

## **Relational Needs and Belonging in Conditions of Social Exclusion: A Critical Discourse Analysis**

Claire Prendergast<sup>21</sup> Imac Maria Zambrana<sup>22</sup>

### **Abstract**

Individuals and groups can experience different forms of social exclusion across multiple domains of social life. Owing to its multivariate nature, a generalized approach to studying exclusion has been adopted in empirical work within the field of social psychology. As such, the relational needs thwarted by various forms of exclusion tend to be accounted for by the generalized construct, the *need to belong*. To increase the specification of these aspects in exclusion research, the interdisciplinary approach of critical discourse analysis and related analytic tools, such as the discursive construction of identity, are used to perform a contextual and systemic analyses of the relational needs implicated in conditions of everyday exclusion. In the discourse of a sample population in Beirut, Lebanon, we aimed to show how distinct relational needs such as *acceptance* and *fitting in* can be disentangled from one another, and from the term *belonging*, as a higher-order concept, disambiguated in natural language. Semi-structured interviews conducted using the language of belonging methodology involved images of socio-political importance as triggers for talk that generated rich data for critical discourse analysis. This resulted in a contextual analysis of sectarianism as exclusionary and a thematic analysis of other experiences of exclusion linked to gentrification, geopolitical division and globalization. Our findings suggest that, as hypothesised, individuals employ distinct terminology when alluding to different experiences of exclusion. This illustrates the benefits of interdisciplinary methods in accounting for social phenomena more fully, and highlights the need for increased specification of generalized constructs in future empirical work on social exclusion in social psychology.

### **Keywords**

Social Exclusion, Relational Needs, Belonging, Critical Discourse Analysis, Discursive Construction of Identity

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<sup>21</sup> University of Oslo, Norway, <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5173-1562>, [claire.prendergast@ifikk.uio.no](mailto:claire.prendergast@ifikk.uio.no).

<sup>22</sup> University of Oslo, Norway, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5904-1777>, [i.m.zambrana@isp.uio.no](mailto:i.m.zambrana@isp.uio.no).

## **Introduction**

Social exclusion is a complex social phenomenon. Individuals and groups can be excluded in many different ways and for many different reasons. Moreover, exclusion operates on different levels of social experience, within and between individuals, communities, institutions, nation states and global regions (Mathieson et al., 2008) and as such, through various socio-political processes (e.g. sectarianism, gentrification, geopolitical division and globalization).

While some conceptual and theoretical frameworks exist that seek to encapsulate its many dimensions, both in terms of why it happens, such as Abrams, Hogg and Marques' (Abrams, Hogg and Marques, 2005) framework for inclusion and exclusion, and how we cope with the experience, such as Richman and Leary's (Richman and Leary, 2009) multi-motive model, social psychologists have primarily been focused on finding out how individuals and groups respond to such social treatment in experimental settings. Thus, to test its effects empirically, 'social exclusion' has been modelled in a generalized way through the use of exclusion paradigms such as cyberball. This experimental manipulation involves taking part in a virtual ball-tossing game during which participants stop receiving passes from other players (Williams and Jarvis, 2006) and it thus acts as a proxy for the experience of exclusion. In addition, generalized accounts of the underlying relational needs that play a role in shaping how individuals respond in the experimental setting to such paradigms have been offered. Notably, a universal need to belong construct has been cited as the main driver of responses (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Others have posited a more nuanced account of responses such as the Need Threat Model including belonging, self-esteem, control and meaningful existence (Williams, 2009).

While a generalized approach to exclusion research cuts through some of the complexity of investigating the phenomenon empirically, it has also resulted in a body of literature within the field of social psychology that can be difficult to navigate and interpret in an ecologically valid way. For example, meta-analytic reports have outlined inconsistencies across findings from hundreds of exclusion studies within the field (Blackhart et al., 2009; Gerber and Wheeler, 2009; Hartgerink et al., 2015). More qualitative work is thus needed to inform and improve empirical methods used in future experimental studies within the field of social psychology, as well as to address the ecological validity of the results.

In the present study, our aim was to increase the specification of the generalized construct of need to belong by parsing out distinct relational needs (i.e. the need for acceptance and the need to fit in) from the higher-order concept of belonging (i.e. a deep and meaningful connection to a group or place). We in turn show how these distinct relational needs are differentially implicated in conditions of social exclusion as brought about by exclusionary acts categorised as either explicit or implicit exclusion. The interdisciplinary approach of critical discourse analysis (CDA; van Dijk, 2015) is employed to model the phenomenon of social exclusion in a systemic way through multi-level analysis of everyday discourse and further analyse how this discourse reinforces such exclusionary conditions. Our research questions were thus: Can an interdisciplinary approach such as CDA and associated discourse analytic tools help to distinguish between the relational needs of acceptance and fitting in and the higher-order concept of belonging as implicated in everyday experiences of social exclusion? And, as individuals allude to their own relational needs, do they simultaneously set up or perpetuate conditions of explicit and implicit exclusion?

Beirut, Lebanon, was chosen as the location to conduct our study due to social identities that are based on religious sect. While other markers of social identity may serve to include and exclude individuals in Beirut, even within their own religious sect, or indeed in any society, the multiplicity of religious sects living in proximity in Beirut makes the Lebanese capital an interesting social setting to conduct this type of exclusion research. Due to the spatial organization of the city, residents in Beirut navigate and negotiate sectarian social boundaries on a daily basis. Since social exclusion, on the societal level, has been linked to maintenance of group identity (e.g. ‘us’ vs. ‘them’), the choice of religious sect as a social category made Beirut an appropriate context for studying the phenomenon. Thus, our contextual analysis of the data is based on the exclusionary theme of sectarianism. However, religious sect only played a small moderating role in our analysis of the other exclusionary themes found in the data which became the focus of our analysis.

To achieve our research aims, we illustrate how everyday experiences of exclusion can be specified and distinguished (e.g., ‘social marginalization’ as distinct from ‘social alienation’). This is also the case for the underlying drivers of responses (i.e. the relational needs) that are implicated in different conditions of exclusion. These social needs are herein referred to as *acceptance* and *fitting in* and are specified externally through explicit acts of exclusion that are active and direct and internally through implicit forms of exclusion that are passive and indirect, respectively. Since these basic needs are often conflated with the higher-order concept of *belonging* in the social psychological literature on exclusion, we sought to disentangle the terms from one another and disambiguate the referent term through the analysis of discursive strategies used by the study informants. We expected that this would in turn shed light on the dynamic interplay of these relational needs with different exclusionary events as they occur in everyday social life.

## **1. States of social exclusion as brought about by distinct forms**

First, we turn our attention toward the terms used to refer to some distinct conditions of social exclusion and offer the following definitions.

‘Disenfranchisement’, as linked to sectarianism, is related primarily to a lack of political representation for an individual or group, who do not *fit in* due to lack of shared beliefs and values with majority members.

‘Social marginalization’ refers to a condition in which individuals or groups are not *accepted* by majority group members or society in general and, therefore, do not have equal access to resources. *Non-acceptance* is usually signalled through explicit forms of social exclusion that are externally cued in social arenas.

‘Social alienation’, on the other hand, refers to a state where one does not feel a deep-rooted sense of *belonging* in society - an internalized state of social exclusion that is shaped and reshaped over time by implicit forms of exclusion that signal *lack of fit* and *belonging*. Our work seeks to document the subtle differences between these states of exclusion and their associated forms of exclusion as well as the relational needs that feed into them, which have largely been overlooked in empirical work on exclusion to date. Here, we draw particular attention to these aspects since exclusionary processes can be layered and sometimes ambiguous, and thus not easily manipulated in the laboratory setting.

### 1.1. Basic relational needs implicated in conditions of exclusion

The relational needs that are thought to underpin human responses to exclusion have also been generalized into a composite self-report measure known as *the need to belong*, defined as a fundamental human motivation for interpersonal *acceptance* and *belonging* (Baumeister and Leary, 1995).

However, from this general definition, and again focusing on lexical meaning, it is possible to distinguish *acceptance*, that is externally specified by the group, for instance, to achieve shared benefit-related goals, from *belonging*, a higher-order relational concept linked to a deeply rooted, complex and meaningful connection to a group or place. What's more, the term *belonging* is a polyseme in the social psychological literature. Aside from constituting a higher-order concept, as referred to above, it is also used to refer to simple group membership, i.e. 'to be part of' or 'to be a member of' a group, and to denote a state of 'unconditional acceptance' externally specified by the group (Baumeister and Leary, 1995: 510). These initial distinctions in terminology and the ambiguity surrounding their interpretation highlights the need for increased specification of the terms employed in social exclusion research.

With this goal in mind, we propose that two basic relational needs, the need for *acceptance* and the need to *fit in* are implicated in different ways when individuals are faced with the threat or experience of distinct forms of social exclusion (i.e. explicit or implicit) and propose the following definitions for these terms. The need for *acceptance* can be understood as a drive to meet a social norm in order to ensure access to group resources and is most commonly thwarted by explicit forms of exclusion that deny such access externally. The need to *fit in*, on the other hand, is linked to an individual having social value within a group and implicit forms of exclusion often frustrate this need by reducing an individual's sense of self-worth internally. Often, *lack of fit* is assessed through a comparison of the individual and target group characteristics, a process in line with Festinger's (Festinger, 1954) social comparison theory.

The need for *acceptance* and the need to *fit in*, as mediators in everyday social relations, likely feed into higher-order cognitive processes such as *belonging* that is experiential, and shaped (and reshaped) over time. Herein, we show that the two basic relational needs and the higher order cognitive process of *belonging*, can be extrapolated from everyday discourse as distinct referent terms, and thus disentangled from one another. This shows that, contextually, they are differentially affected by explicit and implicit forms of social exclusion leading to states of exclusion that can in turn be understood as distinct.

## 2. Methodology

We used interdisciplinary approaches and analytic tools to conduct our research. Firstly, the discourse was recorded through semi-structured interviews using images of socio-political importance as triggers for talk in line with Meinhof and Galasiński's (Meinhof and Galasiński, 2005) 'language of belonging' methodology (see Section 3.3. for more details). Informants are thus less likely to exhibit 'performance bias' as they are unaware of the specific aims of the study taking place and are only informed of the general topic of the research.

Secondly, critical discourse analysis (CDA; van Dijk, 2008, 2014, 2015) was used to analyse the data. CDA treats discourse as social practice, and therefore as embedded in the social context. We thus conceptualized exclusion as a social issue within society at large, according to CDA's socio-cognitive approach (van Dijk, 2014), and worked firstly in a top-down manner to deconstruct component parts of the societal frames that we uncovered in our contextual and thematic analysis. We then made use of the tenets of CDA to explore how everyday discourse can expose the workings of the relational needs of social actors (a bottom-up approach) and also serve to perpetuate and reinforce explicit, active and direct, as well as implicit, passive and indirect forms of exclusion on the group and individual level, according to these basic relational needs.

Finally, since social identity, specifically the processes of social identification (and disidentification), are rarely factored into social psychological reports on exclusion, we looked to the discursive construction of identity, as delineated by Wodak et al. (2009), and reconciled this approach with reference to the relational needs we specify herein.

## **2.1. The Language of Belonging**

The language of belonging, a comprehensive study by Meinhof and Galasiński (2005) outlines a specific methodology for collecting discourse data centred around social relations.

Crucially, this work presents a method of data collection which involves interviews that allow for semi-structured, yet free-flowing conversation by opting to use images as triggers for talk. Directed thematic questions that involve key concepts of the research are thus kept to a minimum, making the data generated more representative of everyday discourse from which it is possible to extrapolate references to the key concepts through the processes of narrativization (and content entry points such as time, place and social relations, similar to the parameters of CDA).

In this study, we adopted this method of data collection by showing study participants images that were of historical and socio-political importance in the local context in Beirut, Lebanon and by inviting them to discuss these images freely in their own terms.

## **2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

A triangulated approach spanning the domains of history, politics and culture, CDA conceptualizes individuals as social actors whose social and personal cognitions constitute the bridge between the macro- (e.g. political structures), meso- (e.g. cultural narratives) and micro- (e.g. individual experiences) levels of social experience (van Dijk, 2015).

CDA, thus, provides a systemic solution to the analysis of complex social problems through its ability to deconstruct social phenomena into their component levels in this way, while offering a unifying context through which the connection and interaction between these dynamic parts can be understood.

## **2.3. The Discursive Construction of Identity**

Analytic techniques offered by Wodak et al. (Wodak et al., 2009) enable thematic and grammatical analyses of discourse that can illustrate the dynamic shifts between identity construction that, in our case, directly and indirectly allude to, and even set up, conditions of social exclusion.

In discourse, individuals typically use constructive strategies, perpetuation and justification strategies, transformation strategies and dismantling strategies that expose the relationships between social structures and their own 'positioning' in the social context (Wodak et al., 2009). In the most obvious ways, discursive strategies that are contrastive, for instance, can be used to set up psychological boundaries between different groups (e.g. 'we', the ingroup vs. 'they', the outgroup) and can also facilitate group synchrony through the reinforcement of shared social representations (e.g. rhetoric or narrative) that serve to strengthen the identity of the ingroup members (Freake et al., 2010). However, these identities can shift according to the levels of analysis and contexts that are selected in a given discourse, and are reproduced interactionally and dynamically in everyday conversations (van Dijk, 2015) making specific case studies, such as the present study, important in understanding how different contexts may bring about different effects. Though not exhaustive, Wodak et al., (Wodak et al., 2009) offers a topos of discursive strategies of identity with categories of linguistic means and expressions that can be taken to underpin these strategies.

## **2.4. Context of the Discourse**

We collected our data in Beirut, Lebanon. Beirut city has a rich historical, socio-political and cultural context (for a comprehensive account of this social context see: Llewellyn, 2010). Its selection as a location for data collection was based on the inherent multiplicity of social groups present, most notably defined by religious sect, and of which there are 18 recognised in total, that live side by side in the city. More generally, the Lebanese national identity is thought to be hybrid and fluid owing to a long history of sectarianism and socio-political unrest (Kassir and Fisk, 2010), making its capital, Beirut, a rich territory for exploring the strategies that can be deployed in discourse to construct multiple identities, and ultimately expose the often deemed necessary processes of social exclusion that permeate everyday social life. While our data was collected in 2017, the content of our study pertaining to access to resources (such as basic services including water and electricity in the city) is related to the more recent and ongoing wave of large-scale protests taking place in the city since late 2019, due to widespread distrust of political powers.

## **3. Data & Analysis**

### **3.1. Participants**

Overall, 21 informants were approached at random and interviewed in Beirut in June 2017. Interviews were recorded with an audio device and took place in public spaces including cafes, park benches, shopping squares, inside shops and on a university campus in diverse areas of the city.



The study content and data management protocol were approved by the national data protection service in Norway (NSD) and all data was anonymized. Explicit informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the interview and 20 participants completed the interview with interview times ranging from 11 to 52 minutes, 440 minutes overall. Eleven of the interviews were conducted in English (non-native speakers), while 7 were carried out in Arabic, and 1 interview was held in French with two informants of the same demographic at the same time. Verbatim audio transcription was completed by the primary researcher (PR), the research assistant (RA) and one additional translator who provided a second transcript and translation of the Arabic interviews in English. The transcripts of the additional translator were included in the analysis.

Basic demographic information was recorded by the research assistant. Age, gender and religious sect of the participants is shown in Table 1 and Figure 1 of Appendix 1.

While we approached individuals at random in public spaces such as those listed above, we kept track of the representation of different age groups and gender, and aimed to sample from areas where finding individuals of a particular religious sect would be more probable to ensure an overall representative sample of the population of Beirut city, where representative is taken to mean a balanced sample across one or more of the demographic categories we recorded (e.g. age, gender or religious sect).

### **3.2. Data Collection**

We conducted semi-structured interviews, anchoring the context of the discourse in images of places, people, events and objects that were presented to participants, according to the language of belonging methodology (Meinhof and Galasiński, 2005).

At the outset of the interviews, participants were informed that the study was about identity and belonging. They were then shown 6 images in the same order and given the instruction to talk freely about what they saw represented in the image and to discuss what the image meant to them personally, or if they had any specific memories related to what was depicted in the image. For the most part, individuals spoke freely after the initial instruction. We used verbal prompts that were pre-set in an interview guide provided in Appendix 2, when necessary to encourage individuals to elaborate on their responses such as, “Please elaborate on your last point”. Finally, participants were asked to select one image from the six images that spoke to them the most.

### **3.3. Image selection**

The 6 images used as triggers for talk were selected from a total of 23 potential images that had been sourced on Google Search Engine of local places, iconic figures and various social and political events in Beirut, Lebanon.

Initial image sourcing was conducted by the primary researcher through related keyword searches and final image selection was made by the local research assistant, together with a local visual artist, according to criteria set out by the language of belonging methodology (Meinhof and Galasiński, 2005):

1. Photographs had to index places that would be recognizable to participants.

2. Photographs had to index pre-war Beirut and post-war contemporary Beirut as two distinct periods in time.

3. Photographs had to have a certain symbolic and/or an emotional significance in indexing key aspects of the historical, socio-political and cultural context.

The final 6 images selected were,

**Image 1:** A photograph of the famous Hotel Saint Georges from 1945 (pre-war era).

**Image 2:** A photograph of the mural of an iconic Lebanese singer, Sabah, displayed on the wall of a well-known cafe corner of Hamra Street (Ras Beirut).

**Image 3:** A photograph of the colourful "I <3 Beirut" sign that is placed in the newly gentrified Beirut Souks downtown area.

**Image 4:** A photograph of a celebration for the election of President Michel Aoun with supporters waving Lebanese, Free Patriotic Movement and Hezbollah flags together in Beirut's Martyrs' Square on October 31, 2016.

**Image 5:** A photograph of the 'You Stink' protesters, a social movement whereby youth of all religious sects gathered together to primarily protest improper waste management by the government but also with an agenda to highlight political corruption and sectarianism on September 20, 2015.

**Image 6:** A photograph of 8 Filipina women in their native dress performing the Habanera Botolena dance in celebration of The Philippine's Independence Day outside St. Joseph's Church in Beirut on June 7, 2015.

### 3.4. Analyses

All transcripts were first coded thematically. This entailed the extrapolation of common and shared exclusionary themes in the discourse of participants, that were encoded in the images, and spanned multiple domains of social life.

We were able to tap numerous parameters for the external and internal specification of *acceptance*, *fitting in* and *belonging* in the data that could be further linked to explicit and implicit forms of social exclusion. Consistent with CDA theory, the images presented to participants served to activate socio-cognitive schemas that were recurrent in the discourse and formed the basis for the analyses. The following is a summary of the shared references and thus main themes that emerged in the discourse of the participants.

The data generated around Image 1 brought the schema of the old heritage sites of Beirut and the 'golden ages' before the war, that elicited the common theme of gentrification of these areas.

Image 2 generated a shared schema for iconism with the focus being on Sabah (as represented in the image) or a preference for her more conservative and melancholic counterpart, Fairuz, according to participant's alignment with their values, as well as Hamra being the city's "melting pot", alluding to the common theme of geopolitical divisions.

Image 3 activated schemas for the new and "modernized" aspects of Beirut, exposing common themes of gentrification, globalization, economic disparity and a disconnect between the old and the new.

Image 4 elicited a statement of unconditional respect for a Presidential figure from many participants, yet engendered confusion over the "blend" of flags shown in the image alluding to the theme of sectarianism.



Image 5 brought up the need for social activism in relation to the supply of basic services leading to the theme of solidarity and social movements as anti-sectarian, yet nevertheless as politicized.

Image 6 was approached with a ‘why not’ attitude by most participants in relation to the schema of social and national celebration, but generated concerns and justifications in relation to how domestic workers are treated in the Lebanese context, together with Lebanese immigration policies, referring again to geopolitical divisions. These socio-cognitive schemas were moderated by age, nationality and religious sect, where age intersected with old and new elements of the images and nationality and religious sect implied not having direct experience with what was represented in some of the images due to cultural and socioeconomic reasons, and historically due to the city’s East-West divide between Christians and Muslims.

The data generated was extremely rich. We first present an analysis of sectarian context in which the data was collected. This is followed by an analysis of main recurrent exclusionary themes in the data that pointed to the everyday processes of exclusion and the underlying relational needs that feed into them, as per our research aims. These were gentrification (‘old’ vs. ‘new’), geopolitical division and globalization (‘us’ vs. ‘them’ and ‘here’ vs. ‘over there’). One analytic aspect of the discursive construction of identity, namely contrastive strategies, formed the basis of our analyses. Contrastive strategies were commonly employed by participants to position themselves socially through the use of personal deixis related to groups (‘us’ vs. ‘them’), the temporal topos of comparison (‘then’ vs. ‘now’) and also spatial topos of difference (‘here’ vs. ‘over there’), at varying levels of discourse.

This approach further enabled us to uncover discursive strategies that pointed to the relational needs of *acceptance* and *fitting in*, and the higher-order concept of *belonging*, as they are implicated by different forms of social exclusion in everyday life in Beirut.

### **3.4.1 Sectarian Context**

In the words of one informant, sectarianism seems to be a ‘*raison d’être*’ (002) for some individuals and groups in Beirut, an expression in French which means the purpose for someone or something's existence.

Indeed, sectarianism appears to be inherent to the Lebanese way of life; the political elite push for and support sectarian identities within Lebanon to uphold economic and ideological hegemony that serves the higher sectarian classes and leaves many without political representation (Salloukh et al., 2015). Interestingly, the images that invoked the concept of sectarianism most directly (Image 4 and 5), led to many of our informants, regardless of their religious sect, expressing their discontent with sectarianism as a way of life and showing concern for the lack of adequate political representation that such a system sets up and perpetuates. Statements made by some of the younger participants, in particular, who appeared to be apolitical, pointed to the widespread ‘disenfranchisement’ of individuals and groups in Beirut.

Similarly, the disconnection from politics and general anomie that these younger informants showed seemed to be owing to their own disapproval of a sectarian system that does not represent their otherwise non-sectarian approach to everyday social life.

At the micro and meso-levels of CDA, individuals spoke about their own personal positive experiences mixing with members of various other religious sects, as well as projected estimates of the level of harmony that they believe are present in everyday Beirut life. Of note in the discourse of these informants were the referential shifts that occurred as they identified (and dis-identified) with groups.

*012: so you can find in this country really around 70% from the people who love to live in peace and love each other. But uh unfortunately, we... they have those people, those gangsters and they are... they are in the government.*

Participant 012 shifts from “we” to “they” as he embarks on a negative appraisal of the Lebanese government that is pinpointed as being the cause of conflict between groups and therefore not part of the ‘we’ he starts out to define (i.e. the 70% of which he is seemingly part). Another participant’s transition from “the people” to “my friends” to “they” may be taken to constitute a referential shift that aims to support the strongest interpretation of the claim being made for harmony among individuals and groups, further bolstered by the use of “they all” seen later in the discourse. Contrastive strategies, including the personal deixis used, once more alluded to the misrepresentation of individuals and groups by politicians at the macro-level of CDA.

*013: Now, I go every night to [inaudible]. And... And the... The people, my friends, they won't eat before I come. And on Christmas, on, on uh, Easter, they all come to me. You know?*

*PR: Mm-hmm*

*013: We don't have trouble. From... with our politician, that's it. Because they want us to be divided. They want to do uh, the business, they want to do the money... That's it.*

A final informant’s discourse was peppered with linguistic hedges suggestive of psychological uncertainty “in general”, “I am only 19 years old”, but the overall message of solidarity with other sects was upheld through repeated utterances such as “not at all”, as well as the repetition of the kinds of friends from other sects that this participant has, “Christian friends and Armenian”,

*008: Look the Christian people in general its true that I am only 19 years old but really I have seen a lot I have lived and dealt with different people all religions I don't have any issues with any religions not at all not at all not at all I have Christian friends and Armenian I come and go but look [inaudible]. I don't have a problem with any religion of course, because I have Christian friends and Armenian friends and everything.*

Furthermore, and specifically at the meso-level of CDA, similar sentiments were shared by other informants in relation to the Lebanese people as a whole, with referential shifts tending in the opposite direction, such that the positive aspects were described in the third-person plural “they” and “their own” and a later comparison with the negatively referenced politicians, becoming “us”. It is possible that the RA’s prompt of ‘politicians’ reframes the speaker’s discourse into an addressee-inclusive ‘us’ helping the informant to assert more confidence in his claim and also pointing to the contextual effects of these processes of identification.

*014: ...Uh, Beirut, it's a special place because, uh, people from Beirut, or Lebanese people, they love to live, uh, love life, uh, they forget, uh...the the bad things and move on, and they are successful in every country, in their own country, and I... I wish all the... all the... uh polit...*

RA: Politicians.

014: Politicians will be like us...

Another informant attributed the conflict of division to groups and politicians indirectly through the use of symbolic representation (e.g. flags), that serve to visually demarcate group boundaries. Specifically, participant 006 reflected on a favourable future through the use of discontinuating strategies by referring to a future *present* reality that would be more representative of the harmony she would like to see between individuals and groups, but also a past reality that she claims would be written differently if the present could have been foreseen. This activity is attributed to a vague referent of ‘*they*’ in the discourse.

006: *it's sad that whenever a flag goes up against another flag there is division... it's evident division and I hope there comes a day when we're here when we're still alive where a present would truly represent us uh especially coming from... you know we got our independence and all these things that they told us at school about, you know, our country. If they were writing history now, it would be totally different... yeah...*

Furthermore, most informants showed support for the non-sectarian social movement, “You Stink” represented in Image 4. The students at AUB used contrastive strategies when speaking about the harmony between members of different religious sects on the campus and how this contrasted with the wider social reality outside the university grounds in Beirut city.

019: *...we should wake more on this idea... Like my feeling is that as people, we do not have... The Lebanese people do not have problem with each other. Like personally, I do not have any problem with all my friends here at AUB, regardless of their religious background, their political background or anything. I guess so on the micro level, there is, I guess, like I don't know, there's no problem between people, but then at the macro level... Yeah, the politic... Let's say the political arena, there is, there is difference...*

Participant 019 explicitly referred to her experience using the CDA terminology of micro- and macro-levels. Another young informant’s discourse was layered with speculative language “*not really*”, “*I mean*”, “*I think*” that pointed to the same uncertainty surrounding the politics of Lebanon and ultimately, a state of disenfranchisement.

020: *I am not really into the politics of Lebanon. I am not really into it...Uh, nor do I belong to any sect or party. Uh, I think it's, I don't know, I think all of this is stupid...Picking sects or parties, and you're just defending them, umm with all what you got and and it's not what Lebanon really is. I mean, the, the people, like in the university, when I came to university, I met people from all other sects, from all other religions, and I really found golden people that are not even in my same religion. I- I- I think this does not describe us as people....If, they just, I mean the, the university should represent like a miniature society, so I think what we have here, how we accept each other, is way beyond this. I don't really identify with this...Nor do I want to, yeah. I don't really want to even know politics of Lebanon. It's just messed up. Yeah, basically.*

Finally, across the three levels of CDA’s socio-cognitive model, it was possible to establish an overview of how macro-level processes influence meso and micro-level narratives and cognitions through discourse. However, most individuals were resisting the direct perpetuation of a sectarian system in their discourse. Motivation to enact any kind of social change was not to the fore of their discourse, exposing their disenfranchised states and this alludes to the explicit

(sectarian symbolism) and implicit forms (sectarian policies) of exclusion at play in this social context. Micro-societies such as universities, on the other hand, appear to enable individuals to achieve their needs for *acceptance* and *fitting in*, and even a contingent sense of *belonging* within a given context, showing the importance of contextual effects in shaping these needs and thus perhaps explaining the lack of motivation for social change within the wider society at the time.

### 3.4.2. Processes of Gentrification as Exclusionary

The theme of historical and contemporary Beirut was indexed in Image 1 and Image 3 of the study generating reflections on past and present realities for participants and social others. The downtown areas of Beirut represented in these images have been gentrified by an urban development company, Solidere, with almost complete erasure of the original architecture and infrastructures. The reconstruction of this area has been described as “neoliberal urban regeneration” (Naeff, 2018: 22) where it is also argued that the linear disconnect between past and present in such areas, as well as the superficiality of its modern facades and associated high-end consumerism, disrupts healthy identity formation and *belongingness* and acts as a disguise for latent violent social conflicts (Naeff, 2018).

We found some evidence for this claim in our data, specifically in the discourse of those disapproving of the modern reconstruction of the area. Furthermore, the regeneration of the area serves to explicitly and implicitly exclude individuals of mid to lower socio-economic status. Indeed, multiple participants used the adjective ‘expensive’ to describe the Beirut Souks (Image 3). The mismatch between consumer purchasing power and what is available for purchase in the area was evidenced through the use of personal and spatial deixis setting up distance between speaker and target referent, alluding to conditions of social marginalization,

008: “*their prices are very expensive over there*”

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002: “*I would just tie this whole thing again with fancy Beirut which is most of these places there I mean you could not I mean a regular person couldn’t shop there they’re pretty expensive*”

===

009: “*honest to god I don’t really like them. You can only look for the sake of looking but you can’t buy anything from there...you can’t...prices are obscene*”.

At the micro-level of CDA, social cognitions that are deemed personal to the individual, it could be inferred that these participants were implying they could not personally afford to shop at the Beirut Souks, with the exception of participant 002, whose recategorization of ‘you’ to ‘a regular person’ remains vague. Importantly, however, no usage of the first-person pronoun was found in the discourse of these participants and as such, a depersonalized account was given.

Perspectivation strategies thus played an important role in pointing to the externalization of processes of social exclusion through the projected mismatch between category type (e.g. expensive shop) and category selection (e.g. high-class wealthy consumer). The repetition of the adjective ‘classy’, along with the repetition of spatial deixis ‘over there’, shown in the following excerpt reinforces this interpretation,

008: *"It's lively. The majority of the people are classy that go there you feel like how do they say like you are living [laughter] over there. It's neat the people are classy over there you find all the classy people over there".*

Participant 008 alludes to the external processes of *acceptance* taking place in the area, "*you feel like how do they say like you are living [laughter] over there*". However, since no explicit act of exclusion is mentioned, it is the internal and self-assessed *lack of fit*, through comparative means in line with Festinger's (Festinger, 1954) social comparison theory, with the type of person, e.g. *classy*, that acts to exclude individuals. Perpetuation of exclusionary narratives are thus evidenced through commentaries on how the impersonal 'you' is oriented in the social sphere and psychological mechanisms such as depersonalization (where 'I' becomes the generic 'you'), albeit unintentionally, can serve to reinforce class divisions between individuals of different socio-economic classes, while also mitigating the responsibility of the speaker (Haas et al., 2015). In this way, the speakers seemingly acknowledge their *lack of fit* in the environment on the micro-level, a discourse that then feeds into the implicit and indirect processes of exclusion taking place according to the meso- and macro-levels of CDA.

At the meso-level of CDA, referring to shared social narratives, some informants embraced the modern infrastructures of the area for their 'newness'. They did so with temporal reference to the old, such that their discourse implied that the old was still accessible through Beirut's history and various other referent markers such as old street names. In contrast to the proposal of Naeff (Naeff, 2018), as cited above, this suggests that complete erasure of the past has not yet been successful in altering the processes of identification.

013: ... *Did you meet people that don't identify with it?*

PR: *Uh, yes, yeah.*

013: *They want the old?*

PR: *They want the old, yeah.*

013: *Yeah, I know, you know, I love it. You know why? Because the old represent Beirut.*

PR: *Hmm.*

013: *And this... The new represent us, you know? It's... It's... It's like...*

RA: *The new generation?*

013: *The new generation. Cannot stay... It's time to... To move on... I guess. Yeah.*

However, the linguistic resources used to convey this seemed spontaneous and situated at the micro-level of CDA only (i.e. personal beliefs). Given the repeated use of the discourse marker, '*you know*', participant 013 was likely negotiating a new interpretation of the area as the discourse unfolded (Erman, 2001). This participant had already stated that his offices were located in the area and that he spends most of his time there. Indeed, the vagueness with which he refers to an '*us*', subsequently offered by the RA as '*the new generation*', suggests that he may have been referring to a higher socio-economic class of which he is part.

Another participant employed a temporal discontinuating strategy as linked to the discursive transformation of identity, which was to merge past and present realities for another group of which he is not part, re-specified as '*old Lebanese people*' from '*old people*'. Since this participant had, on the micro-level of CDA, unlike others, specifically referred to his own socio-economic exclusion from the area in the first-person, "*Especially in Beirut Souks, uh, a single bill is about \$200 or something like that. I can't pay that much. My salary is about \$900, but it's not enough*", it is plausible that he sought to justify the redevelopment of the area for another group, so as to mitigate the negative feelings surrounding his own *lack of fit* there.



014: *Uh... I love this place and for old people, old Lebanese people, it, uh... It brings, uh old memories. But it's different, it's new but it brings old, uh... memories. Ayah Street was for fish I think or vegetables or something. Now it's for clothes.*

Other participants, however, did dismiss the gentrification of the area due to nostalgia for the old heritage sites that are deemed more characteristic of Beirut, in line with the proposal made by Naeff (Naeff, 2018),

003: *"There is no Beirut anymore. It is not Beirut as it was. It is now a concrete city. During our days it was all... not all of it but 80% green spaces ... trees and cacti and figs and berries most of it was, they say"*

Informant 003 began with a strong and existential assertion about Beirut that was gradually reduced to a transformation, a contrastive strategy between 'then' and 'now'. In addition, the shift between "our days" and the final utterance of "they say" moves the discourse from this participant's own personal mental representations at the micro-level to a diluted meso-level shared narrative of CDA and reduces the impact of the overall statement.

Another young participant explicitly referenced the processes of identification with buildings and architecture in the area. Similar to participant 003, the focus was on the superficial appearance of Beirut, 'the face', and therefore limited in its depth, not touching on the higher-order concept of *belonging*, but rather surface level attributes that serve to regulate *acceptance* only (here aligned with the processes of identification).

019: *"Umm actually, I don't l-like how Beirut now looks like. Like I, I do not really identify with the buildings. Uh I do not identify with the architecture.*

[...]

*They are modern areas, but I think they do not reflect the true face of Beirut, so I do not identify with this face of Beirut".*

At the macro-level of CDA, the details of political and economic agendas behind the processes of gentrification, in this case operationalised by Solidere, were present in the discourse of some informants. According to two participants, previous inhabitants of the area had been physically removed against their will for the reconstruction,

002: *again it just brings back these issues that we have now with what it is and should we keep it what it was or should we make... should we change according to what people want now. And I know partly it has to do with money, with economic powers Who's buying what in the country. The other part is I know that from some of the conversations I hear ... is that they wanna take away the little Christian part of Beirut. That's just uh some of the conversations I...and mainly from the Christian people.*

[...]

RA: *I just want to clarify what do you mean by take away from Christians? Do you mean that property wise?*

002: *No, it's not property it's belongingness because I know this area used to have kind of older Christian families in it.*

RA: *mm true*

002: *Yes um... something I didn't know before I started coming to this area. A lot um... and then now it's mainly Muslim um...and I know just like ... um I wanna be very specific when I say this because again it's just some things that I hear and I might have been*



*swayed by those you know thoughts too um... It's that it used to be called Saint George, so why are you changing the name to make it something more Arabic? As opposed to... I mean Saint George is a very purely Christian name for me. I think that's the problem... The divide between...or some people who don't want it to change.*

As this participant recalls what she has heard about the history of the area, her discourse descends into less certain and more speculative language, 'kind of', 'mainly', 'that I hear', 'I might have been swayed by those you know thoughts'. These forms of linguistic hedging can indicate less commitment on the part of the speaker to the message they are communicating (Lakoff, 1973). This may be partly due to the RA's clarification of what was being said, that seemed to lead to a reframing of the removal of *property* to a removal of *belongingness*. Another participant who alluded to the dispossession of property did so with less speculation, evidenced in repetition of "I know" along with "I'm sure" and "I do understand", however referring to those displaced only by the reference to "the poor" and therefore, possibly with less trepidation than that of informant 002, who started out by specifying a religious sect.

018: *I know that there's a history to it. I've never bothered looking it up.*

PR: *Sure.*

018: *But I know that there's a uh history of them kicking out the poor, so that they can build... Like, renovate the whole area.*

PR: *Yeah.*

018: *Now it looks really nice, but I'm sure that people had to pay with their homes for this.*

PR: *Yeah.*

018: *So while I do think it looks really nice and pretty, I do understand that there's a... people were hurt because of this.*

In sum, CDA of the theme of gentrification showed that low purchasing power as an individual (evidenced at the micro-level of CDA) pointed to an external cue for *lack of acceptance* in the newly gentrified area. Traditional ideals and nostalgia for architecture that are culturally shared (shown at meso-level of CDA) signalled *lack of fit* in the social environment as internally specified.

At the macro-level of CDA, and according to these informants, political powers have moved to explicitly exclude certain groups from the area to capitalize on its commercial potential. However, interestingly, young people who also fell into this overall category of *non-acceptance* and *non-fit* had, in part, reclaimed the area in terms of its functionality. Four of the younger participants talked about going to watch movies at the new cinema that is situated in the Beirut Souks (Image 3).

One of these participants also talked about seeing groups of skateboarders there regularly who have taken advantage of the concrete surfaces to practise their sport, thus benefiting from the resources of the area. Crucially, another participant used the term *belonging*, with reference to the planning company, Solidere, as a synecdoche to refer to the whole area,

015: *"Yeah, it's old town and new... Old town and now the new town, but still it's too much, it's expensive. And uh. You don't feel uh... I don't know, I, I don't belong to Solidere, I belong to Solidere just to walk, Beirut, so I go there just to walk."*

Given that this participant acknowledges feeling *belonging* to the area for the purposes of walking only, it exemplifies a case of low-level *acceptance* for this participant (i.e. no explicit exclusion), the young cinema-goers and the skateboarders, for the purposes of benefiting from the resources of the area (i.e. a nice space to walk/cinema/skateboarding), without needing to *fit in* (i.e. to share the ambient values associated with high-consumerism) and feel a contingent sense of *belonging* to the area. This interpretation is further supported by a similar account given in Larkin (Larkin, 2014) in which one informant spoke of the downtown area as cosmopolitan haven, an escape from "narrow professionalism" (Larkin, 2014: 426) experienced elsewhere in the city.

As such, we were able to disentangle the relational needs of *acceptance* and *fitting in* from the higher-order concept of *belonging* in the discourse of these participants. Furthermore, this analysis suggests that lack of *acceptance* is primarily signalled through explicit acts of exclusion (i.e. removal from the area). Lack of *fit* is signalled by implicit forms of exclusion that indirectly made individuals feel they do not fit in (i.e. low purchasing power and/or traditional values) but nevertheless allowed individuals to continue benefiting from the resources of the area (i.e. through low-level acceptance). Thus, CDA illustrates the links between everyday experiences of social exclusion that thwart the basic relational needs of *acceptance* and *fitting in* in different ways. It also provided a first indication in the data that the verb *to feel* may constitute a cluster term with *belonging*, that specifies it as a higher-order concept.

### 3.4.3 Geopolitical Divisions and Globalization as Exclusionary

Many cities in the world have geopolitical divisions and the world itself is often conceptualized as an East-West dichotomy. Beirut mirrors this with city bounds dividing up East and West Beirut (Monroe, 2016), but also allowing some middle-ground, Ras Beirut (the 'tip') where individuals of different religious sects come together (Llewellyn, 2010). Here, we find Hamra Street shown in Image 2 that was described as a "melting pot" for all sects and classes by some informants. However, according to two informants, even Ras Beirut was inaccessible to Christians during the war-time,

*RA: He's never been to Hamra when he was young.*

*013: I've never been to Hamra.*

*RA: Because of the war.*

*013: Because of the war.*

*RA: Now he's recently getting, uh, uh, to know Hamra, and to go to Hamra.*

*013: Exactly...So that's... no memories of Hamra you know, for me. If you ask maybe 10 people, you have the same question from nine people...Same answer, you know....Because we never went there. We couldn't go there, you know.*

Explicit reference to this participant's own ingroup only occurs in the last part of the discourse through the personal deictic 'we'. In recalling his own experience (the micro-level of CDA),

participant 013 shows some consensus bias in estimating the proportion of individuals who he believes did not have access to Hamra during the war (90% of people). Through this narrative (at the meso-level of CDA), we see the lasting effect of explicit exclusion from the area (effectuated historically at the macro-level of CDA). However, this participant upheld the area for its current diversity and *acceptance* of all sects, yet stated that he *still* felt no *belonging* there. As before, the verb ‘*to feel*’ was employed in the context of *belonging* and could be taken to signify the intended referent of the term *belonging* as a deeper, complex attachment to a group or place.

*013: You can see, because Hamra is, is a mix, is a mixture of, is a mix of, uh, rich people, poor people, uh, Syrian people, beggars, uh... You can see every... You walk on the street, she's selling the rings on the floor, you can see the exchange, you know? It's something, it's nice, I like to walk in Hamra.*

[...]

*But not, you know, I, I still have this feeling that I don't belong unfortunately. It's very bad. It's very bad. But you feel that, you walk, but I want to go back, that's what I feel about Hamra unfortunately.*

In addition, this discourse provides a second indication of the possibility of low-level *acceptance* without *belonging*. In line with our proposal, the need for *acceptance* in the face of explicit exclusion (in this case historically) can underpin everyday social relations with implications for the higher-order concept of *belonging*. This can materialize over time such that lack of acceptance, if prolonged will lead to feelings of *un-belonging* on a deeper existential level.

Other participants attributed the qualities of openness and tolerance of diversity to the area also at the micro- and meso-level of CDA,

*015: They are different, they accept all the people and they are very friendly. In Hamra, you feel that you can... In Hamra, In Hamra area somehow you are abroad, you live abroad... Different part of Lebanon you feel you are living in Lebanon because there's the snob... You know the different... But in Hamra especially... You can feel all of the people around you. The cool people, the normal people, the people, uh... The easy-going.*

Participant 015 spoke about Hamra in the third-person plural starting out with a vague referent, “*they*”, later reframed as “*the cool people*”, “*the normal people*” and finally “*the people*” and “*the easy-going*”. The contrastive strategy used in the discourse serves to target Hamra as the exception, not the rule, and that the need for *acceptance* can be easily met there. However, also among our informants, were individuals who spoke in opposite terms using meso-level CDA narratives about the current Hamra Street, seemingly contrasted with the past when the city was more divided. Their discontent also seemed to be due to developments such as the integration of commercial coffee shop franchises,

*009: Hamra was also vibrant and during new years....It was much nicer than now. People used to walk with clarinets. Now you don't find anyone. They are hiding in coffee shops, that is to say, it doesn't have the spirit that was before... Hamra died. It doesn't have life (soul).*

[...]

*I swear to god here it's like there is nothing left to feel you don't even feel Ramadan [laughter] everything changed.*

Participant 009's concluding statement about Ramadan may indicate that the mix of all sects and classes in the Hamra area now diffuses otherwise intensely felt markers of identity such as cultural events that are specific to particular religious sects. These markers enhance ingroup feelings of *fitting in* and therefore likely have implications for downstream *belonging*. Therefore, paradoxically, an atmosphere of inclusion established through low thresholds for social *acceptance*, actually serves to implicitly exclude others whose values do not align and who thus become alienated from the social environment. While *acceptance* is externally possible, *fitting in* that is internally specified, is thus shown to be non-contingent to *acceptance* (i.e. not related to it) in the context of this discourse.

Another participant made explicit reference to the “westernised” face of Hamra. However, a contrastive strategy used with reference to the ‘local’ markers of identity pushes the narrative away from one of desires for higher thresholds of *acceptance* to one of wishes for increased ‘authenticity’. The traditional values thus held by this individual seemed to thwart their need to *fit in*, as internally specified, in the context of a more diverse and supposedly less ‘authentic’ Lebanese setting. Other reports on Hamra, such as those noted in Seidman (Seidman, 2012) that instead reflect more positively on the cosmopolitan developments of the area further support the distinction between external and internal specification, where internal specification underpins *lack of fit* when, for example, social values are not shared.

*019: Like I have, like I really have some con... Not conflict. I do not like the, uh, coffee shops that exist in Hamra...Right now, yeah. I feel it's too Westernised, okay?*

[...]

*Here in Lebanon, you can't find local markers of identity. Like everything is, I don't know, like merged into Western, like, Western, Westernised...*

In conclusion, macro-level CDA processes such as geopolitical divisions and globalization thus have implications for *acceptance*, *fitting in* and *belonging* in the local contexts in which they unfold. Though no explicit forms of exclusion are taking place in areas relating to these processes in the context of Beirut (as needs for *acceptance* can be met), implicit exclusion manifests where individuals internally assess their *lack of fit* and *un-belonging* due to unshared values with the globalized face of these areas and, as such, experience social alienation.

#### 4. Limitations

One limitation with this research is that participants were non-native speakers of English, and as such, lexico-grammatical choices and form may not be as directly comparable to case studies involving native speakers of the English language with respect to the discursive construction of identity.

Moreover, some interviews were conducted in Arabic and translation across different and distant languages such as Arabic and English can be challenging (Akan et al., 2019). As such,

we could not be as confident about the accuracy of the data translated to English from Arabic. For instance, while both translators were given clear instructions to transcribe and translate verbatim, their transcripts differed in terms of lexico-grammatical choice and form in the English translation, even though semantically the same ideas were transmitted in the discourse.

Furthermore, while case studies with relatively small sample sizes that are large in data generation (i.e. the discourse itself), are sufficient for mining with pre-set hypotheses, as was the case for the current study, the generalizability of findings may be limited by the specific contextual aspects involved, such as the multiplicity of identities present in Beirut. As such, further cross-cultural research is necessary to draw stronger conclusions that might also include a more in-depth analysis of the complex sectarian context of Beirut, Lebanon and other more homogeneous societies. Indeed, the selection of Beirut as a location for the research was driven primarily by an interest in a social context involving sectarianism, but the data-driven approach adopted resulted in two other exclusionary themes, namely gentrification and geopolitical division and globalization, becoming the focus of the analysis in achieving our research goals (i.e. disentangling and disambiguating the terms used to refer to different relational needs in conditions of exclusion).

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, we have demonstrated how the conceptual framework offered by CDA, along with related analytical tools, such as the discursive construction of identity, can help to expose the basic relational needs of *acceptance* and *fitting in* in discourse as they are differentially implicated in everyday conditions social exclusion.

Our contextual analysis served to elucidate that sectarianism underpins ‘disenfranchisement’, where this condition of exclusion relates primarily to lack of political representation. However, religious sect, as a social category, created more of a ‘blend’ between groups in our discourse, as opposed to a reinforcing group boundaries (‘us’ vs. ‘them’).

Concerning our research goals, by focusing on the exclusionary themes of gentrification and geopolitical division and globalization that emerged in the data, we have also shown that *belonging*, as a higher-order concept, can be disentangled from these relational needs through contingent and non-contingent instances of *belonging* (i.e. where one is not a necessary condition of the other and where either *acceptance* and/or *fitting in* are possible). Furthermore, the repeated cluster of the term ‘*belonging*’ with the verb ‘*to feel*’ is an important finding for the development of psychological assessment scales in empirical research in social psychology that can begin to consider the wording of items around the concept of *belonging* more critically in future work.

Overall, the socio-cognitive model provided by CDA allowed for a systemic overview of the complex modalities of everyday experiences of social exclusion that can, in turn, begin to facilitate increased specification and contextualization of exclusionary events in the laboratory setting and, as such, help to reconcile prior inconsistencies in the exclusion literature that have come about due to the generalization of the phenomenon in empirical work.

In sum, we were able to address our research questions with the data collected for this study with the following findings: The analysis we conducted exposed linguistic patterns that allowed us to distinguish between needs for *acceptance* and *fitting in* and to disentangle these basic



needs from the higher-order concept of *belonging*. It also enabled us to examine how these fundamental features of the relational system feed into, create and perpetuate explicit and implicit forms of social exclusion. As such, the discourse around the relational goals of individuals and groups in specific contexts as externalized or internalized, can further set up and bolster conditions under which social beings invariably experience disenfranchisement, social marginalization and social alienation.

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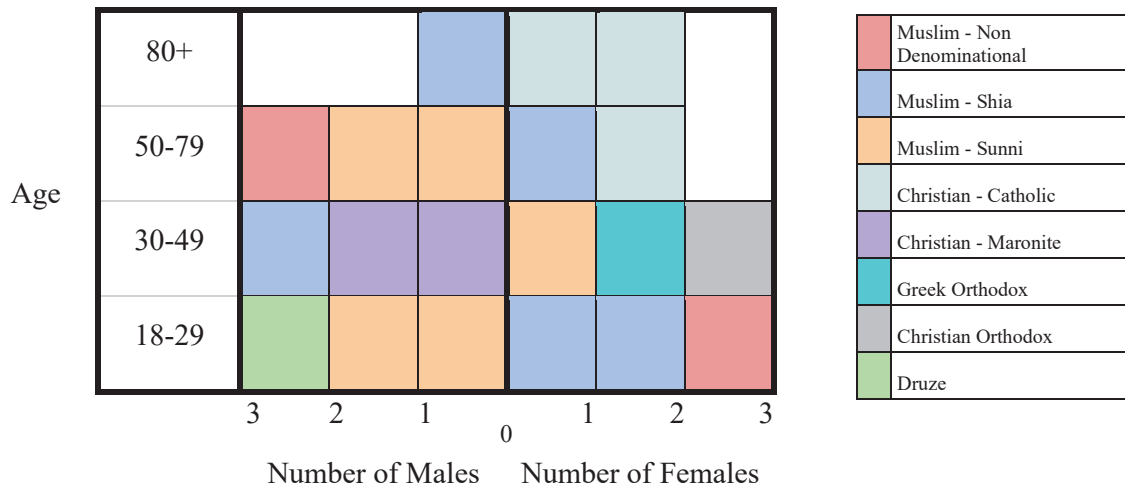


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**Appendix 1****Table I** Detailed Demographic Information for Participants

Participant Number	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Nationality	Ethnicity	Religion	Language
001	80+	M	Single	Lebanese	Arab	Muslim - Sunni	English
002	30-49	F	Single	Lebanese	omitted	Greek Orthodox	English
003	50-79	M	Married	Lebanese	Arab	Muslim - Sunni	Arabic/English
004	50-79	M	Married	Lebanese	Arab	Muslim - Shia	English
005 withdrawn							
006	30-49	F	Single	Lebanese	Arab	Muslim - Sunni	English
007	30-49	M	Married	Lebanese	Arab	Muslim - Shia	Arabic
008	18-29	F	Married	Syrian	Arab	Muslim - Shia	Arabic
009	50-79	F	Married	Lebanese	Arab	Muslim - Shia	Arabic
010 (2)	80+	F	Widowed	Lebanese	French Lebanese	Christian - Catholic	French/English
011	50-79	F	Married	Sri-Lankan	Sinhalese	Christian - Catholic	English
012	50-79	M	Married	Lebanese	Arab	Muslim - Non-Denominational	Arabic
013	30-49	M	Married	Lebanese	Lebanese	Christian -Maronite	English
014	18-29	M	Single	Lebanese	Arab	Muslim - Sunni	English
015	30-49	M	Married	Lebanese	Arab Phoenician	Christian -Maronite	English
016	40-49	F	Married	Lebanese	Arab	Christian -Orthodox	Arabic
017	18-29	M	Single	Lebanese	Arab	Muslim - Sunni	English
018	18-29	M	Single	Lebanese	Arab	Druze	English
019	18-29	F	Single	Lebanese	Arab	Muslim - Shia	English
020	18-29	F	Single	Palestinian	Arab	Muslim Non-Denominational	English

**Figure 1** Sample age, sex and religious sect



## Appendix 2

### Interview Guide Questions

“Do you recognize this image?”

“Please describe this image in your own terms”

“What does this image mean, if anything, to you personally?”

“Do you identify with any of the places/people represented in this image? If so, how?”

“Does seeing this image affect you in any way, positively or negatively, why?”

“Does this image conjure up specific memories that you have surrounding the events or places represented? If so, how do these memories compare or contrast with your current feelings about the event or place”

#### Additional prompts

“Please elaborate on your last point .....

“Please be more specific about what you mean when you say .....