegiance in addition to the star spangled banner at every sporting event. In town there are flag days, patriot days as well as at many of the restaurants serving "Freedom Fries" rather than French Fries seemed to be an interesting note.

**Espoused Level:** This value would be espoused closer to the value of religion and family, this is a value that is talked about a lot, however from an operant importance I believe this value would fall at rank 9 as family values, community, etc. would truly win out in life priorities if they were tested.

**Explanation:** Patriotism in the way of pride of the country you reside in truly shows the outward emotion that this community puts forth. As with other values we find the citizens to be an affective culture emotionally (Trompenaar)

**Rank: 10**

**Value: Service**

**Behavioral Example:** In line with the value of community, service is another important part of the Lebanon life. Citizens of Lebanon are concerned not only about themselves but about the struggles of others and they actually act on these concerns. People of the town come together throughout the year for many causes including, cancer, diabetes, youth illiteracy and homelessness. These causes are near and dear to the people of Lebanon and they raise substantial dollars and give countless hours to these causes throughout the year as a business community and social community.

**Espoused Level:** This operant value would come at a higher level in the espoused values, service and helping others is important to this community, however the family values and inner-community is more important than these larger causes.

**Explanation:** This value of service again inline with the afore mentioned dimensions of this inward orientation. Service and being a part of a bigger cause takes the control out of the masses and brings it inward, Lebanon people believe they have a real ability to make change. Additionally, service again drives home this idea of collectivism and coming together for an over arching cause (Trompenaar)

### **Espoused Values**

Values that you will be told by a member of the community that are important are: **Nature, Acceptance of Others, Value of History.** However, observing the community you will find these to not be true and are just said to make the community sound better. Lebanon with more of an industrial lifestyle, green spaces are demolished in the way of progress and capital. Time after time the community allows and welcomes big industry to build on the grounds of their historical monuments, building over the piece of the Oregon trail that ran through the town, tearing down a historic drive through, demolishing the iconic Lebanon High School building for a new community center all these cases tell a story of progress over historical value. Lebanon as it is a very tight nit community, takes quite awhile to gain the familiarity that the Lebanon natives have, they do not welcome strangers into community events, it is clear you don't really have a place in the community until they warm up to you.

### **Summary**

From an espoused cultural view of Lebanon, we would be led to believe that from a masculine feminine culture view, the cultural is more masculine, however paradoxically would have a strong feminine dimension on family, there really isn't a power distance play (Hofstede), as well as thinking they were more neutral in their emotions (Trompenaar). Taking a deep dive into the operant values really shows proof that it is necessary for you to really dig deep and look at a community from emic standpoint as well as an etic standpoint (Osland). This really is the only way to get a true understanding of the social paradoxes and sophisticated stereotypes and what values are truly operating in a culture.

The primary theory used for evaluation of this culture was Trompenaars' 7 dimensions of culture. From this analysis we found that Lebanon is from its operant values a... universalist, collectivist, diffuse, achievement based culture with a future time orientation and inner directed relationship to nature. Additionally we learned the value of paying attention to the paradoxes in this culture, using the value of progress, Lebanon strives for great progress but hangs on to these small town businesses, which looking at the culture wholistically makes sense since their highest priority values are that of protecting their family and community.

After reading this analysis I hope one has a better understanding of the Lebanon culture and truly understands the value in taking a deeper dive into any cultures values to get passed the espoused values and into what is really going on in that culture.

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