

Home Politics Abroad: The Role of the Lebanese Diaspora in Conflict, Peace Building and Democratic Development

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Synthesis

This report will present a detailed review of how the Institute for Migration Studies (IMS) has conducted and completed its IDRC-funded research project entitled *Home Politics Abroad: The Role of the Lebanese in Conflict, Peace Building and Democratic Development*, under the grant guidelines given at its inception in January 2009. The IMS has endeavored to fulfill these guidelines in conducting and analyzing its research data, releasing publications, holding a policy-making workshop, investing in training and software on qualitative research analysis, and holding research-oriented conferences to discuss our findings and foster collaboration with other scholars, and policy makers. We also have compiled a bibliography over the course of the project which will be presented along with this report.

On June 13, 2012, we received confirmation that we would be granted the second six-month extension that we requested to complete our project. We requested this extension due to various roadblocks that we encountered throughout the course of our research. These specific challenges will be discussed in greater detail in the report as they are relevant to each of the sections to follow. What is important here is that although the end aims of the research project remained the same, the scope of activities involved was slightly enlarged. The extra six months allowed us to focus on the completion and analysis of our data, the application of our scholarly findings as policy recommendations, holding a half-day meeting with policy-makers in order to present and discuss these recommendations, and the preparation of additional publications and research outputs.

Our three-year (plus two 6-month extensions) research has been broken down into significant stages that have been detailed throughout all previous reports. During the period of our first extension, we were able to make significant strides in both the collection of in-depth interviews as well as numerous opportunities to present our scholarly findings. We held two successful workshops for Lebanese students at the Lebanese American University campus, in Beirut, in collaboration with the National Institute for Demographic Studies (*INED*). The workshops gave crash-course training on both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis of (migration-related) research data. They were beneficial both for the research assistants employed by IMS as well as students who will apply their knowledge to their own studies and possibly join our Institute in future endeavors.

Perhaps the most noteworthy achievement in terms of scholarly research-sharing, networking and collaborative efforts enabled by our first six-month extension was the conference we held at the Lebanese American University in February 2012. We were able to secure sponsorship by both the IDRC in connection to the overall project, as well as conference-specific sponsorship from our collaborators in Germany at the Center for International Studies of the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz. The conference brought together 21 international migration scholars on the subject matter of *Relationships between Diasporas and Their 'Homelands' and Their Impact on the State, National Identities, and Peace & Conflict*. The conference provided a valuable space for dialogue on *diaspora* and how this phenomenon is perceived by the state, relates with the state, and operates as its own disparate entity separate from the home state. We gained constructive networking and collaborative opportunities and ultimately used the insights produced in our own research.

The second extension period we received allowed us to complete the collection of our interviews in Canada and the United States, and enter the intensive analysis period of all interviews from Lebanon, Australia, Canada, and the United States. We employed more research assistants at our home base in Lebanon to work with NVivo qualitative analysis software we had purchased earlier in order to capitalize on our time and resources.

As already noted, over the extension periods, our research aims have not been altered, yet, during this period, our focus was on completion of all the necessary field work and analysis related to the countries abroad,

and examining how the diaspora actors, falling under the same categories of the previously studied local actors: the state, political parties, political elites, and various associations (religious, charitable, political, etc.) are currently engaging with and responding to Lebanese political realities from afar. The data obtained during the past twelve months are crucial to addressing a key research question: *What is the impact of politics abroad on politics at home?* We finally have started formulating an answer to this question from a diasporic point of view: Has the Lebanese Diaspora been reinforcing peace building and development in Lebanon or has it alternatively been fuelling conflict and civil strife?

The theoretical discussion surrounding the increasing significance of the Lebanese diasporic communities in understanding the transformation of international and domestic politics will be discussed in full in the publications following the termination of our project. The analysis of our data has given us ample conclusions on the significance and scope of the relationship between the Lebanese Diaspora in the United States, Canada, and Australia and their homeland as a result of the final period of our project. In this report, we will describe the progress we have made over the past twelve months of our empirical research documenting the strong relationship the Lebanese Diaspora maintains and/or is building with their home country as perceived from the receiving end of the three host countries in question.

As stated in our previous six-month report, our in-depth interviews abroad have shed light on a number of variables that were previously tackled through our interviews conducted in Lebanon. These variables include—but are not restricted to—the migrants’ right to vote in the Diaspora, the Lebanese reception of this demand, the current political lobbying by the Diaspora towards both the governments of the host countries and the country of origin, the role of Lebanese political parties in the three aforementioned countries, the responsibility of Lebanese diasporans as technical advisors to Lebanon vis-à-vis political and economic development, political fundraising and the formation of political, religious-cum-political and social groups abroad representing corresponding groups in Lebanon and the role of return migration in local and national politics. One finding that we have previously argued and can strongly confirm through our data is that the Lebanese Diaspora makes itself felt politically in the area of fundraising for the purpose of supporting the political and social activities of local Lebanese actors (i.e., political parties, village associations, religious associations, etc.) as well as diasporan group activities.

More significantly, our research in this final stage has further demonstrated that a variety of these variables—especially those having to do with public affairs such as support for organizations and town infrastructure—largely but not wholly contribute to peace-keeping in Lebanon, while others—particularly those that are remarkably political in nature—result in exacerbating the conflicts between Lebanese political actors and, indeed, further entrench the patterns of conflict in the country. We can confirm that our research has been able to highlight the extent to which the Lebanese Diaspora manifests itself in the domain of political affairs and public activities. What is particularly noteworthy about these findings is that they have become increasingly politically important, as the Lebanese state has enacted a law to be implemented as of the 2013 election that will allow Lebanese citizens abroad to vote in home-state elections while outside of Lebanon. Our research findings have thus arrived at a critical time in Lebanon, giving us all the more of a platform to propose policy recommendations to interested stakeholders.

In conclusion, we believe that the final year of this four-year research project has been quite successful in identifying the political dimension of the Lebanese Diaspora from a diasporic point of view, which can be used critically by policy-makers in Lebanon as the diaspora is given greater citizenship rights. The overall empirical findings offer extensive geographic knowledge of the active Lebanese Diaspora in three important recipient countries—especially concerning various cities and towns abroad that host a large number of active Lebanese Diasporic members—that are also highly crucial to policy-makers and state representatives in Lebanon at this time. Our data also demonstrates the key roles of the Diaspora in Lebanese national politics and

in public affairs. In addition, the information obtained during this period has strengthened our previous knowledge of the relationships between the Lebanese migrant communities and their home country.

Research Problem

In this section, we will briefly restate the main tenets of our research problem, which has fundamentally remained the same since the launch of the project in January 2009. We will spell out a couple of main points previously mentioned in our grant proposal and our prior interim reports concerning the questions that our research set out to address. The general problem our research has sought to examine is: What role does the Lebanese Diaspora play in the politics of their ‘homeland’ and what is the role of ‘homeland’ politics in the Lebanese Diaspora? The analysis of the collective interviews we have gathered has allowed us to answer our twofold research question: How do Lebanese society and state shape the Lebanese diasporic activities and how does the Lebanese Diaspora contribute to the continuation of conflict and/or to the promotion of peace-building inside of Lebanon? `

As we expressed at the beginning of our research, it remains true that no comprehensive empirical study has been conducted on the politics of the Lebanese Diaspora and its impact on home politics. Secondly, the extensive literature review we have conducted in conjunction with our empirical research— an active literature review that is being conducted and updated continuously by the project manager, graduate assistants and interns working on the project – has allowed us to support our assumption that our current study will not only contribute significantly to the growing international literature on diasporan communities, but also, through tackling the case study of Lebanese diasporan politics, we are able to provide a unique look at the complex, distinctive and dynamic character of Diasporan politics relative to the origin country in addition to examining the state-diaspora relationship from a local and diasporic point of view.

We have come to realize from the empirical research completed abroad over the course of the project – and here we refer to the over 320 in-depth interviews conducted in Lebanon, Australia, Canada and the United States – that there is not only great cultural, financial, social and familial interaction between the Lebanese Diaspora and their homeland, but most pertinent to our research problem, there is also major political interaction between the Lebanese at home and abroad.

Our interviews abroad have substantiated one of the key ideas we offered in the primary proposal and the interim reports to the IDRC. We had projected that our study of the Lebanese Diaspora would expose new-found intricacies of diasporan politics due to the deeply divided character of politics in Lebanon. In addition to this, the importance of our study has confirmed that Lebanese Diasporan politics largely, though not solely, replicate the domestic divisions and conflicts inside of Lebanon and may—though this is yet to be fully substantiated—contribute to keeping them ‘alive’ when domestic/local actors might move beyond them. This is further complicated by the replication of the heterogeneity of Lebanese society in the diaspora as a result of ongoing migration. It is interesting to note that our research concluded parallel to the passing of the aforementioned law in Lebanon (first passed in 2008) that will grant citizenship and voting privileges to many Lebanese living abroad. Because of the sectarian nature of the Lebanese state, we are beginning to see that government and municipal officials in Lebanon are exploiting the divisions inherent in the political make-up of the state in order to secure voter support. Our research conclusions demonstrate that the diaspora has thus far tended to maintain strong sectarian identities as opposed to a more unified national identity.

Due to the passing of the expatriate voting law that will allow Lebanese abroad to vote in 2013, we found it necessary to expand the scope of our research to address this key issue. We mainly sought to examine whether or not diasporan groups were actively engaged in spreading knowledge about this law and dispersing election-related information to networking bodies and Lebanese emigrants in general. We put a heavy emphasis on our interviews with Lebanese ambassadors and consulates because of their capacity as mediators between the Lebanese state and its expatriates. We also focused on the overall roles and responsibilities of ambassadors

and consulates in the diaspora, how these roles are perceived by the Lebanese abroad, and to what extent these offices are able to represent the Lebanese state in the countries of our research.

Another aspect of the Diaspora-homeland relationship of which previous literature has taken fairly little note is gender. We have asked how and to what extent does gender play a role in Lebanese diasporic relations with the homeland? This is an important question to ask in a traditional country such as Lebanon where the patriarchal nature of public life remains largely intact, informally as well as formally embedded in national institutions. We have given the issue of gender in the Lebanese diaspora great priority in our project in the past year, as we have realized the emphasis that the IDRC has been placing on gender in the Peace, Conflict and Development Program. When it came to analyzing the role of gender in determining Diasporic activity, given the formal structure of citizenship in Lebanon (only male citizens can pass on their citizenship to their children or share it with their spouses, a fact that has taken on greater consequence as the new citizenship and voting laws have been passed) as well as the more informal patriarchal nature of the society, we began with the assumption that Diaspora engagement would be higher among men in the Diaspora and pass along ‘male lines’ within families. This assumption has been largely confirmed by the findings of our empirical research.

To date, we are finding that patriarchal constructs inside Lebanon have largely been replicated in the Diaspora. While culture undoubtedly plays a key role here, the Lebanese citizenship law, which only allows male Lebanese to pass on citizenship, also means that the Diaspora is forced to deal with patriarchal structures which it might not accept in their adopted countries. What we have also found is that gender has not played a very key role in the activities and missions of many of the diasporic organizations and associations that our research has dealt with. Although this is certainly a generalization that has ample room for certain exceptions, our research has shown that the issue of gender equality has largely been overlooked as a foremost topic of interest amongst diasporan groups. Thus, we can only say that there may be some slight changes in the role of women in homeland public and private organizations as well as in the private, family sphere, due to interactions with the Lebanese Diaspora in the three countries we studied. This issue will be more closely laid out in the publications discussing and analyzing our findings.

One of the pivotal questions in our study aimed at determining how and when the Diaspora-homeland relationship plays a part in peace-building and/or conflict perpetuation. The literature on diasporic relations addresses the existence of what is thought to be a significant third level in the negotiation and resolution of ethnic conflict, made up of kin communities that cross state boundaries and that act independently within their host states, inside their homeland, and in relation with third-party states and international organizations. These third-level actors are capable of having a significant impact on the decision making of states in regards to conflict and peace. From this perspective, the existence of a strong and influential Lebanese Diaspora means that there is significant actual and potential power for the Diaspora to play the role of a “third-level actor”. Expatriates have infused Lebanon with their wealth, experience, and will to provide the country with political and economic stability. In addition, they have sometimes strived to resolve sectarian strife. However, at times, many returning Lebanese have brought ‘reforming’ and revolutionary fervor that has indeed fuelled Diasporan sectarian differences, internal antagonisms, and other domestic conflicts as well. Thus, we have found diaspora participation in homeland affairs to be a double-edged sword that may well ‘keep the peace’ through acting in lieu of the state at the village and/or communal level but at the same time, fuel long-term instability in Lebanon by reaffirming the weak state and strengthening sect-based actors.

In summary, the dependent variables for our research remain peace-building and conflict perpetuation. The independent variables are summarized and updated in the following points:

- 1- The extent and scale of Diaspora engagement in Lebanese politics and public affairs;
- 2- The extent and scale of ‘home’ engagement in Lebanese political and social activities abroad;

- 3- Manifestations of public engagement by the Diaspora in terms of associations, groups, and individuals directly involved in Lebanese politics and public affairs;
- 4- Types of activities (fundraising, lobbying, etc.) relating to Lebanese politics and public affairs engaged in by the Diaspora;
- 5- Manifestations and types of activities by Lebanese state actors (including the role of ambassadors and consulates) and society involved in the Diaspora;
- 6- Host country and Lebanese state and society relations; how the host state allows for migrant and ethnic community input on home country politics; and how the host countries perceive political activity and public engagement by the Diaspora; and
- 7- The role of gender in Lebanese Diasporan participation in public affairs in the home country

Research Objectives

In order to present the clearest picture of the scale of our research on the political relationship between the Lebanese at home and abroad, it is necessary to explain how the particular reach of our study is bound to affect the conclusions we have reached. We were only able to conduct our fieldwork in Australia, Canada, and the United States. The exclusion of other major destination points of Lebanese emigration throughout Lebanese history—such as West Africa, Europe and South America—means that our research subjects as a whole may tend to reflect the political affiliations of some sects over others. Our hope is that the extensive nature of our research has reduced the potency of such a caveat, and allowed us to gather sufficient data that reflects all Lebanese sectarian divisions. This being said, over the course of our four-year study and in particular during the final year and a half in which the majority of our data underwent analysis, the extensive research in Australia, the United States, and Canada has revealed that the deep and chronic divisions in Lebanese politics result in deeply conflicting and fragmented politics *in the Diaspora*, as well as a tendency among some diasporan organizations to espouse a more radical form of political practice.

As noted previously, we expected a great deal of political interaction between the Lebanese diaspora and their homeland, and our research has strongly confirmed what we had predicted. However, at the start of our research, we were not sure how, when, and why the political action takes place. Thus, specifically for this research, we have focused on identifying the mechanisms – physical as well as theoretical/ideological/sect-based – that enable the Lebanese Diaspora to participate politically in Lebanon as well as whether their engagement promotes democratization and/or peace-building on the one hand or civil strife and helps to erect barriers to conflict transformation and resolution on the other. Two mechanisms that we have been especially keen to document and analyze are the right of the Lebanese Diaspora to vote in 2013 without being physically present in Lebanon and also the debate concerning Lebanese citizenship for those of Lebanese ancestry (but who currently are not Lebanese citizens) in the diaspora.¹ In the course of our research, these issues have been tackled by the Lebanese state, stemming from demands from several MPs as well as political and religious groups in the Diaspora. Even though groundbreaking citizenship and voting laws have indeed been passed since the date of our last report, there is still uncertainty as to how well they will be implemented, due in large part to sectarian politics and geopolitics as well as a tendency within the state to put the application of these laws on the back burner in order to focus on issues continually dominating political elite debates (e.g., the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and more recently the civil conflict in Syria).

Our assumption that the heterogeneity of Lebanese society is mirrored in the diaspora was tested and tried through our interviews with the various political and religious groupings in Lebanon and abroad. Indeed, we have found that the different groupings within the home country's society are largely but not completely transferred, emulated and represented across the various countries where the Lebanese diaspora is present. However, we have found that the host state—both how its politics take place as well as its stature in the international realm—affect diaspora politics inside of the adopted country as well as the country's Lebanese Diaspora's relationship with Lebanon itself. Immigration policies shaped after 9/11, multiculturalism, the power of the host country in world politics, democracy, political culture and the civil, legal and political status of the Lebanese Diaspora in each country all determine the extent to which the Lebanese community in the three countries participates in producing and reproducing political activity relating to Lebanon in the host state as well as in Lebanese public affairs. The political arena within the diaspora is also affected by the escalating civil conflict in Syria, which is a matter of deep concern for Lebanese citizens because of its proximity as a

¹ While our project's intent was not to gather complete numbers regarding this issue, we can note that there has been considerable interest in seeking to (re)gain Lebanese citizenship. For example, in Dec 2012, the campaign organized by the Maronite Foundation in the World to register descendants of Lebanese migrants born in Australia resulted in collecting up to 15,000 names of applicants—mainly Christian Maronite—wanting to obtain the Lebanese citizenship.

neighboring state and the various ties between groups across the two countries as well as the historic involvement of the Syrian state in Lebanese politics. The events taking place in Syria may well deepen diasporan divides and halt the implementation of voting and citizenship laws for Lebanese expatriates. These points will be further described and analyzed in forthcoming papers and articles.

When it comes to gender, and the importance of such an issue in a country like Lebanon, we focused on determining in our interviews and research whether the engagement of the Lebanese Diaspora in political and public affairs is related to host country dynamics or more to the patriarchal upbringing of the origin/ancestral country. We have found mixed results. What we have principally discovered is that although there are many cases where the host country treatment of gender has greater influence on the diasporan groups than the patriarchal dynamics of their homeland, the issue of gender equality has yet to become a focal point of diasporan efforts to impact the political or cultural scene in Lebanon.

In conclusion, this research has maintained its overarching objectives:

1. To explore the role of the Diaspora in Lebanese political conflicts and/or peace building and democratization;
2. To make an informed contribution to the current debate about future policy regarding the political role of the Diaspora in Lebanese politics, e.g., dual citizenship, the right to vote, right to parliamentary representation, etc.
3. To promote Lebanese Diaspora engagement in peace building and decrease its (assumed) engagement in conflict continuation by using our research findings to craft a policy reform recommendations on this issue.

To attain these goals, the research seeks:

1. To identify the role and growing influence of ‘home’ (Lebanese) politics in the Diaspora and Diasporan politics at ‘home’;
2. To identify problems and obstacles facing the Diaspora in exerting its influence in politics in Lebanon, both in countries of settlement and in the homeland;
3. To map the transnational community networks of the Lebanese Diaspora involved in politics and their interrelations outside as well as inside Lebanon, including the role of gender;
4. To explore the size and impact of “remittances” supporting public engagement and political parties at ‘home’, e.g. Hezbollah, Lebanese Forces, Future Movement, Phalange Party, as well as charitable and other organizations, etc.
5. To explore the size and impact of “political” and “social” remittances;
6. To explore the role of religious organizations, especially the Maronite Church (as the Maronite Church is centered in Lebanon as opposed to the other religious communities that are not ‘headquartered’ in the country) as a leading diasporan institution, and their mobilization of the Diaspora for the sake of influencing home politics.
7. To examine the role of ambassadors and consulates as state representatives in the host countries, and in particular in their capacity to ensure the enactment of the emigrant right to vote

We envisioned at the outset of the grant period that our research project would be tackled in **four stages**:

- **First**, gathering and assessing data on the Lebanese Diaspora itself through ‘mapping’ the Lebanese Diaspora in terms of its public (and thus, we argue, often political) involvement with its homeland (through 50-75 in-depth interviews conducted by the research assistants in Lebanon – which, as a result of our previous report to the IDRC and several meetings and discussions with IDRC members, was increased to 115 in-depth interviews) in order to clearly define ‘public engagement’ in Lebanon by the Diaspora. This has been completed.

- **Second**, based on the findings of the first stage, deciding which Diaspora communities should be researched in depth, and conducting research in those countries through focus groups and in-depth interviews. This has been completed.
- **Third**, information gathered in the Diaspora would be analyzed to see trends in Diaspora public engagement that directly relate to political engagement. This stage has been completed.
- **Fourth**, the research team would assess Diaspora political engagement as a whole to see when and how it contributes to peace-building and/or conflict perpetuation. This stage has also been completed and we have been able to use our findings to conduct a half-day conference with policy makers in Lebanon on December 11, 2012.

Globalization and other factors—particularly economic and political uncertainty—have fuelled not only significant Lebanese migration, but have also enabled ever closer contact between the Diaspora and the homeland, resulting in more and more interaction between the Diaspora and Lebanon. As we expected, this research project has empirically divulged the political dimension of the Lebanese Diaspora and its role in national Lebanese politics, particularly as their engagement relates to conflict perpetuation and peace building. It has also made—and will continue to make—some contribution to the theoretical debate surrounding the issues of citizenship and diasporic political participation, gender and diasporic activity, national and diasporic belonging, and constructions and dynamics of the nation-state. This discussion is guided by the empirical findings of the research and more importantly contributes to policy discussion on the relationship between the Lebanese migrant communities and their home country as well as to the theoretical discussion surrounding the increasing significance of diasporic communities in understanding the transformation of international and domestic politics.

In broad terms, and up till now, we expect that no major theoretical contribution will be made in the debate on home-diaspora relationships in the domain of public activities. However, we can make the claim that our research and analysis of the findings has enabled us to engage critically with current debate on this topic and as result, refine some of its important concepts. Most importantly, we were able to draw a clear distinction between transnational and diasporic relations and argue for the use of Bourdieu's concept of field to better analyze Diaspora relations as a process entailing specific political, social and economic investments. We also found it analytically useful to draw a clear distinction between social and political 'remittances' which then enabled us to embark on further expanding the concept of political remittances as it is currently used by migration scholars. On the other hand, we claim that our study of the Lebanese diaspora in the US, Canada, and Australia provide fresh and more empirical evidence in support of many theoretical generalizations made in the field of diaspora studies. It is true that no evidence was found to really challenge these basic generalizations, but we argue that our research assisted in elaborating important concepts in migration studies and provided additional rich evidence in their support.

Methodology, Project Implementation and Management

Our research project was officially launched on Friday, 9 January 2009. This section of the report will briefly summarize the methodology used throughout the various stages of research and then tackle the activities since our extension period in greater detail. In our proposal to the IDRC, we comprehensively detailed our methodology and project schedule for Year 1, and then gave all necessary updates and developments in our subsequent reports. The main goal of the first year of our research was to conduct a preliminary mapping of the Diaspora's public engagement in Lebanon, identifying the global distribution of this publicly engaged Diaspora, and constructing a research sample. Our first Project Coordinator, Rima Rassi, was responsible for the preliminary mapping done concerning the mechanisms and locations through which the Lebanese Diaspora participates in Lebanon. Once the mapping out of the project was completed and we were able to set up initial interviews with political, village, religious, and charitable organizations in Lebanon, we began hiring research assistants and preparing them for their work through methodology workshops, which have continued with all additional research assistants and field-workers employed during the course of the project.

The methodology workshops held with the research assistants focused on issues relating to the goals of the project and the overall research methodology as well as spending considerable time sharing interviewing and focus group techniques and data reporting protocol. The workshops also attempted to raise and address potential challenges to data collection and reporting in each region. Last, the workshops successfully built strong relationships between the research team members as another means to insure quality control. Drs. Tabar and Skulte-Ouaiss worked on formulating the guidelines for the interviews to be conducted in Lebanon, Australia, Canada and the United States, which were modified and analyzed before being used. The guidelines were organized according to the interviewee: political elite, political party, town mayor, religious association, charitable association, other associations, etc. The methodology training that our research assistants and field workers received later in the project was more advanced, and we were able to give better training on how to ask questions in a manner that would elicit responses that were insightful and pertinent to our study

Under the management of our second Project Coordinator, Karel Hayek, we were able to focus on hiring field coordinators and research assistants abroad and collecting interviews from Australia, Canada and the United States. We also increased our interviews in Lebanon from 50-75 to 75-150, as we progressed with our fieldwork and we realized the extent to which the homeland is actively linked to the Diaspora. We began our extensive literature review, which we have continuously expanded, and we increased our interview list through a "snowballing" effect in which interviewees from different diasporan groups provided us with recommendations to interview additional groups and networks.

In July 2011, Marie Murray joined our team as Project Coordinator, as Karel moved on to a new career position elsewhere. Marie's initial focus, in addition to communicating with and directing field coordinators and research assistance, was the organization of the February 2012 Conference we held at the Lebanese American University. This three-day conference was highly successful and brought together scholars from over ten countries and various migration-research backgrounds to present on the topic of *Relationships between Diasporas and Their 'Homelands' and Their Impact on the State, National Identities, and Peace & Conflict*. As mentioned above, we were able to secure sponsorship by both the IDRC in connection to the overall project, as well as conference-specific sponsorship from collaborators in Germany at the Center for International Studies of the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz. The conference brought together 21 presenters as well as two keynote speakers. Although we received over 50 papers to be presented, we had to narrow down our list because of our time limitations. Our colleagues Anton Escher and Tobias Boos at the Center for International Studies of the University of Mainz helped us in the rigorous practice of reviewing each paper and choosing our final presenters.

Our keynote speakers were Dr. Alan Gamlen and Dr. Nicholas Van Hear. Dr. Alan Gamlen is Lecturer in Human Geography at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, Founding Editor of the new journal, *Migration Studies*, from Oxford University Press, and Lead Researcher on the ‘Diasporas and Emigration States’ Project, one of 11 projects within Oxford University’s Diasporas Programme, which he co-designed with Prof. Robin Cohen and Dr. Nick Van Hear. Alan’s research focuses on issues surrounding migration, diasporas, and transnationalism, and in addition to his cross-country comparative work on state-diaspora relations, he has published and lectured on topics such as migration and development, highly skilled migration, global migration governance, international migration data, and methodology in migration studies. Alan holds a Doctorate in Geography from the University of Oxford, where he was a New Zealand Top Achiever Doctoral Scholar, based at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society. He subsequently held a Fellowship at Oxford University’s Department of International Development, and remains a Research Associate of its International Migration Institute.

Dr. Nicholas Van Hear is Deputy Director of the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford. With a background in development studies, he works on migration, refugees, conflict, development, diaspora, transnationalism, and related issues, and has field experience in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Europe. Before joining COMPAS when it was launched in 2003, he held senior research posts at the Refugee Studies Centre in Oxford (1990-2000) and at the Danish Centre for Development Research in Copenhagen. Both keynote talks initiated the valuable discussions that took place as various presenters added their research findings, theories, and innovations on diasporas.

The conference provided a valuable space for dialogue on *diaspora* and how this phenomenon is perceived by the state, relates with the state, and operates as its own disparate entity separate from the home state. We gained constructive networking and collaborative opportunities and ultimately used the insights produced in our own research. Some of the questions that we highlighted were: What are the emerging patterns in this new development and what are their basic features? What are the most appropriate theoretical concepts and structures that best describe and analyze these new patterns (e.g., transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, diasporic relations, etc.)? Are second- and third- generation migrants implicated in these new developments? If yes, what are the character and the extent of this involvement? Participants were encouraged to pay a special attention to the role of diasporic associations (hometown associations, political groups, charitable and village associations, religious groups and institutions, etc.) and their homeland counterparts, as well as the states of the sending (homeland) countries and their agencies abroad (e.g., embassies and consulates). Last, participants engaged in studying more than one migrant community were requested to conduct comparative analyses of two or more countries to further our understanding of comparative home/state-diaspora relationships and examine if pertinent theoretical conclusions are generalizable. Scholars and practitioners exploring theoretical issues pertaining to this discussion (transnationalist methodology, disembedded national identity, absent voting and dual citizenship, class formation/transformation and migration, porosity of national boundaries, etc.) were also invited to this conference.

Following this period, May Habib came on board as a research assistant and eventually took the role of Project Coordinator from Marie Murray after Ms. Murray had to step down to focus on her Masters studies and then return to the United States. May played a major role in coordinating interview efforts in Canada and later in the management of coding of our interviews for analysis.

Since the submission of our last report, we have completed 206 interviews in Australia, Canada and the United States [See Appendix A for tables of all interviews conducted for the project]¹. Some aspects of the completion project went more smoothly than others. In Australia, although we conducted a vast number of interviews, we ran into some problems with the clarity of the recordings that were sent over by one of our

research assistants. In some cases, we were still able to decipher enough information for good quality transcriptions, but there were also interviews that we were unable to use because of the poor audio. Unfortunately, these interviews could not be re-done, but the problem that this created was manageable due to the 83 interviews we collected in Australia overall. Dr. Tabar was able to visit Australia during the summers of 2011 and 2012, and in this time was able to conduct five focus groups in Sydney and Melbourne as well as meet with our research assistants Cathy Wehbe and Samia Mikhael. A problematic issue that we encountered in Australia (as well as Lebanon and Canada, which we will discuss below) was the matter of interview transcriptions. In the end, most of the transcriptions were completed in Australia while others were completed at LAU by the IMS staff.

Another transcription challenge was the language. Many of the interviews and focus groups were in Arabic, and our office lacked research assistants skilled in transcribing from spoken Arabic and then translating into English. Luckily, we were able to hire Mariam Hasbani, a research assistant in Lebanon who made excellent progress in transcribing Arabic. During the last few months of our transcribing process (at which point we were also heavily involved in the coding and analysis of our interviews), we needed four transcribers (one in house) assisting us with the task of transcribing, and we placed high priority over interviews conducted by Dr. Tabar and Dina Najjar (in Canada) to ensure we had a representative sample across all the target countries. In the future, we realize that the best method is for the interviewers to transcribe their own interviews before submitting them to us along with the audio recordings, as this task is time-consuming and expensive for research assistants to complete in Lebanon. In this project, we allowed interviews to be conducted in English, Arabic, and/or French depending on which language the interviewee was most comfortable speaking. For future projects, we realize that interviews should be conducted in English unless the subject is absolutely unable to communicate in English. If we were to allow for three languages in the future, we should place greater priority on the financial and time logistics of transcribing and translating, as these tasks can be arduous and lengthy.

Our work in Canada to finish collecting interviews remained a challenge until the end. There were obstacles with finding willing and qualified field workers who had the time as well as the interest and skill to devote to the project. We found that the central locations for Lebanese emigrant groups in Canada were Montreal, Toronto, and Ontario. Due to the distance between these geographic locations, we also faced problems with finding research assistants who were willing and able to travel in order to conduct interviews. We managed to secure three research assistants in Canada during the last year of the Project. Ms. Dina Najjar, a PhD Candidate at the University of Western Ontario garnered 13 interviews in London, Ontario and was instrumental in finding key members in the Canadian parliaments from and involved in the Lebanese Diaspora. Ms. Sylvana Douehy, a PhD candidate at the University of Sherbrooke, Quebec conducted 13 interviews in Montreal and Ms. Livia Murray, a journalist, assisted us in targeting the Lebanese Diaspora associations in Toronto.

For the United States, we were able to complete our interviews and transcriptions under the excellent management of our Field Coordinator, Khalil El-Saghir. Our field worker Samra Nasser worked with us to collect interviews from Washinton D.C.-based organizations in addition to the many interviews conducted in Michigan, an American state with a large and active Lebanese diaspora community. We worked with Deborah Trent, a then Ph.D Candidate at the George Washington University working on the role of Lebanese American community in shaping US Public Diplomacy. She presented to the LAU campus the preliminary findings of her doctoral dissertation fieldwork on U.S. public diplomacy towards Lebanon. As a result of her talk, we thought she could be of a great help in terms of providing us with valuable contacts for interviews. She was able to give us valuable contact information and complete five interviews for us.

A huge asset to the project in the United States came when we began working with Cynthia Salloum,

who had presented a paper at our conference in February 2012. Cynthia is researching the Lebanese migrant communities in France, the United States, and parts of Latin America. Her familiarity and interest in the field was a great incentive, and she not only conducted numerous interviews in New York and Washington D.C., but also provided us with rich information and insight into the Diasporan groups she worked with. In the United States, we did not encounter any problems with the transcription of the interviews. Most of the interviews conducted were transcribed by the interviewers themselves, or were completed by research assistants in our IMS office soon after they were received. The rapid progress we were able to make in the United States in terms of completion and transcription of interviews, as well as the analysis of the interviews was mainly due to the coordination of Khalil El-Saghir, the trips that Dr. Skulte-Ouaiss took to the United States to conduct interviews, and the work done by Cynthia Salloum, which was clear and easy to transcribe without audio or language barriers in the recordings.

Once the data gathering process was well-established, we looked into acquiring and receiving training for qualitative analysis software to later analyze the data. This aspect of our work was very successful. We held one four-day and one three-day workshop at the Lebanese American University (LAU) campus in order to train both our staff members and LAU students interested in learning more about research methodologies. We worked with a capacity-building organization in France, the Institute for National Demographic Studies (INED) to come and hold the training workshops for us. The first workshop dealt with quantitative research analysis and used the SPSS software, which, although very useful, was not geared toward the specific needs of our project. It was held from October 27-October 31, 2011. This workshop offered students an introduction to the uses of quantitative methods in migration research.

After a brief presentation of the main theories in migration studies and the type of questioning specific to quantitative research, students received a practical, hands-on course on:

- 1) identifying available data sources on migration flows and stocks at a regional and national level (macro-level data)
- 2) designing a survey on migration topics: sampling issues, developing the questionnaire, supervising the fieldwork (micro-level data)
- 3) analyzing both macro- and micro-level data : basic statistical operations (descriptive statistics) and an introduction to more advanced techniques (regression analysis)

Many empirical applications were discussed during the sessions. Fourteen students participated and came away with a finer understanding of research analysis and the skills necessary for practical applications.

The second workshop catered much more to our project as it focused on *qualitative* research analysis and its applications in migration research. In order to maximize our time with our trainer Dr. Lama Kabbanji, a researcher from *Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD-France)*, and a research associate *INED-France*, prior to the workshop we looked into which software we could purchase and use for our analysis stage. After much consulting and investigation, we decided to go forward and purchase NVivo, the software recommended by Ms. Kabbanji. Her familiarity with NVivo gave us further advantages in the training workshop. We chose to use NVivo to help us organize and then analyze our qualitative data from four countries for a number of reasons. The software allows us to import the transcripts of the interviews and then to code for key variables that we have determined are important to our research. In addition to transcripts, we can import a variety of other documents, including PDFs, spreadsheets, audio, video and pictures that relate to our research. Among the many strengths of the NVivo software is the ability to uncover subtle connections in ways that simply are not possible manually with queries over 320 thirty to seventy-five minute interviews are

overwhelming for any research team to analyze. [See Appendix B for a longer description of NVivo and a list of the ‘nodes’ (variables) for which we coded our data.]ⁱⁱ

Following a 3-day intensive workshop led by Dr. Lama Kabbanji, we trained an additional three researchers (Mark Francis, Alice Crabtree and Mariam Hasbani) to work on the coding of the interviews. By beginning to code our data, our research team was forced to work together to establish—and agree on—the variables that seemed to relate to our research questions. This process was critical not only for this research project but for training the young scholars on our team in advanced research methods. The NVivo software also helped us to decrease the bias in our research by forcing us to rigorously justify our interpretation of data with evidence. After we finished some preliminary analysis, NVivo also allowed us to use other software (Excel, SPSS, etc.) to complement its qualitative focus with a more quantitative one. Last, with money from the IDRC grant, we have purchased five NVivo licenses so we are able to share work among our research staff.

The process of creating nodes by which to code our interviews for analysis was thorough and involved much discussion amongst Dr. Tabar, Dr. Skulte-Ouais, Marie Murray, May Habib, and research assistants Mark Francis, Alice Crabtree, and Mariam Hasbani. We wanted to ensure that we took ample time to consider the best possible way to create nodes that would draw forth all the information that could be relevant to our study. In the end, we decided on the final list, which we include at the end of this report [See Appendix B]. The process of entering all of the interviews and coding them according to the nodes we created was very time-consuming at first, but as we gained experience and greater familiarity with both NVivo and dealing with interview content, we became better skilled in the coding process and were able to accelerate to a much faster rate, while maintaining the integrity of our work.

Once we began to move onto the analysis, Dr. Skulte-Ouais designed a template that helped us summarize the vast amount of data that we were dealing with. We basically worked by pulling out specific interview data according to the nodes and then comparing them first by country and then doing cross-country analysis, and eventually looking at how answers varied by different information. NVIVO has many functions that enabled us to compare various variables against one another, and also isolate them as needed.

In July 2009, we sent May Habib to attend a workshop with the Issam Fares Institute on working with policy-makers and project management. May came back with lots of useful hints and critiques that could be applied to the Institute for Migration Studies as well as specifically to the IDRC project. The workshop focused on the use of social media and we realized that the IMS might need to find a way to best utilize facebook and twitter to post updates, publications, upcoming projects, etc. This is something that can be discussed more in depth and whether IMS can be continuously keeping such tools up to date is a question we might need to ask ourselves for the future. The catch about the use of such media is there should be constant use or it loses its goal. We found this might also be helpful in terms of maintaining the networks we had formed during our research. May was also able to return with some pointers that would later be helpful in organizing our half-day conference for policy-makers on December 11, 2012. A third point that this workshop brought to our attention was the importance of strong communication and procedural clarity between our Institute and the Lebanese American University.

During the spring of 2012, we hosted Jason Tucker, a PhD candidate at the University of Bath, as a research fellow with IMS under the supervision of Dr. Tabar. Jason worked with us on our literature review while he executed his own research efforts. On May 23, 2012 Jason presented a brown bag talk on “The Role of Global Citizenship in a Stateless Lebanon.” The talk focused on the role of theories of global citizenship being used for the assistance and protection of the differing stateless populations in Lebanon, and related these practices back to the wider debate on global citizenship within the stateless discourse. The talk went well and generated good discussion that we were able to relate back to aspects of our research.

Further discussion of project output can be found in subsequent sections.

Evaluating Research Methodology

It bears emphasizing that our research methodology is not quantitative but rather qualitative based on a semi-structured open-ended interview technique. The sample for our interviews was not designed to be representative of all groups and individuals engaged in diasporic relations whether in Lebanon or in the US, Canada, or Australia. Rather, we sought to create a sample that was ‘reflective’ of the *active* diaspora in three countries that we believe to be widely comparable. When the sample in Lebanon was chosen, we considered the geographical distribution (as well as sect, since it is a major means of categorization in Lebanon and in the Diaspora) of our informants with a particular focus on villages that sent its residents to the United States, Canada, or Australia or any combination of these three countries. We also targeted informants who were engaged in diasporic activities; those who were not so engaged were simply ignored.

In relation to Lebanese diaspora abroad, we also targeted groups, associations, and significant individuals who were already active in dealing with Lebanon in the domain of public activities. This strategy was neither exhaustive nor representative of all who fell under the same category. The “snowball method” was to select our sample in Lebanon as well as abroad. Based on this selected sample, we cannot make generalized statements about the whole of the diaspora—even in these three countries. But, we have ended up collecting huge amount of information that can be analyzed and used to make *suggestive* conclusions about the public engagement of the Lebanese diaspora in the public affairs of their homeland. We also found that in most cases these conclusions added *more empirical substance* to what other scholars have concluded in relation to other countries, and in any event, our conclusions will certainly be very useful to carry out further studies on Lebanese diasporic activities in countries other than the ones we selected for this study. Finally, our data will help us to address the central research question: How do Lebanese society and state shape the Lebanese diasporic activities and how does the Lebanese Diaspora contribute to the continuation of conflict and/or to the promotion of peace-building inside of Lebanon?

Project Outputs

In this section, we seek to do the following:

- a) *Findings*: Lay out key findings from analysis of our large data set;
- b) *Answering the research question*: Provide a preliminary answer to the project's central research question;
- c) *Outputs*: Describe research outputs to date; and
- d) *Policy Recommendations*: Discuss how our findings and answer to the research question can be used as a basis for policy recommendations.

Findings

Given the amount of data that was collected in this project, we have come across a number of findings. For the purposes of clarity (technical and theoretical), we grouped the findings into seven themes. This section will go theme by theme before turning to more general findings stemming from our data.

First, we have been able to establish that **the relationship between the Lebanese diaspora and their homeland is very dynamic**: it involves many groups in the country of settlement as well as in Lebanon. They are mainly political, social (village, charity and development), and economic in character (e.g., chambers of commerce enhancing trading activities between adopted country and the homeland). They are also intense especially in times of crisis in Lebanon, such as the Israeli War in 2006 and the 2009 elections; otherwise they remain basically regular and predominantly developmental (largely in a local sense) in character. As a result of this dynamic field of diverse activities, the line separating 'home' from 'abroad' is fuzzy and increasingly porous. Analysis of this finding is key to our current and future publications.

Second, the data confirmed that **the political culture and formal political institutions of the host/adopted country shape (but do not dictate) how the Lebanese diaspora engages with Lebanon** and what resources can be mobilised in this process. Since the 1970s, the policy of multiculturalism in Australia (and later Canada) have combined with its liberal democratic tradition to create specific points of entry for the Lebanese diaspora to make certain claims of Australian charity organizations and political parties to support their public engagement in the 'homeland' (i.e., Lebanon). Lobbying is specifically important in the US as a mediated form of political engagement in 'home' politics, but it also exists in Australia and Canada, albeit in different forms and with different objectives. In these two countries, it entails diasporic members of particular constituencies directly meeting with local MPs or ministers and asking for specific support. It also involves members of the diaspora advocating for a political cause at 'home' by joining a major party in one of these two countries or organising political events and activities within the Lebanese community (public meetings and annual parties and other social events to raise fund) and in society at large (e.g., demonstrations).

The policy of multiculturalism in Australia and Canada also results in government support for community organizations making the Lebanese diaspora more resourceful and consequently more effective in its engagement in 'home' public activities. Countries of settlement create the conditions for diasporic associations and organizations to be major sites of social activity for members of Lebanese abroad despite their various identities and goals.

In the US, where multiculturalism plays second to long-standing pressures to assimilate, diasporic communities are also strong but lack in many ways the dual-identity nature of the Lebanese-Canadian or Lebanese-Australian communities (that is, the communities are very much Lebanese and—at the same time—they are very much Canadian or Australian). Instead, American political culture seems to push the Lebanese community—as well as virtually all other 'ethnic' communities—to be 'American' first and the their 'ethnic

identity' second. How and when this particularly affects Diaspora engagement in Lebanon is being analyzed in depth in our publications.

Finally, social and political values acquired by members of the Lebanese diaspora in the US, Canada, and Australia sharpen their awareness of the deficiencies of the political system in their 'homeland' and make them more critical of 'home' politics and politicians as well as the diplomatic representatives of Lebanon in their country of settlement.

Third, **community building** takes different shapes depending on the level of residential concentration by members of the Lebanese diaspora, the settlement policy adopted by the receiving state, and how many generations there has been large-scale migration to the country. In Canada and Australia, members of the Lebanese community are closer to each other and concentrated in fewer places than their counterparts in the US. This has created more favorable conditions in Canada and Australia to generate a diversity of community groups ranging from village to political associations and including charity, student, and religious groups and institutions. In relation to settlement policy, the absence of a multicultural policy in US and its strong liberal tradition deny community building of substantial support from the state. In contrast, the opposite is true in Canada and Australia due to their adoption of multiculturalism and more interventionist states.

Community building and community associations, whether supported by a multicultural state or relatively disregarded by a liberal state and viewed as the responsibility of the private sector, ends up being vital to mobilize the community for fundraising activities. It is also found that in each of these three countries, fundraising seems to respond very generously to specific calls for financial support from the 'homeland'. How fundraising is done seems to vary from being fairly well-institutionalized in the US and to a lesser extent in Canada (e.g., annual galas, sports tournaments, charity drives, etc.) to more ad hoc in Australia (e.g., fundraising at a community BBQ or via church for a specific cause in Lebanon). Finally, community building seems to mean two interrelated things in the Lebanese Diaspora: Building Lebanese community in the country of settlement and at the same time becoming 'Canadian', 'Australian', or 'American'. Thus, our data demonstrate community building is a mechanism for integration and settlement in a new country and also a means for reinforcing the local diasporic community.

Fourth, while **the Lebanese state** is 'weak' and seemingly 'absent' in the area of homeland relations with the diaspora, it frames opportunities for domestic and international actors alike. The weakness of the Lebanese state (i.e., unable to forge a non-sect-based, inclusive state-diaspora relationship—The World Lebanese Cultural Union (WLCU) and its trajectory provides a good example of a largely unsuccessful attempt by the state to build an inclusive bridge with the diaspora) has led the Diaspora to engage extensively in taking on some usual state activities (e.g., building roads, hospitals, schools).

Members of the diaspora consider the Lebanese Foreign Ministry (LFM) archaic and ineffective and noted that the Lebanese state cannot continue to rely solely on the high quality of number of ambassadors nor the good initiatives of diplomatic corps. According to their perception, the LFM must become modernized and be given more resources. Also, members of political parties in the diaspora perceive consulates as more politicized than embassies. This is true of the perceptions of the chapters of all Lebanese parties in the diaspora across the three countries.

However, as a result of home-diaspora relationships, the sovereignty of the Lebanese state and its governance has become increasingly deterritorialized. The state is becoming engaged more and more in extending its arm of government to its population outside Lebanon especially by conferring the right to vote to Lebanese abroad. However, the fundamental divisions among the Lebanese political parties lead to either

impeding the implementation of state diaspora policies or their utilization for narrow and often contradictory purposes.

Fifth, since the end of the Civil War in 1990, **political parties in Lebanon** have realized the importance of institutionalising diaspora participation. Now each party has a special party bureau and personnel in charge of relations with the Lebanese Diaspora. Regular contacts between the two are maintained in the form of e-communication, visits by party representatives and leaders in the Diaspora, visits to Lebanon by party members from the diaspora, organizing events and party conferences in Lebanon specifically for party engagement in the diaspora and its development, etc. In other words, the diasporisation of political parties in Lebanon is progressing gradually but surely.

Still, the relationships between political parties at home and abroad is found to operate in a top-down manner especially regarding policy platforms and alliances let alone issues that concern the diaspora. Interestingly, most Lebanese political parties abroad **say** that they don't provide financial support to the mother party in Lebanon and that the mother party doesn't provide party branches in the diaspora with funding yet anecdotal (in the case of the US and Canada) and empirical (in the case of Australia) evidence demonstrates that, in reality, large-scale fundraising and donations to mother parties take place, especially during political crises inflicting Lebanon. However, this financial/political support is usually remitted for presumed charitable and human reasons.

Our research also reveals that parties are much more than political vehicles in the diaspora, they are also sites of social activity. Given the nature of Lebanese political parties as well as their variable means of action in the Diaspora, political parties might be an effective tool for pushing for greater accountability in Lebanese politics, especially at the national level. This needs much additional analysis.

In relation to the role of political parties in the Diaspora, a closer examination of our data is needed to find out more about the various intensities in their political activity and the differences in their work method depending on the country in which this activity takes place. We anticipate writing a paper that specifically addresses the data gathered on political parties for the project.

Sixth, our findings clearly indicate that there are limited liberal, democratic **remittances** from the Lebanese Diaspora to the homeland and instead, Diaspora remittances often amplify and accentuate dominant formal and informal political structures in Lebanon. The net outcome of these remittances is to integrate and incorporate the engagement of the Lebanese abroad directed at their home politics into the dominant, sectarian political structure in Lebanon.

Moreover, patriarchal legacies (in Lebanon)—sociological and institutional—seem to result in many fewer women engaging public activities targeting homeland, with the exception of charity work (religious-based and secular). Still, there seems to be indications that there are increases in women's participation in private and public life in Lebanon at the micro-level.

Last, our research found **significant interest and concern in voting in Lebanese elections**. Some in the US and Australia think that allowing expat voting might make problems in the diaspora and make it even harder to unify the diaspora as 'Lebanese'. In contrast, many more members of the active diaspora across the three countries voiced a frustration that the diaspora gives 'so much' to Lebanon but then is unable to participate in decision-making by being able to vote in the diaspora. In fact, a majority of the organizations and individuals interviewed say they want diaspora voting (this may or may not include a 'diaspora quota'). We found that an increasing number of civil society groups are formed in Lebanon and abroad using extensively social media to

advocate for the right of migrants to absentee voting and for the right of Lebanese women to pass on their citizenship to their children.

Only in the US, did some voice the opinion that that Lebanese abroad should only be able to vote if they do not naturalize somewhere else. We need to explore this view and why it is different from Lebanese in Australia or Canada.

In addition to the seven themes just discussed, we found that there are a number of important study conclusions that are more general than the theme findings. They are:

1. Even when diasporans want to engage Lebanon in a non-sectarian, non-political way, they are limited by their pre-existing social networks as well as the high opportunity costs of creating a new engagement dynamic with the homeland.
2. While many diaspora state-like activities may have short-term positive effects (e.g., building a new well in a village or adding a hospital wing), they are contributing to perpetuating the weakness of the Lebanese state—something that goes against what many diasporans say they want: a “strong Lebanon”.
3. Many in the diaspora say they *want* to change the nature and patterns of Lebanese politics but are largely at a loss for how to do so. They often end up replicating and/or strengthening long-established political institutions and behaviors
4. Much of the support given by the diaspora is for general social needs, not long-term social development—the exception to this is education (scholarships in Lebanon and in the Diaspora) in which our research found that Lebanese abroad invest heavily.
5. Individuals and groups in the Lebanese diaspora seem to trust other Lebanese diaspora organizations more than they trust organizations in Lebanon. This may in certain instances lead to changes in micro-power relations and structures in ‘home’ institutions, e.g. hospitals, municipalities, and village associations.
6. The Lebanese diaspora in the US seems to turn to the US government to mediate its participation in Lebanon more than the diaspora in Australia and Canada; meanwhile, the diaspora in Australia and Canada seem to turn to their host country governments to support community building more so than the diaspora in the US

Now the report turns to answering the central research question of the project.

Answering the Research Question

Does the Lebanese Diaspora contribute to peace-building or to the perpetuation of conflict in Lebanon? The answer to this question is most certainly not simple. It depends first on the *evaluation* of the political views and practices of the major political players in Lebanon. But most importantly, it also depends on the *objective outcomes* of actual political practices in Lebanon by the various protagonists. Thus, perhaps our evaluation of Lebanese politics should ultimately be based on objective outcomes of the total political practice in Lebanon. The country is still deeply divided following a civil war that ended in 1990, and the main reasons for this division and ensuing conflicts and political instability revolve around the role of Lebanon vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict and Israel’s policy towards Lebanon, relations with neighboring Syria, and the power-sharing formula inside Lebanon. In this sense, Diasporic engagement in Lebanese politics is fully integrated in this dynamic of division and conflict and has remained incapable of initiating or lending its support to a political process and/or to political players that will generate relative peace and stability in the country.

However, at the level of charity and social activities (i.e., developmental activities) the picture is relatively different: First, diaspora contribution to the funding of (mostly) village-based development projects is regular and expansive. This has the effect of allowing Lebanese inside the country to put off their demands for more effective governance and leadership. Secondly, the focus of this type of engagement is community-based rather than contributing to nation-wide or region-wide projects, that is, only some Lebanese benefit and significantly, regions of Lebanon without significant diaspora connections have access to fewer resources to make up for a too-often absent or ineffective state. These two main characteristics of diasporic contribution to home ‘public’ activities have a twofold function: on one hand they contribute to communal prosperity and support the survival of targeted community or social groups, and in this sense, they act as peace-builders (in the sense of ‘keeping the peace’). But, on the other, their contribution is making local recipients more dependent on outside support and as a result more parochial in their identity and general outlook. This ultimately discourages the forging of citizens and a civil awareness that makes key demands on their state. Also, local and national authorities are indirectly discouraged from fulfilling their social developmental duties towards their constituencies and their function to nurture national consciousness and integration is weakened. In the long run, this will further undermine the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of communal groups in Lebanon and will facilitate communal conflicts over the financial and power resources of the Lebanese state.

Outputs

As mentioned in our previous reports, Year One of our project greatly contributed in building the research capacity of the Lebanese American University on a macro level and the Institute for Migration Studies on a micro level. The research skills of the young scholars who contributed to the project were improved through learning to provide clear input, perform analysis, and interact with our research teams abroad regarding empirical, financial, and methodological aspects of the project.

The research skills—particularly in conducting fieldwork—that young people from the region have gained is noteworthy. During the course of our project, we have employed around 30 research assistants to conduct interviews in Lebanon, Australia, Canada and the United States. A large percentage of these were Master’s and PhD students, and all received training on conducting qualitative research. Our own training capacity grew as we ourselves gained knowledge over the course of our work. Each of these research assistants was required to read the guidelines we presented on how to conduct interviews, and then carry out mock interviews with Dr. Tabar and the Project Coordinator before they went to perform the pilot interviews we required. Research assistants were mandated to provide whatever supplemental materials the interviewees gave in, and were encouraged to add any field notes they found pertinent.

In our training workshops on quantitative and qualitative analysis, we were able to train approximately 20 students, several of whom worked with us on using the mechanisms for the analysis of our research. These students were given certificates upon completion of the intensive training workshops. We trained around four additional in-house research assistants to work on the coding of our interviews in the NVivo software.

The Institute for Migration Studies held a half-day Policy Workshop on Tuesday, December 11, 2012 with members of Lebanese political parties, Ministry of Foreign Affairs personnel, and Ambassadors. Entitled “Home Politics Abroad: The Role of the Lebanese Diaspora in Conflict, Peace Building and Democratic Development—Research Findings” the workshop presented the preliminary findings of the project. There were over 20 participants, including some LAU faculty. Representatives of three political parties attended the workshop as well as three officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants. Ms. Hilary Child-Adams, Ambassador of Canada, and Mr. Lex Bartlem, Ambassador of Australia, also attended the workshop. The workshop entailed a summary of the preliminary findings of the Home Politics Abroad Project allowing

questions to be asked by the participants of the findings as well as a discussion of policy recommendations. The policy workshop garnered much interest by the state and political party stakeholders and many of the participants showed interest in the eventual publication of the findings and future workshops on the role of the Lebanese Diaspora in Lebanon. This was particularly the case with regards to the discussion on the right of Lebanese to vote abroad – a “hot topic” among many political and state stakeholders as the 2013 elections is fast approaching. [See Appendix C for power point presentation given at the Workshop on December 11, 2012.]ⁱⁱⁱ

A more policy-oriented report will be published in January 2012 (in Arabic and in English) that details the project’s findings and the policy recommendations stemming from them. In-depth discussion of our research design and methodology will also be included. The report will then be given to Members of Parliament, civil servants who work with issues relating to the Lebanese Diaspora, and other policy makers as well as individuals and organizations dealing with migration and conflict and peace programs in Lebanon.

As mentioned in our prior interim reports to the IDRC, one of our main aims of this project is to make our research open to the public, in order for both researchers and policy-makers alike to recognize the significant relationship between Lebanese politics and Lebanese Diasporic activity. It is critical that knowledge gathered in the past two years be disseminated widely in order to make local actors aware of the effect of homeland politics in the Diaspora and, consecutively, how these politics come into play in Lebanon, on a local level.

The IMS has already embarked on its aim to distribute the data we have retrieved concerning the engagement of local actors with the Lebanese Diaspora. In fact, Dr. Skulte-Ouaiss and Dr. Tabar have are currently working on three articles describing and analyzing the Lebanese Diaspora’s impact on Lebanese politics. Preliminary presentation of one of these articles was done at the European University Institute’s annual conference in Montecatini, Italy. On the same occasion Dr. Tabar presented a paper, ‘Expanding political Remittances: the case of Lebanon in 2009 elections,’ submitted for publication to the journal, *Migration Studies*. Upon publication, the articles will be distributed to the Lebanese parliament and several governmental and international agencies based in Lebanon who continually seek political and economic support from the Lebanese Diaspora without implementing any successful policies benefiting it. In particular, we believe that our research will be helpful in pushing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to come up with concrete solutions concerning the repetitive policy discussions concerning the Diaspora that are being held in Lebanon. This is particularly true now that the new citizenship and voting laws have been passed and will hopefully come into effect in 2013. In addition, we have discussed with Eileen Alma the possibility of making our vast trove of interview data available to other researchers once the grant period has finished.

Up till now, we can confidently say that the knowledge produced has been positively received both in Lebanon and abroad. We anticipate that the numerous individuals, parties and organizations that have requested a copy of our reports as well as publications covering the results of the research thus far conducted will make use of our findings. We also anticipate that all individuals who receive our report and/or later publications will make use of the knowledge produced, helping us to reach one of our main aims: influencing the creation of Diaspora policies that will contribute to peace building and not conflict perpetuation in Lebanon.

Project Outputs on a more general level

Over the past four years, our work on the IDRC project, Home-Diaspora Relationships, has been acknowledged by local, regional and international institutions, which resulted in further developing the work on the project and that of IMS in general. The fact that we had won such a large research grant from the IDRC undoubtedly gave the Institute significant prestige. We are happy to report that we have done our best to use this

to build the capacity of the IMS for future work with the aim of becoming the regional hub for research and policy recommendations concerning migration.

More specifically, our collaboration with other research institutions and building contacts with stakeholders and policy makers have progressed considerably:

In Lebanon

As just noted, the Institute for Migration Studies (IMS) is acknowledged mainly through its involvement in the IDRC project by local universities and research centres as a serious research institute concerned with migration studies and capable of publishing well researched studies on the subject and provide valuable advice to policy makers. As a result, USJ, Institut Français du Proche-Orient (ifpo) and Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies (LCPS) have all approached Dr. Tabar, the director of the Institute, on different occasions to either present papers and participate in relevant seminars or engage in research activities. At the moment, Dr. Tabar is engaged with ifpo and USJ in two small research projects, one on skilled migration (funded by ifpo) and the other on migrant workers in Lebanon (funded by CNRS). He was also asked to be involved with USJ in a research project on religious rituals and practices in Lebanon and his task is to examine this phenomenon among Lebanese migrants in Australia.

At the level of the Lebanese government, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Expatriates has invited Dr. Tabar on several occasions to present papers on Lebanese emigrants abroad and ways of improving state relations with them, based on the findings of the IDRC project. In addition, prior to the President Suleiman trip to Australia in April 2012, Dr. Tabar was approached by the President's Office to give advice to his Excellency on the Lebanese community in Australia and what the President could tell them during his proposed visit. In this context, Dr. Tabar had three meetings with the President's advisor on Migrant Affairs, Mr. Lahoud, and provided to the President a full report on the Lebanese in Australia, focusing on the community's needs and aspirations. Former Ambassador, Dr. Latif Abul Husson, is in constant contact with Dr. Tabar on the best ways to organize the state's relationship with the Lebanese abroad. Officially, Dr. Abul Husson is the convener of a committee assigned by the President of Lebanon to devise and propose a plan to improve relationship with Lebanese Diaspora. State agencies and research institutes and universities in Lebanon (e.g. AUB, NDU and Balamand University) are becoming increasingly aware of the scholarly quality of our work through our work on the IDRC project and the public presentation of its findings. Last, the Centre for Arab Unity Studies in Beirut asked Dr. to write a book on Arabs in Australia. The book is expected to be published in 2013.

The Arab Region

The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS), located in American University in Cairo invited Dr. Tabar on two occasions to present papers at their Centre and was asked to write a paper on Lebanese immigration past and present. The paper was done and published by CMRS in 2010.

International Recognition and Collaboration

Our work on the IDRC project has also been recognized by many scholars and research institutes in the West.

1. As a result, we established through the initiative of Dr. Tabar strong and fruitful relations with the Department of Human Geography, University of Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz, Germany. In this context, LAU and UJG have signed a MOU. Also, the Department of Human Geography jointly organized with IMS two international conferences on migration, one in Beirut and the other in Mainz. They also contributed very generously towards the cost of these conferences. In this context, UJG invited Dr. Tabar to give MA students at Mainz University a seminar on Migration during last spring. Last, the head of the Department (Professor Anton Escher) and Dr. Tabar have been appointed by a German publisher (Franz Steiner Verlag) to edit a series of books on Migration under the title: Comparative Migration Studies.

2. Institut National d'Etudes Demographique (INED) in Paris has invited Dr Tabar to spend a whole month to discuss our work on the IDRC project with some of its research scholars. As a result, INED sent four senior researchers to LAU to give a series of classes on research methodology and migration studies. They also introduced our research team to SPSS. The whole exercise was fully paid by INED. LAU students and some faculty and students from other universities in Lebanon (USJ and the Lebanese University) also attended the course. Last, INED is discussing with Dr. Tabar future collaborative research projects.
3. Over the past few years, Dr. Tabar managed to establish a strong and collaborative relationship with the Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM) at the European University Institute in Florence. CARIM invited Dr. Tabar on two occasions to present papers and act as a discussant of workshops on migration. They also asked him to write a paper on Arab politics in Australia, which they have published on-line. Also they asked him to write a chapter on social and political aspects of skilled migration, which will be published as a chapter in a forthcoming book by I.B.Tauris in London.
4. Dr. Tabar has also established a good working relationship with the Mediterranean Program run by the above European University Institute. In fact, in March 21-24, 2012, he was invited to run a workshop on Diaspora Politics and Diaspora Policies during the 13th Mediterranean Research Meeting in Florence organized by the above Program. Dr. Tabar was not only the director of the workshop, but he also presented a paper during the event.
5. Our work on the IDRC project is also acknowledged by the Institute for Culture and Society, located in University of Western Sydney, Sydney, Australia. In this context, Dr. Tabar is invited this upcoming summer to be a visiting senior researcher at the Centre for three months and to work jointly with a member of the Centre (Dr. Greg Noble) on a joint project on Migrant Habitus.
6. In acknowledgment of our work on the IDRC project, International Organization for Migration (IOM) asked Dr. Tabar to contribute a chapter to one of its publication on Inter-regional Labor Mobility in the Arab World. Now IOM consult with IMS at any time they want to address an issue related to migrants in and outside Lebanon.
7. In recognition of our work on home-diaspora relationships, The Middle East Institute, Washington DC, asked Dr. Tabar to write a study on Lebanese Jewish community in the diaspora. The study was published in April 2010. In fact our work on the home-diaspora relationships project made us the main contact for local, regional and international scholars and research institutions concerned with Lebanese migration issues.

Publications and conference papers developed out of the IDRC [Many of the following can be found in Appendix D]:

Edited Book

Tabar, P. & Skulte-Ouaiss, J. (eds.) (2010) *Politics, Culture and the Lebanese Diaspora*, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 406pp, [ISBN(10): 1-4438-2329-5]

Book Chapter

Tabar, P. (2011) 'Mobilisation for national voting abroad: The participation of Lebanese-Australians in Sydney in 2009 elections in Lebanon', in *Metamorphose des figures du leadership au Liban: Champs et contrechamps des elections legislatives de 2009*, The Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies, Presses de l'Institut Francais du Proche Orient, Beirut (in Arabic and French).

Others

Skulte-Ouais, J. (forthcoming) Home is where the heart is; Citizenship is where it's safe. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*. Taylor & Francis.

Tabar, P. (2010) Lebanon: A country of emigration and immigration. Paper submitted to Forced Migration and Refugee Studies (FMRS) at the American University in Cairo (AUC).

Tabar, P. (2010) 'The Lebanese Jewish Community: Emigration and diasporic relations', *Viewpoints, Migration and the Mashreq*, The Middle East Institute, Washington DC, April 2010.

Tabar, P. and Rassi, R. (2010) 'Lebanon: A Sending and Receiving Country of Arab Labor', in *Intra-Regional Labour Mobility in the Arab*, International Organization for Migration.

Tabar, P. (2009) 'Immigration and Human Development: Lebanon as a case study'. A background paper for the Human Development Report 2009.

Tabar, P. (2009) 'Politics among Arab Migrants in Australia'. CARIM, RR2009/09, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesoli (FI): European University Institute, 2009.

Conferences

Skulte-Ouais, J. & Tabar, P. (2011). "Diasporas as Non-State Actors: The Case of Lebanon", International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada, March 2011. Conference Proceedings are published.

Skulte-Ouais, J. & Tabar, P. (2012) "'We really (don't) want you to come back...': Contradictory state policies regarding Lebanese migrants', paper presented during the *13th Mediterranean Research Meetings* in Florence organized by the Mediterranean Program, European University Institute, March 21-24, 2012.

Tabar, P. (2012) 'Expanding the concept of 'political remittances': the case of Lebanon', paper presented during the *13th Mediterranean Research Meetings* in Florence organized by the Mediterranean Program, European University Institute, March 21-24, 2012. [NOTE: Dr. Tabar was also asked to run a workshop on Diaspora Politics and Diaspora Policies during the same event.]

Tabar, P. (2012) 'A research program: the nexus between migration and political development, and between sectarianism and lack of democracy and social justice' in *Conference Reader: Realigning Power Geometries in the Arab World*, Leipzig, February 24-26, 2012.

Overall Assessment and Recommendations

The IDRC-funded research project was an incredible learning experience and we feel that we gathered a tremendous amount of data on a subject that is not only relevant to academics today but is important for current policymakers as well as future ones. In addition, while this study neither sought to make the claim that Lebanon is unique nor common in regard to the engagement of its diaspora in homeland affairs, this research will allow us—and others—to strengthen the findings of some of the scholarly and policy literature as well as formulate some hypotheses. We can also definitively say that the capacity-building aspect of the grant was a success in regard to training young scholars for social science fieldwork and analysis.

Despite numerous challenges great and small, we do want to thank LAU and all of the staff and students that worked with us on the project: It would not have been possible without their efforts, skills, perseverance, and interest. Though we note a number of areas in this report in which we as researchers and LAU as a research-supporting institution could improve, we do this in the spirit that what we all do is truly collaborative.

The last component of our grant is to provide recommendations to policy makers and others interested in using the project's findings to improve the Lebanese diaspora ability not only to significantly contribute to the welfare of many small communities throughout Lebanon but also to engage in peace-building activities in their homeland. To this end, the following are our preliminary policy recommendations. Following the recommendations is a list of proposed future workshops and possible publications.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Given the weakness of the Lebanese state and the desire for the Lebanese diaspora to be not only more involved in homeland public affairs but to improve the capacity of the Lebanese state and to contribute to long-term development of the country, we propose that the Lebanese Diaspora work with the Lebanese state to focus on the wide dissemination of Lebanese culture and talent in many areas through:
 - The creation of endowed chairs in Lebanese history, culture and politics with particular focus on Lebanese migration and its impact on sending and receiving societies, Lebanese/Arab Affairs, Conflict Resolution, Migration Studies, Diaspora Studies in the main diaspora countries as well as in Lebanon itself;
 - The activation of the role of the Ministry for Culture in Lebanon in the realm of Lebanese abroad. This includes, but is not limited to, providing funding for Lebanese artists (all types) to go abroad to improve country's image and increase tourism;
 - A 'branding' campaign that takes Lebanese intellectual, business, financial, cultural, and other talent abroad and links it directly to Lebanon. The Lebanese state would organize it and the Lebanese Diaspora would fund it—with a key oversight role to ensure accountability in the state [This was recommended by a few interviewees themselves—particularly regarding Lebanese fashion designers].
2. Given the central role of Lebanese Political Parties as both vehicles for homeland political involvement on the part of the Diaspora as well as sites for social activity in the diaspora, we propose that Lebanese political parties make efforts to jointly propose their aid and support for the holding of elections in the diaspora. Indeed, some of the interviews volunteered such support and the logistical and political resources of the political parties could be helpful in making possible absentee voting in the diaspora.
3. As the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is a key link between the Lebanese state and the Lebanese diaspora, we recommend that the MFA try to elicit diaspora funding for increased services and physical presence

in countries of large migrant populations (e.g., solicit diaspora support for the purchase of a larger embassy or for support for a consul in a non-capital city in which a large number of Lebanese reside).

In addition, we recommend that the MFA use our findings (as well as others) to craft a report to the Parliament and Cabinet regarding evaluation of embassies and consulates abroad in three countries and the subsequent need to increase resources to diplomatic missions abroad and to speed up and depoliticize the naming of ambassadors and other diplomatic staff at the highest levels of government. Ambassadors in Australia, Canada, and the United States have largely been able to continue a proud legacy of professional and non-sectarian service to their country—they should be applauded for doing so.

4. We suggest that a more *institutionalized rapport* is founded between the Lebanese government and Lebanese abroad. This relationship should provide a proper mechanism for democratically expressing demands made by the Lebanese diaspora (migrants' rights) of Lebanese state and government. In return, the state will be in a better position to make its own demands of the Lebanese migrant communities and their descendants to engage positively and constructively in their 'homeland' (migrants' obligations). Transparency and accountability will be essential in the organizational structure of this relationship and its mode of operation.
5. We recommend that Parliament play an active legislative role in granting formal rights to Lebanese abroad (e.g., absentee voting) and lend support to all informal initiatives to strengthen the process of institutionalizing the home-diaspora relationship).
6. Knowing that the Cabinet is the key decision-making body in Lebanon, we recommend that they pay close attention to the significant interest in absentee voting on the part of the Diaspora (as demonstrated by our research) and ask themselves how the country could best capitalize on this interest?
7. Last, the party with the greatest interest in seeing its efforts improve life in Lebanon, we recommend that Diaspora groups:
 - a. Continue to engage embassies in their formal and informal development activities. Our research in Australia, Canada, and the US has demonstrated that the embassies can be helpful in offering a site for networking among interested and active Lebanese abroad. However, persistence is needed.
 - b. Recognize that the embassy is not the only potential partner for long-term development activity. Other diaspora actors may be helpful in meeting your organization's goal in the homeland; embassies can be persuaded to support such initiatives.
 - c. Realize that short-term and/or support limited only to one's home region will not help larger development of the country. While one may feel a particular pull to focus support on the micro-level, if this is the only focus, then Diaspora support is in many ways condemning Lebanon to having a perpetually weak state in which sectarian politics limits development and stability.
 - d. Consider forming 'diaspora umbrella organizations' to fund larger-scale development projects or projects all over Lebanon might be helpful

List of follow-on workshops and venues for publication and dissemination:

- e. Workshops with:
 - i. Lebanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs
 - ii. Parliament of Lebanon

- iii. NGOs and IOs in Lebanon and the region.
- iv. Ex-Ambassadors in Lebanon, with particular interest in those who served in the US, Canada, and Australia
- f. Possible publications on:
 - i. Lebanese Diaspora: A general account of its role in 'home' affairs
 - ii. Lebanese political parties in the Diaspora
 - iii. Lebanese Village Associations and the role of the host society in explaining differences among them
 - iv. Local development by Diaspora organizations: short term peace-keeping versus long-term peace-building
 - v. Lebanese Diaspora and change in gender norms in the homeland

APPENDICES
ⁱ Appendix A.1: Table of Total Number of Interviews by Country and Type of Organization

Status of Lebanese Diaspora Project Interviews:
Total Interviews Conducted - by Type of Association

	U.S.	Canada	Lebanon	Australia
Political Party	9	14	21	17
Charity	13	9	7	7
Religious	14	12	10	18
Economic	2	4	2	-
Village	5	3	12	32
Significant Persons/Political Elites	2	4	19	2
Municipalities	-	-	39	-
Embassies	2	1	-	2
Focus Groups	1	-	-	5
Universities	5	9	3	-
Lobbies	10	3	-	-
UN Organizations	-	-	2	-
Miscellaneous	1	-	-	-
TOTAL	64	59	115	83

A.2: Lists of Interviews in Lebanon by Organization Type and Region


Lebanon_INTERVIE
WS_Dec 2012.xlsx

A.3: List of names of organizations by type of organization and country


Stats on Interviews
Conducted_30 Novem

ii **Appendix B: Description of NVivo qualitative analysis software and list of nodes for project**

NVivo is a qualitative data analysis computer software (QSR International). As noted in the main report, we chose to use NVivo to categorize and analyze our data because it is well-known as a useful tool for researchers working with richly detailed qualitative data, such as the in-depth interviews that form the core of our project.

NVivo allows users to classify, sort and arrange information; examine relationships in the data; and combine analysis through the use of coding or, in NVivo parlance, coding for nodes. Nodes are ‘themes’ that the researchers create in order to provide the software the means to separate and categorize the data for analysis. For this project, we created a large number of nodes and then went through each transcribed interview and coded data that we thought was related to the various nodes. While to-date we have used NVivo to compare across countries and organization type related to one node; in the future, we hope to conduct more complex analysis such as network and organizational analysis. NVivo also allows us to include other types of data in the same project so we have been able to input our extensive literature review into the software. Due to the nature of our data—primarily that interviews were conducted in English, Arabic, and/or French and then translated to English, we do not feel comfortable engaging in direct discourse analysis; NVivo does allow us to analyze discourse writ large, however.

The following are the ‘nodes’ for which we coded our interviews. A sample pull of data on one code for one country is also attached.



NODES_Dec
2012.docx

iii Appendix C: Power Point Presentation by Drs. Skulte-Ouaiss and Tabar at Policy Workshop, December 11, 2012



IDRC Policy
WORKSHOP Presenta

Appendix D:

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_Heart_Is_FINAL_Sk



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Diasporas as
Non-State Actors_Fel



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Tabar_2009_UNDP
report on Lebanon.doc



Tabar_AUC
paper.pdf



Tabar_diasporic
field_DRAFT.doc



Tabar_elections
2009 and austleb par



Tabar_Political
Remittances - Lebane