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A principal goal of this study has been to assess the impact of social distance on attitudes towards Palestinian resettlement using comprehensive cross-cultural survey research. The results are clear and consistent for all Lebanese sub-groups. Social distance is a significant predictor of attitudes toward resettlement for all six sub-groups examined. Specifically, social distance is inversely and consistently associated with unfavorable attitudes toward the prospect of the permanent settlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. These findings indicate on one hand, that the majority of Sunnis and Druze respondents endorse communal ties with Palestinians and approve their permanent economic, social and political integration. However, social distance influence political attitudes toward Palestinian resettlement, namely in the case of Christian and Shii groups. Hence, for most Lebanese the question is about their own political survival not Palestinian resettlement. If the actual perceptions stand, resettlement will create a potential for communal conflict and will affect the social cohesion of the society.

Introduction

After half a century in the shadows, the Palestinian refugee issue has assumed a central place in the Arab-Israeli conflict with the initiation of the Middle East peace process in 1991. Following the discussions in Madrid, it has become clear that a satisfactory solution regarding the future of Palestinian refugees residing in Arab host countries is imperative for a durable peace in the Middle East. Pending a political solution that determines their fate, more than five million Palestinians continue to be refugees in various Arab countries. Although host population-refugee interaction vary proportionally to rights and restrictions accorded to Palestinians, Palestinians living in most parts of the Arab world have been considerably integrated (Aruri and Farsoun 1981; Brand 1988; Davis 1996; Arneberg 1997).

An exception is Lebanon, which continues to be the most reluctant of hosts. Lebanese officials seem concerned that Peace with Israel would eventually lead to the permanent settlement of Palestinians in the country. They worry that this cannot take place without further eroding the country's precarious

demographic composition. After two decades of civil war, Palestinian presence has been the subject of much controversial debate ranging from statements calling for their comprehensive deportation to more careful and pragmatic propositions that they be granted civil rights and a more secure form of permanent residence. And while almost all segments of society-politicians, religious leaders, political parties and scholars- joined the discussion, it is important to devote attention to public attitudes vis-à-vis the Palestinians and the prospect of their permanent settlement in Lebanon¹.

Debate regarding the fate of Palestinians residing in Lebanon resurfaced with the confirmation in the Oslo Agreement that there is an agreement to settle the Palestinians in the countries where they actually reside. If a solution is reached regarding the Palestinians' presence, it will not provide for their return. Lebanese positions range from statements calling for their wholesale removal to more measured and accommodating suggestions that they be granted civil rights and a more secure form of residency. Not only the permanent settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon is outlawed under Lebanon's constitution, but also public statements by Lebanese officials continue to itinerate a refusal to permanently integrate the refugees. Lebanese President Emile Lahoud confirmed this point when addressing a conference for Francophone countries in Canada that "all the Lebanese people agree that the permanent settlement of the Palestinian refugees is a time bomb"(Blanford 1999, p.18). Other examples of this common political position are a remark by a prominent Shii Lebanese politician, Abdallah Al-Amin (Al-Majallah 1995): "The talk about settling the Palestinians does not concern us in any way. We say that the Palestinians must return to Palestine, as we are unable to absorb or settle anyone." Former Minister of Education Michel Eddeh (Al-Nahar November, 1999) concludes: "Lebanon refuses the implantation of the Palestinians on its territories, since this foreshadows the country's division." Sunni MP Ahmed Karami (Al-Nahar July, 1999) expressed his categorical opposition "While the foreign media have been suggesting that resettlement is going to be imposed on the Lebanese, we think that the Lebanese people, because of their unity and solidarity, can stop any resettlement plan".

Although writings about Palestinian resettlement in Lebanon are numerous, most of them tend to be first, very much descriptive or mainly concerned about the refugees legal and socio-political standing (Salam 1994; Sayigh 1994; Arzt 1996; El-Khazen 1997). Second, only rarely are studies nationwide and cross-cultural, with a concern of discovering what conditions social and political relationships. Third, and perhaps most important, there has been little research in which the individual Lebanese is the unit of analysis, and accordingly very few systematic databased investigations that focus on the link between the social and political orientations of ordinary Lebanese citizens toward Palestinian presence (Khashan 1994; Haddad 2000).

To these deficiencies may be added the dearth of information about the relationship between social attitudes held by the Lebanese towards Palestinians and their indefinite settlement in Lebanon. In order for Palestinian resettlement to be feasible, there needs to be general consensus in the country, including acceptance of various aspects and consequences of this position among the different sectarian groups. In a multi-confessional state that recognizes the primacy of religious communities, any decision or policy must satisfy all communities to be workable. Second, there should be overall low levels of intolerance for Palestinians in the population. In our view, minimal social integration and weak inter-communal bonds between Lebanese and Palestinian groups are a major obstacle to achieving resettlement without disrupting peaceful coexistence in the country. These two elements constitute a conceptualization of social distance that is appropriate to the Lebanese. Accordingly, to contribute to an understanding of whether and how social distance toward Palestinians influence the way that ordinary Lebanese think about resettlement, this study uses cross-sectional survey data from Lebanon to examine the degree to which social distance account for variance in attitudes toward Palestinian resettlement in Lebanon.

Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of the Study

a-Relevant Theoretical Considerations

Immigration, involving long-term relocations of people across national borders, is a timely issue of sensible and academic importance. The act of leaving one's native country and settling in another country has immediate and long-term consequences for both immigrants and members of immigrant-receiving nations. Immigration presents a range of challenges, and the challenge of managing immigration successfully--in ways that facilitate the achievement and well being of immigrants, that benefit the country collectively, and that produce the cooperation and support of members of the receiving society--is critical for nations and individuals (Dovidio and Esses 2001). These issues have been framed academically largely in terms of economics, politics, and resource management. As a consequence, they have been studied extensively by economists, sociologists, political scientists, demographers, historians, and geographers (e.g., Borjas 1999; Cohen & Layton-Henry 1997; Hirschman, Kasinitz, & DeWind 1999; Rumbaut, Foner, & Gold 1999).

While an estimated 80 million migrants, almost 2 percent of the world's population, live permanently or for long periods of time outside their countries of origin (Castles 1993, p. 18) in most cases, and even European nations have seen harsh, often violent, reactions to these new minorities (Pettigrew 1998, p. 77). As Solomos and Wrench (1993) indicate, "In many societies in contemporary Europe, questions about migration and the position of minorities are amongst the most hotly contested areas of social and

political debate. Developments in Britain, France and Germany over the past decade have highlighted the volatility of the phenomenon and the ease with which it can lead to violent conflict" (p. 4). Even immigration that clearly and objectively benefits a nation as a whole does not necessarily have the same consequences for all segments of the population (Borjas 1999; Castells 1997). Immigration may thus be perceived as threatening and undesirable by subsets of a population (Cohen 1997). Opposition to immigration may vary systematically as a function of perceived competition across time and for different segments of the receiving society (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong 1998). Many continue to view the new minorities as not belonging - even the growing numbers of the second- and third-generation who have lived only in the host nation. They view the new minorities as "a people apart" who violate traditional values and for whom they feel little sympathy or admiration and tend to discriminate against them (MacEwen 1995). Discrimination comes about only when individuals or groups are denied equal treatment (Allport 1954, p.51)

Both direct and indirect discrimination are involved (Pettigrew 1998, p. 79). Direct discrimination, where blatantly prejudiced people may oppose immigration categorically, is straightforward and sets up spatial boundaries of some sort to accentuate the disadvantage of immigrants. It occurs at points where inequality is generated, often intentionally. That is when steps to exclude members of a certain group from our neighborhood, school, occupation or country are taken. A classical example is provided by surveys of Black/White interracial contact in the United States. Scholars assert that White acceptance of Blacks across a range of formal and informal settings. Preferred social distance or pro-integration sentiments among Whites measured their acceptance concerning bringing a Black person home for dinner, allowing Blacks into the neighborhood, and permitting interracial marriage (Dovidio, Brigham, Johnson, & Gaertner 1996).

Indirect discrimination involves people with more subtle biases who may oppose the immigration of certain groups of people (i.e., stigmatized racial or ethnic groups) but justify their exclusion on the basis of reasons other than prejudice, such as economic reasons (Pettigrew & Meertens 1995). It operates when the inability to obtain citizenship restricts the opportunities of non-EU minorities in most institutions. It restricts their ability to get suitable housing, employment, and schooling for children. A visa is required for travel to other EU countries. In short, the lives of non-citizens are severely circumscribed (Wilpert 1993). Castles (1984) contends that the newcomers are established as a problematic and stigmatized outgroup, suitable for low-status jobs but not for citizenship. Wilpert goes further. She asserts that Germany's institutions are based on "a dominant ideology, which distributes rights according to ethnic origins..." (Wilpert 1993, p. 70). The revealing comparison is between the almost two million Aussiedler and the Gastarbeiter. Officials regard the former as kin often on the thinnest of evidence, though since 1996 a language test must be taken. Aussiedler

readily become citizens and receive favorable government treatment. Yet even third-generation Turks, who are at least as culturally "German" as the Aussiedler, are largely denied citizenship and given unfavorable treatment.

b-Obstacles to Palestinian Integration in Lebanon

There are no definitive figures concerning the number of Palestinians in Lebanon today but estimates suggest that the actual size of the Palestinian community is close or even 400 thousand or more than 10 percent of the country's populationⁱⁱ. Because of the lack of census data and civil status records, political motives tend to distort accurate figures.

For the first few years following their arrival in 1948, Palestinians refugees were given material and moral support, but since then their treatment has deteriorated. Early governmental response was that the Palestinians are not allowed to stay indefinitely in the country and Lebanese authorities refused to discuss any solution that would open the door for the Palestinians to become assimilated or naturalized. In fact, the Lebanese government has made every effort to make life uncomfortable, and Lebanon unwelcoming, for the Palestinian community (Natour 1996, p.60). This policy is practiced consistently and with obsessive fervor to make sure that those Palestinians wishing to remain in Lebanon are unable to do so, under unbearable economic and political circumstances (Sayigh 2001).

Consequently, not only Palestinians were denied basic refugee or immigrant rights (Westin 2001), but also they have been in most cases the victim of official discrimination, social derogation and exclusion: First, restrictions on political rights and naturalization have ensured that Palestinians have been excluded from public institutions of social life and from the legal rights and protections the state affords to its citizens. Officially, the Palestinian community does not call for Lebanese citizenship, but those who can acquire it do so. In the past several years, around 50,000 Palestinians have been naturalized in Lebanon. In 1994, citizenship has been granted to another 27,000 who were mostly Shii residents of Southern border villages who had Palestinian refugee status (Shaml 1997); the rest were Sunnis who, for reasons not made public, were naturalized in 1995, perhaps to balance out the Shii naturalization. Maronite protest ensured that the few remaining Palestinian Christians without Lebanese citizenship were then naturalized (Peteet 1999). In addition, travel restrictions on Palestinians were always tight, passports rarely given, and the only documents issued by the government were temporary. Accordingly, the greatest majority remains stateless and is treated as foreigners, since Lebanese law prevents Palestinians from buying propertyⁱⁱⁱ.

This leads us to the second type of governmental restraints, which has to do with economic integration in the labor market. This is where Lebanese and Palestinians meet, interact, and develop mutual interdependence. Palestinians are classified as special case category foreigners along with Sri Lankans, Thais, Filipinos, Kurds and Syrians, who together constitute

Lebanon's imported working class. A harsh policy referred to as "strangulation" of Palestinians is accomplished by extremely restrictive options that provides for employment only by permit and the near-total absence of social welfare provisions (Peteet 1997). Obtaining a work permit remains a complex and lengthy process that offers neither social security nor insurance benefits nor a regular wage increase, and becomes invalid when its holder is laid off the job. Moreover, employment in large institutions is largely closed to Palestinians because it is governed by sectarian rules. Palestinians, however, explicitly are forbidden to work in virtually more than 70 qualified professions such as medicine and law. These restrictions force them to work in the informal sector with low wages, insecurity and no benefits. On the other hand, and as a preventive measure to discourage them from remaining in the country, official policy has made it difficult for the younger generation to continue post-compulsory school studies, even if international assistance has helped to provide secondary school places for some. The normal public schools are closed to Palestinians, while private schools charge fees that are often beyond their means (Hammarberg 2000).

Third, legally enforced segregation in housing ensures that not only are Palestinians in Lebanon confined to well defined, circumscribed and surveilled camps but they are also prevented from urgent reconstruction work in the camps, which contribute to their insecurity. Restrictions on building and reconstruction in the camps have resulted in severe overcrowding. Refugees have been banned since 1992 from bringing in any kind of building material into camps "Not even stones to cover our graves, says a camp official" (The Economist 2000). Since the government did not show the slightest interest in integrating the refugees, Lebanon remains the only host country where the quota of camp inhabitants is still higher than 50 percent

Finally, and perhaps most important, Lebanese prejudice put into practice receives additional evidence from Palestinians' perceptions of their situation in Lebanon. By definition, Palestinians are held in low regard by Lebanese and are often subject of negative stereotypes, hatred and hostility. Palestinians also recognized the differences between Lebanese and Palestinians in social prestige and socio-economic conditions. According to Peteet "there are several problems in distinguishing Palestinians from Lebanese and confining them to homogeneous enclaves" (Peteet 1996, p.28). However, until the late 1960s, the majority of Lebanese citizens did not manifest blatant prejudice or outright rejection for Palestinian refugees who came to Lebanon in 1948 and who share language and culture with their Lebanese hosts. In fact, many Palestinians have formed strong social and economic ties, through a long history of intermarriage and trade, to their host country. According to one Lebanese official (Brynen 1997), for example, fully one-quarter of third generation Palestinians in Lebanon has one Lebanese parent.

Although, urban Palestinian camps, which were scattered all over Lebanese territory had merged with surrounding Lebanese areas by the mid-seventies,

Lebanon's official policy contributed, through deliberate spatial containment, to create and sharpen communal distinctions. During the 1950s, tight vigil by the army curtailed movement for Palestinians. Later, with the dissolution of state authority in the 1970s and 1980s, local Lebanese militias crafted and imposed boundaries where a fluidity of space and social relations once prevailed between Lebanese and Palestinians (Cutting 1988). In postwar Lebanon, Palestinian refugees describe their lives in terms of abnormality. Aside from shortages of shelter, food, safety and access to medical care and education, they have constant doubts about the security of residence. In fact, not only were Palestinians landscaped out of Palestine, but also the erasure continues in exile. A Palestinian lawyer, echoing popular sentiment, has written, "that there are those who believe that the group known as Palestinian refugees in Lebanon will stop existing within a few years (Al-Natour 1993, p.41)." The refugee experience did not include the usual minority attributes of difference in language, religion and culture. Palestinian marginality is contingent, to some extent, on the concept of a Lebanese nation and society, however problematic, that excludes them. This negative identity held by their hosts prompted some observers to characterize the Lebanese society as minestrone rather than a melting pot, and encouraged the Palestinians to stress their culture, tradition and own identity (Koltermann 1997).

c-Basic Views on Palestinian Resettlement

Despite growing opposition to Palestinian resettlement, many think that Lebanon will have to face the reality of settling the Palestinians in it. Under the best circumstances, it might be possible to ensure that 250,000 to 300,000 of them leave, but Lebanon will find itself compelled to absorb at least 100,000 of them (Abd-al-Samad 1995; Khoury 2000). At the same time, there is very little support in Lebanon, at either the official or popular level, for the permanent resettlement of a significant number of Palestinians. In general, Lebanese authorities avoid raising this issue because it causes internal divisions, not about the principle of rejecting the settlement of Palestinians, but about the way in which this policy should be carried out. Some people in Lebanon believe that the presence of the Palestinians in Lebanon will create demographic, economic, social, and sectarian disorders. More specifically, Lebanon's opposition to resettlement rests on three major perceived political and historical arguments (Solh 1999):

* *Economic*: Lebanon's geographical area is very small in relation to its population. The Lebanese area that can be settled and exploited, after eliminating the mountains and deep valleys, is very small. This makes it unable to assimilate the Palestinian refugees, especially following the devastation inflicted by the civil war^{iv}. Former Minister Michel Edde adds that it is "impossible" for Palestinian refugees to settle in Lebanon. "The economic situation is very difficult and people are emigrating due to the high rate of unemployment" (Daily Star, 30/12/2000).

* *Political and Historical:* Granting the refugees sanctuary was undertaken as a humane, emergency measure; it was never intended to be permanent, the situation of the Palestinian refugees in the existing camps in Lebanon is basically different from their situation in some Arab countries where they live, work, and enjoy medical and educational security (Boueiz 1994). After more than 50 years, Lebanese see themselves as having paid a much higher price for the Palestinian cause than any other country. There are harsh memories of the civil wars of the 1970s and 1980s in which the Palestinians were blamed for dragging the country into bloodshed. Lebanese feel they cannot be asked to pay more in the form of the consequences incumbent on settling the Palestinians in Lebanon.

* *Demographic:* Lebanon is a multi-confessional country with seventeen officially recognized sects. Lebanese belong to three main sects: Muslim, Christian and Druze. The Lebanese sectarian structure is very delicate. Palestinians citizenship would further skew the already shaky balance both between Christians and Muslims, and between Sunni and Shia Muslims^v. Any imbalance will have a political, social, economical, and security impact on it. Ever since, Lebanon found himself host to a large and overwhelmingly Muslim refugee population, the Christians anticipated that the largely Muslim refugees might threaten their economic and political dominance, and assumed demographic majority. They feared and still fear their presence could upset the sectarian balance and political status quo by serving as a focal point for the growing discontent of Lebanon's Muslims and their eventual political mobilization for a greater share of power and national resources. Lebanon's Shiis concur; out of fear that Palestinians will tilt the Muslim Lebanese balance in the wrong direction. (The Economist 1992, p.45)

In fact the government still proclaimed the Palestinian refugees to constitute the greatest menace to national security. In this context, the immense number of mostly Muslim refugees was seen as highly explosive, threatening to blow up the entire political system of their host country.

The intensity of anti-Palestinian feelings, judged by the intensity and salience of hostile attitudes publicly expressed, prompted a journalist to characterize Lebanese attitudes towards Palestinians as ranging between two poles: indifference at one level and negativity at the other, with negativism varying between active hostility and passive dislike (Zeine 1994). Notwithstanding more concrete evidence are provided from cross sectional surveys of Lebanese groups (Khashan 1994; Haddad 2000). Previous research findings on the permanent settlement of Palestinian in Lebanon have pointed out that attitudes expressed by the Lebanese have been found to be highly non-supportive of resettlement, attitudes towards the Palestinians are variable, but usually negative. However, the relationship between attitudes towards the Palestinians as individuals or group and support for resettlement, which is the focus of the present report, has not been examined.

Methodology

In all, 1073 adult individuals, 688 male and 385 female respondents responded to these questions. The survey was carried out in late December 1999 and January 2000, using a face-to-face interviewing procedure. The response rate (based upon the number of completed interviews, as compared with households contacted) was 80 percent.

The sample included five occupational sub-groups, selected on the basis of quota sampling necessitated by the fact that representative selection is not possible due to lack of accurate demographic data pertaining to the characteristics and the urban distribution of the population. Because the sample is non-probabilistic, it is important to describe its characteristics and to note that, in some respects, they differ from those of the larger Lebanese population over the age of 18. The sex distribution of the sample consisted of 64 percent male and 36 percent female. The lower proportion of women in the study reflects their marginal position in the Lebanese society dominated by males as well as their limited professional role. The sample had an age range of 18-66 years and a mean age of 33 years. The representation of each confessional group is, as close as possible, in proportion to its actual size in Lebanon's population: 29 percent Maronites, 10 percent Greek-Catholics, 9 percent Greek-Orthodox, 27 percent Shi'is, 18 percent Sunnis, and 7 percent Druze. In terms of educational level, the sample was found to be over-represented in the college-educated level with 58 percent having achieved college education. Less-educated Lebanese generally have a problem in forming political opinions. In terms of occupational groupings the sample somewhat over-represented people with professional and managerial occupations, and underrepresented people in the trades and labor category^{vi}. Despite some limitations, including the non-representative composition and the relatively small size of the sample, this data constitutes an empirical foundation possessing considerable strength. First, the availability of opinion data dealing with socio-political issues is itself a very notable strength because surveys dealing with political attitudes are extremely rare in the Arab world and also in Lebanon. Lebanese people in general are cooperative but have deep concern about their security. They suspect that most of such surveys are conducted to serve government objectives or a deceitful political organization. In responding to questionnaires what they think or write could be used against them. Second, the respondents were interviewed in an atmosphere of strict confidentiality, and well-trained interviewers of the same religious background interviewed the respondents in their native language (Arabic). The author maintained close contact with the field workers during the entire period of data collection and personally supervised the stage of data processing (coding and entry), including tabular preparation and presentation. Third, given the precarious nature of survey research in a conflictual environment three reliability test measures were imposed on the data: pre-testing, internal consistency and response bias. Consequently,

proper additions, deletions, and adjustments were made on the final version. In general, respondents attested that the questions were easily understood.

Survey Instrument

In developing the survey instrument, an initial pool of items was constructed from two sources. Approximately half of the items were adapted from existing instruments (Allport 1954; Khashan 1994; Bettancourt & Dorr 1998; Labianca et al. 1998; Tuch et al. 1999). The remaining items were developed anew by the investigator. Many of the items adapted from previous instruments were reworded to simplify their readability. Items were selected or developed to assess social distance and attitude toward resettlement, which represents the single dependent variable in this study. English and Arabic language versions were prepared. A copy of the interview schedule is available from the author.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Independent and Dependent Variables by Religious Sect

Christian Groups									
	Maronites			Catholics			Orthodox		
	Mean	SD	Coeff*	Mean	SD	Coeff*	Mean	SD	Coeff*
ATR scale ^a	2.51	0.69	0.66	2.43	0.75	0.68	2.27	0.81	0.75
SD scale ^o	1.55	0.80	0.79	1.36	0.34	0.81	1.43	0.57	0.87
Education	1.38	0.61		1.94	0.94		1.65	0.61	
Income	2.30	0.59		2.36	0.54		2.20	0.68	
Occupation	2.20	0.51		2.25	0.55		2.13	0.6	
Muslim Groups									
	Sunnis			Shi'is			Druze		
	Mean	SD	Coeff*	Mean	SD	Coeff*	Mean	SD	Coeff*
ATR scale ^a	1.68	0.81	0.78	2.23	0.79	0.67	1.75	0.75	0.53
SD scale ^o	2.34	0.87	0.83	1.96	0.91	0.82	2.31	0.86	0.84
Education	1.58	0.65		1.68		0.70	1.42		0.69
Income	2.28	0.63		2.44		0.53	2.21		0.53
Occupation	2.22	0.60		2.45		0.55	2.10		0.45

Full Sample

	Mean	SD	Coeff*
ATR scale ^a	2.21	0.82	0.75
SD scale ^o	1.87	0.91	0.86
Education	1.50	0.65	
Income	2.32	0.58	
Occupation	2.26	0.56	

N.B: ^aAttitudes toward Resettlement

^o Social Distance

*Cornbach's Alpha coefficient

Independent Variable

The present analysis seeks to determine the role of social distance established between Lebanese and Palestinians in accounting for variance in attitudes toward Palestinian resettlement in Lebanon. A scale to determine the level of social distance was constructed from seven items dealing with views about preferred social distance between Lebanese and Palestinians. Multi-reliability and factor analysis were employed to ascertain the unidimensionality of the scale. The survey items that cluster together are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Survey Items Used to Measure Social Distance towards Palestinians

1. Do you think that Lebanese and Palestinian students should go to same schools or to separate schools?
2. How strong would you object or support if a member of your family had close personal relation with Palestinians?
3. Do you think that there should be laws against marriage between Lebanese and Palestinians?
4. How would you feel if a relative of yours was planning to marry a Palestinian?
5. How would you feel if all your children's' schoolmates were Palestinians?
6. Would you accept to live in a neighborhood where the Palestinians are a majority?
7. How willingly would you sympathize with Palestinians?

Table 2. Factor Analysis Scores for the Social Distance Items Using Varimax Rotation (full sample)

Item	Loading
Same or separate schools	0.76
Close personal relation	0.81
Laws against mixed marriage	0.60
Palestinian schoolmates	0.79
Palestinian neighborhood	0.72
Sympathize with Palestinians	0.71
Marry Palestinians	0.84

Social distance or views on integration of Palestinians is the primary independent variable in this analysis. Nonetheless, whether it is related to attitude toward Palestinian resettlement is to be determined. Although it might be assumed that increased social distance implies opposition to Palestinian resettlement, permitting differentiation between independent and dependent variables, the actual situation is much more complex. Lebanese officials have issued contradictory statements about whether the Lebanese government will permit Palestinians to be fully integrated in the country, and even theoreticians and politicians advance different views about whether such integration is probable.

Bogardus introduced the Social Distance Scale for use as an index of the social distance that respondents perceive between themselves and members of different groups defined by nationality, ethnicity, religion, or politics. The scale, or some form of it, has been used in studies involving a variety of populations, including ethnic minorities (Bogardus 1925, 1967; Fagan & O'Neill 1965; Payne et al. 1974; Kunz & Ohenebra-Saki 1989; Lambert & Taylor 1990), and has been considered as a measure of prejudice. The survey contained a battery of likert scale questions (responded to in terms of strong agreement, agreement, etc.) tapping various aspects of the preferred social distance between oneself or one's family and Palestinians living in Lebanon. Some items were phrased positively (i.e., indicating tolerance) and others were phrased negatively (i.e., indicating prejudice). From seven of the questions used in the survey, this scale which assesses respondents' willingness to accept Palestinians in various roles (as a neighbor, friend, etc.) was constructed and checked by various empirical analyses (internal consistency of items in a scale, factor analysis of items, and scale inter-correlations). The sum score of the items divided by their number was taken as an indication of negativeness or prejudice. The survey items that cluster

together are shown in Table 2. Other independent variables are also included in the analysis to assess the explanatory power of intense religiosity relative to that of other factors. Linear regression is used to examine these relationships, with the following independent variables included in the model: education, income and SES.

2. The Dependent Variable

Table 3: Survey Items used to measure the Dependent Variable

- 1.If resettlement were imposed, would you accept it?
- 2.If Palestinian resettlement were imposed, would you actually try to resist it militarily?
- 3.Do you think that Palestinian resettlement will lead to inter-group conflict?
- 4.Do you agree with the claim that Palestinian resettlement will result in the resumption of the civil war?
- 5.Given your understanding of the Palestinian resettlement issue, would you say resettlement would have negative repercussions on Lebanese society?

Factor Analysis Scores for the Attitudes towards
Resettlement Items Using Varimax Rotation

Item	Loading
Accept resettlement	0.76
Resist resettlement militarily	0.68
Resettlement will lead to conflict over allocation of power	0.69
Resettlement will result in the resumption of the civil war	0.66
Resettlement would have negative repercussions on Lebanese society	0.73

Table 4: Attitude Toward Palestinian Resettlement Scale by Religious Sect

	Maronites	Catholics	Greek Orthodox	Sunnis	Shi'is	Druze	Total
Favors resettlement	11	15	23	54	23	44	25
Somewhat for resettlement	27	26	27	24	32	38	29
Opposes resettlement	62	59	50	22	45	18	46

(*) The items listed in Table 3 have been combined to form a scale.

The dependent variable in this analysis is attitude toward Palestinian resettlement. A scale composed on five inter-correlated items from the survey instrument measures attitude. Table 3 lists the items used to construct these measures, all of which deal with the respondents' present position, perceived impact, and reaction to Palestinian resettlement, Table 4 presents the response distribution on these measures of the dependent variable.

Evidence in support of the validity and reliability of these measures comes from several sources. Multi-reliability analysis revealed high inter-item correlations and the reported Cronbach Alpha was equal to 0.86. Confidence was further increased by the use of factor analysis; the five items load highly on one factor demonstrating that these items cluster together and thus measure the same underlying concept.

Analysis of The Findings

Table 1 presents the respondents mean ratings for all five independent and dependent variables used in the study. In addition to highlighting the socio-economic status for every sub-group (community), two important results are generated. First, with regard to social distance, all three Christian groups, joined by the Shiis, display higher levels of discrimination against Palestinians compared to Sunnis and Druze. For instance, Christian groups scores were 64 percent, 61 percent, and 60 percent respectively in contrast to 43 percent for the Shiis and 25 percent and 26 percent for the Druze on the social distance scale. Second, in terms of the overall level of support for Palestinian resettlement, the results indicated only moderate support among Sunnis and Druze in sharp contrast to Christian and Shii clear opposition to its prospect. These findings indicate that views of Lebanese communities are

less divided between Christians and Muslims than within each of the sub-groups. Thus, in order to answer the research question concerning the independent relationship between the level of respondents' social distance, their demographic characteristics, and their attitudes toward Palestinian resettlement, multiple regression analysis was employed. Table 5 presents beta weights and t statistics between social distance, education, income and SES and attitudes toward Palestinian resettlement. The results indicate that social distance is significantly related to attitudes toward resettlement for all sub-groups. Thus, the higher the respondents' level of social distance, the less the overall support given to resettlement. In other words respondents from all sects are much less likely to support resettlement in Lebanon if they contest future personal contact with Palestinians, whether civic, educational or residential. Indeed, these relationships are always stronger than those involving any other independent variable, i.e. educational attainment in the case of the Sunnis and income level for the Shiis were found significantly related to the criterion variable ($p>0.05$).

Table 5
Multiple Regression of Factors influencing Attitudes toward Palestinian Resettlement in Lebanon

	Maronites (n=283)	Catholics (n=83)	Greek Orthodox (n=83)	Sunnis (n=158)	Shi'is (n=226)	Druze (n=68)	Full Sample (N=901)
Social distance	-0.33 (-5.77)**	-0.43 (-4.33)**	0.49 (5.05)**	-0.47 (-7.02)**	-0.40 (-6.49)**	-0.40 (-3.57)**	-0.47 (-16.04)**
Education	-0.11 (-1.89)	0.02 (0.17)	-0.08 (-0.84)	0.28 (4.10)**	0.030 (0.467)	0.070 (0.62)	0.00 (0.26)
Income	-0.09 (-1.52)	-0.14 (-1.38)	-0.04 (-0.42)	0.06 (0.83)	0.155 (2.55)*	0.12 (1.09)	0.04 (1.46)
SES	-0.02 (-0.42)	-0.13 (-1.27)	-0.06 (-0.60)	0.00 (0.10)	-0.82 (-1.04)	0.16 (1.39)	0.03 (1.07)
Constant	34.81)**	(19.52)**	(17.65)**	(10.34)**	(9.30)**	(10.67)**	(54.61)**
R ²	0.11	0.19	0.24	0.30	0.17	0.16	0.22

NOTE: Table 5 shows standardized coefficients (betas) and gives t statistics in parentheses * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$

Although part of these findings is to be expected- in the case of Christian groups- those related to Muslim groups- are surprising and interesting. They are also at variance with the arguments advanced by some scholars, to the effect that *Tawtin*, or resettlement, is probably the only issue on which the views of the Lebanese - across ideological and confessional lines - agree. This argument is presented by El-Khazen (1997) who contends that Palestinian presence, from being the most divisive issue in post-independence Lebanese politics is one of the few issues that arouse national consensus in post-war Lebanon. A more plausible argument is offered by Sayigh (2001) who asserts that Lebanese public can be divided into three main segments: 1) a determined anti-Palestinian minority, 2) a large

component who are indifferent to the Palestinian issue unless aroused by sectarian campaigning, and 3) a minority that positively supports the refugees.

Findings from the present study lend only partial support to these arguments. Social distance defined in terms of degree of endorsement or rejection of inter-communal -social, civic, residential, educational- ties with Palestinians bears a significant relationship about attitude toward resettlement. Intense anti-Palestinianism is discernible in the case of Christian groups namely in statements like: "Usually, we don't care about them. Sometimes we feel pity for them because they are poor. But we don't think that they belong here" (Kolterman 1997, p.7). A reconstructive ethos promoting "Lebanon for the Lebanese", which has been carried by Lebanese Christians throughout the civil war, is reiterated usually by Christian leaders who tend to exaggerate the size of the Palestinian community and use the question of resettlement to flourish their political vision of partition^{vii}. Religious affinity plays a part in this extreme position since the Palestinian refugee population is constituted as nearly all Muslim (Peteet 1997). Prior to the 1975 civil war, in order to further a sectarian gloss to the refugee issue, and in a demographic attempt to bolster the Christian population, the Lebanese Government made available Lebanese citizenship to Palestinian Christians. One of the major consequences of the Civil War was Confessional "cleansing" of Palestinian refugee camps in Christian-controlled areas to other parts of the country. Massive population shifts, accompanied by the reintegration of displaced Palestinians into more homogeneous, self-contained and exclusive spaces and the consequent physical separations have confined Palestinian interaction to practically two Lebanese groups, Sunni and Shii Muslims (Khashan 1992). However, a highly significant negative relationship between social distance and attitude toward resettlement emerges from the findings. Beyond political factors, such as the deterioration of Palestinian-Lebanese relationship, heavy-handed Israeli retaliation and PLO excesses, a set of economic asymmetries added to Palestinian-Shii antagonism. Both communities lived side by side but the Shii belonged to a lower low socio-economic spectrum. Underclass resentment aroused because of the material advantage enjoyed by Palestinians who were well established in Arab oil-producing states projecting Palestinians as aliens, intruders and destroyers of our country (Sayigh 1994). Referring to Palestinian misbehavior during their presence in Lebanon, a Shii villager told Norton " We gave Palestinians everything and they gave us back insults, corpses, and lessons in corruption" (Norton 1987, p. 12).

This negative position is extended only to a minority of Sunni respondents. Khashan and Palmer (1981), who examined Sunni perceptions during the Lebanese civil war, found out that the dominant position enjoyed by Palestinians during that period, while not vociferously opposed by the Sunnis, was complicated by the fact that Lebanese Sunnis generally accorded

the Palestinian refugees an inferior social status. Thus, Palestinian-Lebanese Sunnite affinity was partially eroded by military dominance of Palestinians and by the reversal of status roles (Khashan & Palmer 1981). While part of the Sunnis tends to distance themselves from Palestinians, this tendency is stronger among less educated Sunnis than among their college-educated counterparts. Indeed this result is striking since the integration of refugees is supposed to take place, according to experts, within their sub-community. However, this finding is in line with the position adopted by most Sunni politicians. In 1990, even the Sunni Muslim leaders-who theoretically had most to gain from the assimilation of the Sunni Palestinians into Lebanese society- refused to welcome the Palestinians. This ultimately led to the unexpected amendment to the constitution refusing non-Lebanese permanent residence in the country. Later, Sunni prime Prime Minister Rafic al-Hariri explicitly uttered, "Lebanon will never, ever integrate Palestinians. They will not receive civic or economic rights or even work permits. Integration would take the Palestinians off the shoulders of the international agency that has supported them since 1948" (Cooley 1999, p.1)

Experiences of Palestinian marginality in interacting with Lebanese are illustrated by Sayigh "Palestinian refugees have been pathologized in a manner reminiscent of turn-of-the-century American hyperbole that immigrants carried tuberculosis, and more recent fears of immigrants as carriers of the AIDS virus. Pathology demands quarantine: segregating Palestinians would facilitate the "normalization" of Lebanon in the post-war era with national health restored through the isolation of an infectious presence" (Sayigh 1996, p. 28).

Pro-Palestinian voices present a weak minority in favor of resettlement. A housing project submitted by the Canadian government to help provide a certain measure of relief to the homeless refugees through the construction of new barracks outside Beirut was supported in 1994, by Walid Jumblatt, Minister for Refugees and leader of the Druze community. However, the media leaked the talks and the violent protests that ensued led to the abandonment of the entire project. This was a symptom of the fact that any initiative that can be interpreted as indirect assent to the Palestinians remaining is interpreted as a confessionalistic move. The Druze minority was mainly interested in a buffer zone of loyal Palestinians between them and the expanding Shi'a population. This is a clear indicator of expressed social desirability of Palestinians by a large segment of the Druze community.

The findings of the present study indicated that social distance was a significant predictor variable for all sub-groups-and the only predictor for most of them, i.e. Christians and Druze. According to this concept, not only does an observer interpret a group or member of a group erroneously, he or she concludes that it he is inferior and therefore unwanted. This tendency for outgroups rejection and hostility is clearly reflected in the study's findings that a high rating of social distance is related to the rejection of Palestinian permanent settlement in Lebanon. Specifically, the study's findings indicated

that respondents who tend to score highly on the social distance scale believed that resettlement will have damaging repercussions on the country, and are therefore more likely to resist it.

To conclude, some brief observations pertaining to other independent variables may be offered. Findings about these variables are not always consistent and are, in any event of secondary importance to the present study. In his attempt to determine the correlates of multiculturalism in Australia, Robert Ho (1990) found that ethnocentrism was the only significant predictor, but none of the demographic variables, for respondents' attitudes toward multiculturalism. In fact, respondents' education, income, and SES level were, in most cases, unimportant predictors of attitudes toward resettlement. Nevertheless, there are several interesting relationships, some of which identify promising areas for future research. To begin, the absence of any significant relationship involving SES deserves mention. It delineates the failure of the analysis to control for other meaningful factors, most notably the respondents' level of economic security and the perceived effect of immigration on employment opportunities. In multicultural Canada, economic concerns and worries have been assigned a more important role than intolerance in determining the attitude toward immigration. Furthermore, because Lebanon suffers from economic stagnation at the moment, it may be hypothesized that perceived economic insecurity would have pushed towards opposition to resettlement^{viii}. This proposition, which deserves future study, is consistent with findings about determinants of political attitudes toward immigration in Western countries. In his survey of Canadian attitudes toward immigration, Tienhaara (1974) found that opposition to immigration was greater during recession and attributed most to unemployment concerns. This point receives support from a recent investigation that brought similar results using survey data in many studies on immigration and attitudes towards immigrants (Palmer 1996). The economic dimension is particularly worthy of examination as Lebanon may be expected to accept permanent settlement of refugees induced by a tremendous aid/development package. If economic conditions improve as a result of Palestinian resettlement, would this reduce social distance and hence opposition for resettlement? Coupled with the present study's findings that social distance account for variance in Lebanese attitudes toward Palestinian resettlement, this suggests that a multi-factor model, including other variables pertaining to the Lebanese situation have a much larger effect on attitudes toward resettlement than do the respondents' self-interest measures.

Conclusion

A principal goal of this study has been to assess the impact of social distance on attitudes towards Palestinian resettlement using cross-sectional survey research. The results are clear and consistent for all Lebanese sub-groups. Social distance is a significant predictor of attitudes toward

resettlement for all six sub-groups examined. Specifically, social distance is inversely and consistently associated with unfavorable attitudes toward the prospect of the permanent settlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

These findings indicate that, although social distance influence political attitudes toward Palestinian resettlement-a conclusion that is hardly surprising for Christian and Shii groups- the majority of Sunnis and Druze respondent endorse communal ties with Palestinians and approve their permanent economic, social and political integration. They also suggest a more focused conclusion about the kind of social factors most likely to have explanatory power. Judgments about the perceived consequences and to economic needs in particular appear to be important in determining the attitude toward resettlement. This proposition, which receives support from findings about the importance of nature of perception of immigration on economic status, offers a promising area for future research.

Keeping in mind that the nature of the sample employed in the present study may limit the generalizability of the obtained results, the overall findings carry a number of implications for the issues raised on the current debate over Palestinian permanent settlement in Lebanon and also for the Lebanese system as a whole. How genuine are Lebanese fears about resettlement? Palestinian otherness is juxtaposed not to a homogeneous singular category of Lebanese, but to a shifting set of sectarian groups and alliances, each with particular interests and fears. A majority of Christian and Shii respondents display intense prejudice towards Palestinians suggesting the presence of social barriers that hinders socio-economic integration of camp inhabitants and their children. On the other hand, the results suggest the presence of a structural weakness in the Lebanese system. Lebanese scholar Joseph Maila (2000) concedes that the permanent settlement of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the vast majorities of whom are Sunni Muslim, could be fatal to Lebanon's delicate social mosaic. The Palestinians could turn into an autonomous community, a development unprecedented in Lebanon. The kind of linkage between these Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority is likely to create tremendous problems for the Lebanese in the coming years^{ix}. Hence, for most Lebanese the question is about their own political survival not Palestinian resettlement. These negative attitudes, coupled with further government restrictions and pressures on Palestinians, imply that permanent settlement is a dangerous alternative that threatens the regime with collapse. If the actual perceptions stand, resettlement will create a potential for communal conflict and will affect the social cohesion of the society. In connection with this, the Lebanese government finds itself compelled to consent to continued Palestinian military presence in refugee camps, which threatens to return to the situation of 20 years ago by reenacting the civil war. Refugees in Palestinian camps have grown increasingly restive over the course of the uprising. Lebanese authorities are discounting fears that the fighting in the Palestinian territories could spark a series of organized cross-border attacks into Israel from south Lebanon.

Whereas, Muslim clerics have been calling for active support to liberate Palestine, Christians responded by condemning “the voices announcing their intentions to violate Lebanese laws and attempt to go back to a past the Lebanese want to forget (Daily Star 7/10/2000).

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Endnotes

¹In addition to increased attention to the Palestinian refugee question in Lebanon, a conference on Palestinian Resettlement were upheld in 1999," Lebanese Identity: Between Naturalization and Implantation," at the University of Saint Esprit, Kaslik, on November 11 and academic workshop entitled "Opposing Resettlement" at The Saint Joseph University organized by Research Center for Arab Law, Beirut on November 26 grouping prominent Lebanese figures and even the prime minister. This trend received

additional support with the announcement that Lebanese clerics of all sects intended to hold conference to take a harsh stance on the matter on July 29.

ⁱⁱ See *Palestinians in Lebanon, Report on the Conference Held at Oxford, September 27th to 30th, 1996* (Oxford: Center for Lebanese Studies, 1996), p. 10. More recently Maronite deputy Naamatullah Abi-Nasr, former president of the Maronite League, offered a figure of 12 percent compared to other Arab host countries where Palestinian represent 1 percent of the population in the United Arab Emirates and only 0.1 percent in Egypt and in Saudi-Arabia during a conference entitled "Lebanese Identity: Between Naturalization and Implantation," attended by the author on Palestinian Resettlement at the University of Saint Esprit, Kaslik, Lebanon, on November 26, 1999 .

ⁱⁱⁱ Recently Lebanese Parliament approved revisions to Law 11614 (1969) concerning ownership of real estate by foreigners, forbidding "anyone who does not have citizenship in a recognized state (Palestinians)" from owning property, text published by al-Safir, 23 March, 2001).

^{iv} This could mean that 40 to 45 percent of total Lebanese territory cannot be exploited and may result in increasing the population density to reach 632/km². This is a huge figure compared to other countries like Irak 47/km² and Australia 2/km².

^v Though Lebanon's constitution allocates public offices on the basis of a 50:50 ratio of Christians vs. Muslims, it is commonly accepted that the Muslims constitute a majority in the country.

^{vi}The author sought to broaden the representativeness of the sample by including 20 professions which were regrouped into five sub-groups for reasons of data manageability: 19 percent professionals, 40 percent semi-professionals, 11 percent unskilled, 25 percent college students (selected from three private academic institutions: Notre-Dame University and Lebanese University, and the American University of Beirut) and 5 percent unemployed.

^{vii} Maronite politicians such as Michel Edde and Naamatulah Abi-Nasr have brought the number of Palestinians in Lebanon to 500,000 and 600,000 respectively stressing that resettling them means partitioning the country.

^{viii} This dimension receives additional support knowing that that unemployment in Lebanon is said to have exceeded 27 percent and that the demographic composition of the Lebanese society includes a formidable

percentage of 31 percent of foreigners (source Debate regarding Palestinian Presence in Lebanon MTV Television. Beirut, 11 November 1999).

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