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Familial relations and labor market outcomes: the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon☆

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Abstract

We analyze intra-family support among Palestinians living in Lebanon, using detailed household survey data from the refugee camps and Palestinian communities in Lebanon and latent class analysis technique. The study uncovers five latent classes of familial exchange. Two different theoretical models—the solidarity and reciprocal exchange—are used to examine the link between patterns of assistance and labor market conditions. Contrary to the solidarity account, we find no evidence of high familial assistance among the unemployed, or those excluded from the labor market, and this is true regardless of type of exchange. However, the camp population is more likely to engage in exchange relations than their non-camp counterparts. The married, loners, educated, employed, and those with stronger ties to relatives are more likely to be money exchangers. The findings are similar for care receivers, but age and gender figure prominently here. Some policy implications of the findings are discussed.

Keywords: Familial exchange; Solidarity; Altruism; Reciprocity; Refugees; Lebanon; Latent class analysis

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1. Introduction

There is a large body of work dealing with exchange among relatives, particularly support within families. The basic assumption of most studies is that instrumental relations based on ascribed characteristics such as kinship are features of a non-market, gift economy. It is often argued that instrumental relations among relatives should decline in the course of modernization, giving away to transfers regulated by the marketplace or public agencies. However, a family living in a developing economy tends to rely on relatives for assistance in times of need rather than on formal organizations (i.e., a personal loan from a bank) despite the presence of a full-fledged market economy. While the importance of kinship-based assistance has declined in modern society, non-market transfers remain quite widespread in the underdeveloped countries. Some argue that the persistence of institutional arrangements governing non-market behavior may "hasten the pace of economic development" and the evolution of a market economy (Stark, 1995, pp. 13–15). Suggestive evidence indicates that such non-market transfers are largely motivated by sheer altruism instituted especially in the fabric of 'traditional' societies. They can also be the result of group solidarity arising out of the circumstantial situation (e.g., exploitation, exclusion) facing a group vis-à-vis adversities in modern societies. The situation of refugees and immigrants in new urban environments (Tilly, 1990), disadvantaged ethnic groups (Wilson and Portes, 1980) as well as the working class in capitalist society a' la Marxists are classic examples. Strong familial support or ethnic-based solidarity in these contexts compensates for weak labor force attachment and economic hardship more generally (see, Bentolila and Ichino, 2001). Yet, the link between patterns of inter-family support and labor market situation has not been subjected to explicit tests.

This study has a dual purpose of (1) describing the multidimensional nature of family support among a vulnerable refugee population and (2) analyzing the impact of labor market outcomes on patterns of inter-family exchange. It is based on unique and detailed household survey data on patterns of familial help among Palestinians residing in camps and small refugee communities in Lebanon. Most previous studies on inter-generational exchange focus on one or two general types of exchange, primarily financial and non-financial exchange, and focus on the Western context. The present study was designed to produce data on giving and receiving familial and non-familial (i.e., friends and neighbors) support by an unusually detailed list of exchange types among vulnerable refugee communities in the Arab context. The data also includes a wide range of socio-economic variables, providing a unique opportunity to examine commonly held views about patterns of kin 'instrumental' support.

2. Theoretical background

Two alternative views guide our study: social solidarity and 'reciprocal exchange' (Bernheim et al., 1985; Cox and Rank, 1992; Edwards, 1969; Spitze and Logan, 1989; Stark, 1995). Proponents of the solidarity model view inter-family assistance

as the product of altruistic motives on the part of cohesive, or otherwise vulnerable, members of communities (Becker, 1974; Gilen et al., 1994). Vulnerable communities can range from a small village suffering from economic scarcity (Ekeh, 1974) or temporary disasters to immigrant 'enclaves' (Portes and Stepick, 1993) in global cities of the industrial world. The well-off members of such communities are expected to provide monetary and in-kind support to their 'vulnerable' relatives or coethnics, particularly during periods of high unemployment and economic hardship. This perspective has its roots in sociological classics, emphasizing the normative and moral characters of economic exchange (Durkheim, 1893; Polany et al., 1957). Proponents of the American functionalist school during the 1950s and 1960s invoke concepts such as 'value introjection' to denote the importance of learned norms and values through socialization in guiding economic actions rather than selfishness or greed (see, Parsons and Smelser, 1956). In the context of Mediterranean countries, familial relations 'steered' by the prevailing norms and values span the extended family and beyond.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that that extended family networks in the Mediterranean countries' labor markets provide 'insurance' against unemployment, compensating for the consequences of job losses (Bentolila and Ichino, 2001). For otherwise, how can we explain "high, long-term and persistently concentrated unemployment rates" in Southern European countries without signs of social unrest (Bentolila and Ichino, 2001, p. 1). In the absence of a developed financial market and welfare insurance, relatives help each other in case of need. Lacking hard data to test their claims, Bentolila and Ichino (2001, pp. 14–18) relied on indirect evidence concerning the strength of family ties, including proximity of parents to their children, in Southern Italy and Spain. While they do not rule out purely selfish motives for such transfers, they cite 'altruistic motivations' for the observed extended family activities in relieving the burden of hardship.

In another study, Gilen et al. (1994) argue that extended family networks provide an avenue of coping with the economic challenges facing refugees in Lebanon. "A ... wide network of contacts across national borders, primarily through relatives, have enabled Palestinians to adopt certain strategies that enhance their economic possibilities" (Gilen et al., 1994). Help from local relatives and friends allow families to cope with poverty and insecure situations. For this reason, factors influencing the various economic strategies such as employment opportunities and closeness of kin may be linked to broader systems of familial support. Hence, if this model holds true, the unemployed or poorer persons should receive more transfer than their employed counterparts.

In contrast, the 'reciprocal exchange' model views kin support as reciprocal in nature (Bernheim et al., 1985; Cox, 1987), and hence financial and 'in-kind' support may be compensated by current or future 'payment.' While this 'exchange' perspective is a characteristic of neoclassical economics, it has a long history in sociology dating back to the classic work of Simmel (1955) on group affiliation. Contemporary sociological formulations, including social exchange (Blau, 1964; Cook, 1993) and rational choice (Coleman, 1990; Hechter, 1987) theories, conceive of social life as consisting of a wide array of transactions involving giving and receiving material

items (e.g., gifts) as well as other valued services (e.g., care, information). The underlying assumption here is that individuals are viewed as rational, maximizing, agents—inter-familial transfers are motivated by self-interest rather than by group morality. Unlike market regulated exchanges of money and goods, reciprocal transactions are based on previously accumulated 'favors' and deeds, and are regulated by the 'norm of reciprocity' (Gouldner, 1960) "according to which the group that has received must give, and the group which has given must demand" (Levi-Strauss, 1969, p. 138). An actor lacking in valuable or intangible resources is presumably excluded from such reciprocal exchanges, regardless of the circumstantial conditions under which this person lives. In other words, collective identity (e.g., refugeness) or similar principled group-oriented ethos do not figure highly in explaining the emergence of instrumental exchange behavior.

This perspective is commonly used in demographic research to explain intra-family transfers and subsequent child support (Nugent, 1985). In the absence of a welfare state, old age security provides strong incentives for spouses to bear (and invest in) children (Ehrlich and Lui, 1991; Hoddinot, 1992), while the threat of disinheritance provides incentives for children to provide support for their parents (Bernheim et al., 1985). According to this view, elderly persons should also be more likely to be recipients of support than their younger counterparts; such pattern of support being motivated by prospects of inheritance. In contrast to the 'solidarity' model, the employed and well off are more likely than the vulnerable to exchange money and other valued goods and services. For, the poor and unemployed are less endowed to 'repay' for the transfers provided.

Previous studies show that familial support is also influenced by an array of demographic, social, and economic factors (Hogan et al., 1993). However, most previous studies are descriptive in nature and focus only on inter-generational patterns of help and their explanations (e.g., Cox and Rank, 1992; Hogan et al., 1990, 1993; Litwak and Kulis, 1987; Parish et al., 1991; Spitze and Logan, 1989, 1990; Taylor, 1986). In our analysis to follow, we estimate an inclusive model that includes labor market variables while controlling for the impact of age, gender, household structure, family ties, distance to relatives, and human capital variables. To our knowledge, this is the first attempt to analyze inter-family support in the Middle East context.

3. The setting

Following the 1948 Arab–Israeli war, an estimated 100,000 Palestinian refugees (out of some 750,000 in total) fled, or otherwise expelled, from what is now northern Israel to Lebanon. For the past 50 years, many of these refugees have been living under a precarious conditions characterized by physical misery and constant insecurity (Abbas et al., 1997; Sayigh, 1995). While some of the refugees, mostly of middle class, received Lebanese citizenship between 1948 and 1978 allowing them to establish themselves in the country, the remaining took sanctuary in refugee camps. The excluded, and those residing in the camps in particular, rely upon a web of material support from meager wages earned in the informal labor market, remittances from

family abroad and international aid for survival. Clearly, each of these resources is vulnerable to the sway of political forces in Lebanon, the region, and beyond.

Many households have been several times displaced in Lebanon with the destruction of several camps during the Lebanese civil war (1975–1989), leading to a decrease in the number of refugee camps from 17 to 12. A consequence of this is that 'gatherings' of refugees on the fringes of the "official" camps and in Beirut have developed—many with considerable numbers of squatter households who have not been re-housed after the 'war of the of camps' in the early 1980s (Gilen et al., 1994). Conditions in the camps and 'gatherings' are quite harsh. Despite large improvements in health and education thanks to services provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), camp residents continue to experience relatively high levels of extreme poverty (Egset, 2001), poor living conditions, and uncertainty about their future (Sayigh, 1995). Refugees in the camps are largely isolated from the rest of Lebanese society: their movements are often restricted by Lebanese authorities; they are denied participation in national health, education, and social service programs; and they have little formal access to the labor market.

Exclusion from Lebanese public services and labor market is a factor directly contributing to the high level of poverty and hardship experienced by the refugees in the country. Considered to be foreign residents, they are prohibited from entering most skilled professions due to either the lack of a work permit (rarely granted to refugees) or the fact that professional practice requires association or trade union membership—largely denied to Palestinians (Abbas et al., 1997). In the labor market, unskilled Palestinians face high levels of competition from Syrian workers who are not required to have work permits as well as from other Asian laborer (Al-Madi and Ugland, 2003, p. 1).

The survey data show that about one-quarter of households in camps and gatherings have no member who is currently employed in the formal labor market. Furthermore, labor force participation is rather low at 42%; unemployment is estimated as 17% of the total labor force (Al-Madi and Ugland, 2003, p. 6). Underemployment is a considerable problem, particularly for men and among the younger age groups. Nearly one-half of those 15–24 years are underemployed, unemployed, or discouraged workers.

Also contributing to continuing and increasing hardship has been the marked reduction in assistance given to camp refugees by a wide range of international aid organizations. Since the signing of the Oslo Accord in 1993, a considerable amount of international donor funding has been re-channeled to the West Bank and Gaza Strip—lowering the level of services provided by international and local Non-Governmental Organizations. This has occurred alongside UNRWA's financial problems leading to reduction of services to refugees throughout the region (Sayigh, 1995). Many of those eligible for assistance (such as female-headed households with no adult son) have become even more vulnerable since the early 1990s, when PLO-provided social and welfare services such as pensions, free health services, and job opportunities in Palestinian institutions were cut as a result of events following the Gulf war (Sayigh, 1995). Overall, the conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are uniquely difficult when compared to their counterparts living elsewhere in the region (see, Brand, 1988).

Our brief portrait of the living conditions and the circumstantial situation of Palestinian refugees currently living in camps and small gatherings in Lebanon, and comparisons to the Palestinian population as a whole, convince us that the local camp community continues to buffer its members from adverse economic hardships. For years, refugee camp communities have sustained their economic survival largely through cooperation and kin-ties at the local level. Accordingly, we expect the vulnerable, and especially the unemployed among them, to be more engaged in routine familial exchanges compared to the well-off groups. In other words, the solidarity account should hold, regardless of exchange type. Thus, those residing in camps should also exhibit higher levels of familial exchange than those living in small non-camp communities. Exchange levels should also be especially high among the needy group particularly in receiving financial assistance as compared to other refugees, and this should hold regardless of their ability to make future repayment.

Of course, involvement in routine exchange, and the ability to make future payments in particular, is dependent on salient demographic and health characteristics, including age, sex, marital status, and living arrangement. Following findings from previous research on inter-generational exchange in the US, we expect women, older persons, loners, and unmarried adults to be receivers of familial support, including money, as compared to other adults. On the other hand, human capital should diminish the need for routine assistance. Thus, we expect education and health status to have strong impact on routine exchange, but the health effects should be contingent on the type of exchange in question. Those with poor health are expected to be receivers of both in-kind assistance (e.g., care) and money as compared to healthy adults.

While the political economy of the camps might be largely responsible for the persistence of extensive exchange networks at the community level, the historical legacy of intra-family solidarity that cut across varieties of Arab culture cannot be overlooked. Traditionally, a person subordinates his or her interests to those of the extended family. And, the family continues to be central to social life in Arab society. Accordingly, family ties such as visiting relatives should act to increase all routine exchanges among relatives. However, those without relatives living nearby have no one to exchange with, and hence distance to relatives should be a critical determinant of familial exchange.

4. Data and measures

The data come from the 1999 Living Conditions household sample survey covering all Palestinian refugee camps and selected 'gatherings' in Lebanon. The survey is based on a one-stage probability sample of 4000 households drawn from a frame containing complete listings of households, largely constructed as part of the survey preparatory phase. The 'gatherings' are defined as any population agglomeration of at least 25 households. The Palestinian Bureau of Statistics and the Oslo-based research institute, Fafo, carried out the survey in the spring of 1999. The survey is based on face-to-face interviews with the selected households by trained female interviewers.

As with other Fafo's Living Conditions Surveys, each contains three questionnaires: one for the household, one for a randomly selected adult from each household, and the third for all ever-married women aged 15 and over at the time of survey. The survey was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the household questionnaire, containing questions about the household as a whole (e.g., housing items) as well as about each of its usual members (i.e., the individual roster containing various items such as age, sex, marital status, migration, education, and labor force). In the second stage, interviewees were conducted with eligible respondents for the randomly selected adult and ever-married women (if any) questionnaires. Thus, after completing a household questionnaire, the interviewer selected randomly one adult aged 15 years and over from the household schedule according to a preprinted selection sheet. Systematic random sampling was used in selecting adults from households. The source of the labor force data is the household instrument, but the exchange data come from the randomly selected adult questionnaire. Thus, any adult person from a selected household provided general demographic, educational, and labor force data about all household members (i.e., by proxy); those pertaining to exchange items were collected directly by interviewing the selected adult. Our strategy is to confine the analysis to the randomly selected individual after matching the two questionnaires. On the whole, the data obtained by the Living Conditions Survey appear to be of very good or acceptable quality, with an overall response rate of 95.7% (see, Khawaja, 2003).

The survey includes detailed items on type of support given and received by adult respondents. These items are part of the 'randomly selected individual' questionnaire, and hence the respondent is the same person reporting on his or her exchange. We initially asked each randomly selected adult: "During the last two weeks, did you receive assistance from any family member, or family relative, living outside your household?" If the answer is yes, then we asked him/her, "What kind of help did you receive?" The same questions were repeated for help given to any family member not currently living in the respondent's household. Here, we include 13 types of help involving such things as household help, working in family businesses and assistance with the planning of weddings and other gatherings during the two-week period before the survey. For the purpose of this study, 12 of the above items of familial help were collapsed into 4 broad kinds of exchange: household care, work, general assistance, and monitory assistance. The household care category consists of childcare, food preparation, assistance during childbirth, and other household care. Clearly all of these four items relate to the general category of household care. Assistance on family business and agricultural farm were combined into one item called work-related assistance. The third general assistance category includes a diverse set of familial assistance: help in wedding, funeral, house construction, shopping, and transportation. Both the item referring to help in study (school homework) as well as the residual category, other, were excluded from the analysis because they do not have clear implications for economic activity.

Our decision to collapse the items was based on practical as well as theoretical considerations. For one thing, there are not enough cases for some of the items to be analyzed separately. Second, the statistical procedure used in the study requires the

cross-classification of all the items used in a single contingency table, and thus the inclusion of all the variables would result in a sparse table. Even with the 8 broad items chosen for receiving and giving help, the resulting contingency table has 256 cells. Furthermore, some of the items included in the survey instrument are conceptually redundant. For example, help from a family member during a funeral or a wedding implies the same kind of help—being a communal activity quite common in the Middle East context. Also, there is very little difference between help in the farm or family business, both implying work-related help, and so on. While some of the specific types are important in their own right (e.g., help during childbirth), they are not so in this study. Both receiving and giving support on each of the items are coded into dichotomous variables (yes, no) for latent class analysis.

The outcome variable in the analysis to follow is respondents' involvement in one of several exchange types. Based on previous research, we consider a number of demographic, socio-economic, and network variables characterizing group members. A brief description of the measurement of independent variables in our model follows.

Labor force activity is measured according to the ILO guidelines. Respondents were classified into three possible states at the time of the survey: employed, unemployed, and out of the labor force. Employment is defined as working, or temporarily absent from work, for at least an hour during the previous week before the survey. While some of those employed could be classified as underemployed in terms of hours worked or wages, we have decided not to do so here owing to the small numbers involved. Anyone who was out of work, available for work and actively seeking work was defined as unemployed. The rest are classified as economically inactive. We obtained the labor force questions by proxy (i.e., the person answering the household questionnaire), answering for all those aged 15 years and above at the time of survey.[2]

Demographic composition and household structure are clearly important factors in any discussion of exchange relations, and we rely on a number of commonly used measures of theses variables. Age of respondent is measured in five categories, distinguishing between adolescents, middle aged, and older persons (aged 65 and over). Age is calculated directly from dates of birth as provided in the individual roster of the household questionnaire, although in some cases date of birth will have been imputed or otherwise calculated from completed age at the time of survey (Khawaja, 2003, p. 1). Household composition is measured by a simple typology, distinguishing persons living alone, in nuclear households, or in extended household structures. The latter two types could be refined further into family and non-family households as well as according to the dependents such as children and elderly persons, but this leaves us with very few cases for meaningful analysis. Nuclear household is defined as consisting of a married couple without children, a married couple with children, or a single-parent with children only. Extended household is defined here broadly to

[2] The procedures and definitions used here are essentially the same as those used in the US Current Population Survey.

include a nuclear household and any additional member regardless of kin relations with the head of household. The measurement of other demographic variables (sex and marital status) is straightforward.

Human resource variables include educational attainment and health. Educational attainment is measured by levels of education completed, distinguishing between four distinct conventional levels ranging from elementary to secondary level or more. The latter category could be refined further, distinguishing between secondary and college education, but we decided to group these levels owing to the small number of cases in the college education category. Data about the educational levels of all household members were obtained from the (proxy) respondent to the household questionnaire. Unlike education, health status is measured by asking randomly selected adults directly to assess their general health, using a conventional question consisting of 5 ordinal responses ranging from bad to very good. We collapsed the five categories into three levels to both simplify the analysis and preserve enough cases in the relevant cells. Although crude, this rather very subjective question appears to yield results that are consistent with physical health.

The last two variables refer to the strength of social ties and spatial proximity to relatives, both of which have been identified by previous research as crucial factors in predicting familial exchange. Both of these items are available in the randomly selected adult questionnaire. Social ties are measured by a direct question on visiting behavior. Each chosen adult respondent was asked about the frequency of visits by relatives from the father and mother side and currently not living in the respondent household during the two weeks before the survey. A total of eight possible categories were used to record responses, ranging from daily visits to none. Here, we collapsed the responses in the following three categories: daily or more than five, 1–5 visits, and no visits. The second social network question captures satisfaction with proximity to relatives in the neighborhood, with answers ranging from very unsatisfactory to very satisfactory. The answers were also collapsed into three categories, ranging from very satisfactory to very unsatisfactory with moderate satisfaction in between. Given the subjective nature and this question, it was asked directly to the randomly chosen adult from each household.

Our last variable is a locality wide variable, distinguishing refugee camps from other small communities. The distinction reflects the age of a locality (i.e., establishment date) but also economic standing of respondents. These (non-camp) communities are newer places, some of which were established during or after the Lebanon recent civil war, and are generally considered better off economically as compared to camps.

Not all dwellers of the camps are Palestinian refugees, and some camps and refugee communities in Lebanon contain a varying proportion of other immigrant laborers. Refugees are identified by a single question on refugee status included in the survey. Every respondent in the survey was asked whether he or she was a refugee from 1948, a person displaced by the 1967 war, a refugee and then displaced, a person from the Gaza Strip, or other non-refugee (or displaced). In this study, we confine the analysis to Palestinian refugees or displaced who are usual residents in the camps (and small communities in Lebanon), and thus all the non-Palestinians (about 3%) are excluded from the analysis.

5. Methods

Latent class analysis will be used to measure the dimensionality of family support. Of concern is whether the various exchange items represent one or several underlying dimensions of family support (Hogan et al., 1993). The technique is the equivalent of factor analytic procedures commonly used for measurement models of continuous variables (see, McCutchen, 1987). It assumes that the association among observed discrete variables is explained by their dependence on latent (i.e., unobserved) factors.

The classical expression of the latent class model is,

$$\pi_{abcd} = \pi_{\chi}\pi_{a|x}\pi_{b|x}\pi_{c|x}\pi_{d|x}, \tag{1}$$

where π_x is called a latent probability and $\pi_{a|x}$, $\pi_{b|x}$, $\pi_{c|x}$, $\pi_{d|x}$, are referred to as conditional response probabilities given the latent class (see, Goodman, 1974; Lazersfeld and Henry, 1968). The observed variables are assumed to be independent of each other, a property called 'local independence.' Haberman (1979) and Hagenaars (1993) show that the latent class model can be formulated as a log-linear model for the incomplete frequency table m_{xabcd},

$$\log m_{xabcd} = \mu + \mu_x^X + \mu_a^A + \mu_b^B + \mu_c^C + \mu_d^D + \mu_{xa}^{XA} + \mu_{xb}^{XB} + \mu_{xc}^{XC} + \mu_{xd}^{XD}. \tag{2}$$

Here, $\mu_{11}^{X/A}$ represents the probability of choosing response 1 to item A if the respondent is a member of the latent class 1. If the observed variables are independent, only one latent class is necessary, and the model is referred to here as the model of independence. Usually the associations among the variables can be explained by additional latent classes, and this is a function of the dimensions of the contingency table analyzed. Standard likelihood ratio tests (e.g., χ^2) can be used to determine the number of latent classes needed for an acceptable fit.

The latent class technique does not permit the assignment of individuals to latent classes, and this is its major limitation (see, Yamaguchi, 2000). However, it is possible to calculate the probability that a person with a given response pattern is from a particular latent class. These conditional probabilities are commonly used to assign each respondent to the model latent class, resulting in a discrete observed variable for use in standard multivariate analyses, including log-linear models (Clogg, 1981; Hogan et al., 1993).

We make use of multinomial logistic regression to assess the impact of labor market outcomes and other relevant socioeconomic variables on types of familial exchange measured in terms of latent classes.

6. Findings

We begin by providing a descriptive portrait of the levels and patterns of social ties, including family support, among the study population using the detailed list of exchange items. Family networks among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon share common characteristics with typical social networks elsewhere in the region.

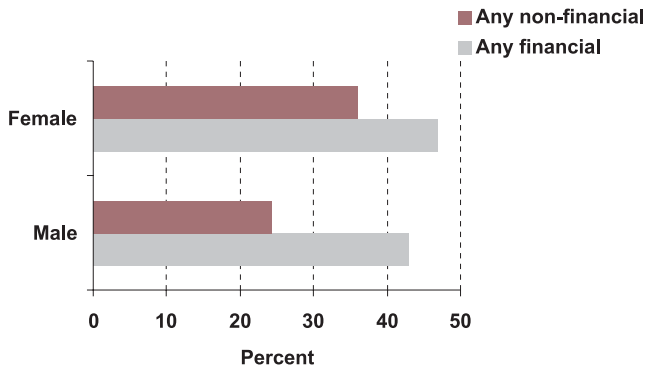

Fig. 1. Percent of adults engaged in financial and non-financial exchange by sex. *Source*: Lebanon living conditions survey micro-data, 1999.

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, however, appear to be somewhat more isolated from their extended families than has been found among Palestinian refugee households in Jordan (Hanssen-Bauer, 1998). Settling near relatives is the norm, with 88% of households reporting having relatives within walking distance, and many having rather large family networks living nearby—one in two households report more than 10 relatives nearby.

Overall, 60% of individuals have engaged in some kind of exchange of help during the two weeks prior to the survey (for non-financial types of help) and during the 12 months prior to the survey for financial help (Fig. 1). Assistance is much more often exchanged within the family network than within the wider social network including friends, neighbors and colleagues, and more often financial in nature than other kinds of assistance. Gender differences in the pattern of exchange of help are apparent, with women more often engaging in some exchange of help, particularly non-financial.

Table 1 shows the proportion of individuals reporting help given and received with family. Help with household activities is the more common type of non-financial help exchanged with 15% report giving and 12% report receiving help in household chores. Productive help is much less commonly exchanged, with 7% giving and 2% receiving productive help. Assistance in occasional activities such as marriages and funerals are the least common with less than 2% exchanging this type of help. However, this is expected, as these activities are less regular than others almost everywhere. Overall, financial help during the last 12 months has been given by 28% of persons to other family members, and 26% have received financial help from family.

6.1. Latent class analysis

The second step in our analysis is to determine the number of latent classes needed to uncover the structure of the data on familial exchange. The data on eight dimensions of receiving and giving monetary and in-kind help are represented in a large

Table 1
Type of help given and received last two weeks

Types of support	Help given or received from: family and relatives	
	Given	Received
Help in one or more household activities	15.0	11.5
Shopping	3.9	3.2
Child care	3.8	2.1
Food preparation	3.9	4.4
Other housework	8.8	8.5
School work, studies	1.1	0.4
Help in one or more productive activities	6.5	2.1
Transportation	1.8	0.9
Family enterprise (non-agricultural)	2.1	0.3
Agricultural fields (or garden)	0.1	0.1
House-building or repair	2.2	0.8
Help in one or more occasional activities	1.5	0.4
Post-natal care	0.5	0.2
Wedding arrangement	0.4	0.1
Funeral arrangement	0.7	0.2
Financial help	28.3	25.8
Other help	3.6	2.2
Total	100	100
Total *N* (un-weighted)	3703	3703

contingency table (256 cells) for the latent structure analysis. Fit statistics for the latent class models applied to the eight dimensions of familial exchange are shown in Table 2. With a likelihood ratio test of 1402 and 247 degrees of freedom, the independence (one class) model fits the data poorly as would be expected. The index of similarity for this model shows that it mis-classifies about 23% of the cases. The addition of the second class provides a substantial improvement in fit while mis-classifying only about 8% of the cases. Yet, this model does not fit the data adequately; nor do the third and fourth models. The fifth model provides an acceptable fit to the data ($L^2 = 227$ with 211 *df*; $P = .22$), mis-classifying only about 4% of the cases. It should be noted that while the 5-class model is the one chosen to describe the data adequately in terms of goodness of fit, this model adds very little (less than 2%) in terms of the correct classification of cases over the 3-class model. BIC statistic developed by Raftery (1995), and reported in the table, also shows that the 3-class

Table 2
Fit statistics for latent class models of familial exchange

Model	L^2	*df*	*P* value	BIC	Dissimilarity index
One latent class (independence)	1402.1	247	.000	−620.5	.231
Two latent classes	577.6	238	.000	−1371.3	.083
Three latent classes	356.3	229	.000	−1518.9	.054
Four latent classes	291.3	220	.000	−1510.3	.049
Five latent classes	226.8	211	.216	−1500.9	.036

model is the best model – this model has the lowest value. However, BIC is appropriate for tables where the sample size is unusually large, rendering it difficult for any model to fit the data. Recently, Weakliem (1999) warned against using this statistics as a goodness-of-fit measure. Thus, although there is good reason to proceed with the more parsimonious model that contains 3 latent classes, we report the result of the best fitting 5-class model as judged by the conventional likelihood-ratio statistics.

Table 3 reports the maximum likelihood estimates of the conditional probabilities of item responses for each latent class and the eight dimensions of familial exchange obtained for the 5-class model. The estimates of the latent class proportions for this model are also provided in the table. The interpretation of each latent class is readily apparent from the conditional probabilities reported.

The findings indicate that about 7% of the sample adults belong to the first latent class of high exchangers. There is an overwhelming strength of ties among persons in this category compared to the other types of exchanges. The persons here are more likely to give (and receive) general assistance as well as work-related help than any other category of exchange. It seems to be largely composed of less needy 'dependents' since the high exchangers persons are more likely to give assistance of general nature while more likely to receive than give money and household care. The second latent class accounts for about 7% of adults. The persons here are more likely to give and receive money than any other category; hence the latent class is termed 'money exchangers.' They also seem involved in exchanging household care—probably as reciprocity to money exchange.

The largest proportions (60%) of adults belong to the third class of low exchangers. Of the total adults belonging to this category, about 77% of them are not involved in any kind of exchange. Of those involved in exchange, the majority (14%) are money givers. However, low exchangers have the lowest probabilities of being involved in any kind of exchange compared to persons belonging to the other categories. The fourth latent class comprises about 9% of respondents. Persons belonging to this type of exchange are more likely to be receivers of household care compared to others.

Table 3
Conditional probabilities of item responses for five-class model

Item of exchange	High exchangers 1	Money exchangers 2	Low exchangers 3	Care receivers 4	Money receivers 5
Receive work assistance	.061	.000	.000	.001	.000
Give work assistance	.196	.000	.008	.000	.051
Receive general assistance	.323	.054	.006	.230	.000
Give general assistance	.562	.097	.030	.074	.121
Receive household care	.219	.450	.000	.606	.006
Give household care	.214	.573	.046	.358	.027
Receive money	.685	.872	.000	.000	1.000
Give money	.448	.696	.139	.347	.366
Latent class proportions	.065	.072	.596	.091	.176

They are also involved in receiving general assistance and giving money. This group of respondents is perhaps involved in exchanging money for care. The fifth and final latent class accounts for about 18% of respondents and is therefore the second largest category of exchangers. Every member of this category receives money and hence it is referred to as 'money receivers.' To a large degree, this type of exchange seems to be the compliment of the previous one in comprising adults who provide household care and other form of general assistance. None of its members receive general assistance or work-related help, and very few receive household care. Overall, the reciprocal nature of exchange relations among refugees is evident in the exchange types described above, with those involved in providing care being less likely to be provide monetary assistance to other family members and vice versa.

6.2. Bivariate analysis

Does involvement in familial exchange, reciprocal or otherwise, differ across groups? To answer this question, we begin by exploring the links between patterns of familial exchange and independent variables separately. Table 4 reports the distribution of adults over the five latent classes and the independent variables.

As shown in the table, group differentials in the use of familial exchange are not large. While there are clear variations among groups with regard to involvement in specific types of exchange, this is not so with regard to employment status. Contrary to expectations, the inactive and unemployed groups are less likely to engage in routine exchange compared to the employed. While about 67% of the unemployed (and 66% of the inactive) are low exchangers, about 59% of the employed are. The inactive are slightly more likely to be money exchangers and care receivers than the employed, but they are less likely to be money receivers. This might indicate reciprocity between the employed and inactive in exchanging care for money. There is a larger proportion of elderly persons among the inactive than the employed groups, which might explain the difference in care exchange. This finding gives preliminary support to a rational exchange perspective at the expense of the altruistic account of familial exchange.

As expected, females are slightly more likely than males to engage in routine exchange. This is true with regard to money exchange and household care. About 16% of females are money receivers compared to only 4% of males. Females are not only more likely to receive money (12% compared to 3% male) than males, but also to exchange (receive and give) money (9% compared to 4% male). However, males are more likely to be in the high exchangers' category than females, but the difference is not statistically significant.

Not surprisingly, familial exchange varies by age. This is especially true with respect to the last two categories: care and money receivers. However, there are essentially no differences among the younger groups in patterns of exchange, including care and money; the only significant differentials are between the older persons and the rest. Not that the older persons are more likely to be high exchangers. To the contrary—more (67%) of them are in the low exchangers' category than the younger persons. As expected, the elderly are more likely to be care receivers and

Table 4
Familial exchange by background variables

Background variable	High exchangers	Money exchangers	Low exchangers	Care receivers	Money receivers	*N*
Labor force						
Employed	4.1	4.1	58.7	3.0	30.1	1226
Unemployed	5.1	2.9	66.9	4.0	21.0	272
Inactive	2.4	7.3	65.9	10.1	14.3	2092
Sex						
Male	4.4	4.4	66.2	3.1	4.4	1721
Female	2.0	9.8	60.9	11.2	16.0	1874
Age						
15–34	3.7	6.7	62.6	6.6	20.3	2124
35–44	2.8	4.6	64.8	4.1	23.6	563
45–64	2.5	5.7	63.5	6.6	21.7	636
65 and over	0.7	2.2	66.9	21.3	8.8	272
Marital status						
Single	3.7	4.6	66.7	6.0	19.0	1433
Married	3.0	7.1	60.2	6.9	22.8	1883
Widowed/divorced	1.4	3.9	68.8	16.8	9.0	279
Household type						
Loner	1.7	5.1	52.5	30.5	10.2	59
Nuclear	3.1	6.1	64.3	6.7	19.7	2758
Extended	3.5	5.0	61.2	7.7	22.7	780
Education						
Less than elementary	2.5	4.4	68.8	8.6	15.7	1296
Elementary	3.5	6.2	64.2	7.4	18.6	1158
Preparatory	3.6	7.4	58.4	5.8	24.7	688
Secondary and over	3.4	6.8	53.8	5.2	30.9	444
Health status						
Bad	3.7	6.2	61.1	6.0	22.9	2067
Fair	2.8	6.0	65.8	7.1	18.3	939
Good	1.9	4.6	67.9	12.0	13.7	591
Locality type						
Camp	3.5	6.3	61.4	7.6	21.3	2765
Community	2.2	4.6	70.2	6.5	16.6	832
Distance to relatives						
Satisfactory	2.8	7.2	60.7	7.0	22.4	1755
Acceptable	4.0	4.3	65.6	9.9	16.2	990
Unsatisfactory	2.7	5.2	66.6	5.0	20.4	812
Ties						
Daily visits	5.6	9.0	55.2	9.6	20.7	1045
1–5 visits	2.3	5.6	62.9	5.8	23.4	1458
No visits	2.0	3.1	72.3	7.2	15.3	1088

about one of every five persons is in this category compared to about 4% of those in their prime working ages, 35–44 years. One would also expect money transfer from the younger to the older generation in a developing country context such as this one. Yet this is not the case here as 9% of older persons are money receivers compared to over 20% of those in the younger age groups.

Similar proportions of the widowed/divorced persons are in the care or money receivers' categories, perhaps reflecting age. For most of the widowed or divorced are older persons. And like the elderly persons, the widowed/divorced persons are more likely to be low exchangers overall. There is little difference between single and married adults. The married are associated less with the low exchangers' category compared to the never married, but the two groups have essentially similar exchange behavior.

Also similar are adults living in nuclear and extended households. While adults in extended households are slightly more likely to be associated with exchange, regardless of type, as compared to those living in nuclear household the differences are too small to be statistically meaningful. Loners differ from other types of households, owing to their age and sex composition. In the Arab context young and middle aged adults tend to live with others, whether in nuclear or extended living arrangements and the vast majority of men in the younger age groups are married. This may shed light on the striking similarity of exchange behavior between loners on the one hand and widowed/divorced and elderly persons on the other. As shown in the table, over 30% loners fall in the care receivers' type of exchange compared to about 7% of adults in nuclear households. On the other hand, a significantly less proportion (10%) of loners are money receivers than adults in nuclear (20%) or extended (23%) households. These differences are clearly due to the fact that loners tend to be older in age and a large proportion of them are women.

There is an inverse relationship between education and engagement in routine exchange behavior. In some respects, this is surprising because it would appear that the less educated are more in need of familial ties to compensate for their human capital deficiencies in the labor market. Also, since 'time is money,' the educated persons might be reluctant to engage in costly helping behavior as compared to the uneducated persons. However, the findings do not seem to confirm these expectations. Nearly 70% of those with less than elementary education are engaged in routine exchanges compared to about 54% of those with at least secondary education. The more educated are more associated with the exchange of money, while the less educated are slightly more associated with the household care. While about 30% of those with secondary education are in the receiving money category, only about 16% of those with less than elementary education are. The relationship between educational attainment and receiving money is surprisingly consistent. It is not at all clear why this is so. One plausible explanation might have to do with the economic vulnerability of the educated Palestinians in the Lebanese labor market combined with their relatively high consumption demands. Their relatively low wages and higher needs may account for their greater likelihood of being in the 'money receivers' category, notwithstanding their employment status.

Somewhat related is the health status of respondents, for good health is an invaluable resource for labor market commitment. As would be expected, persons with good health are more likely to be in the low exchangers' category compared to those with ill health. Yet, surprisingly those with good health are associated more with

receiving care and less with receiving money as compared to those with ill health. About 12% of the healthy are in the care receivers' type compared to about 6% of the unhealthy. It is difficult to explain why adults with ill health who should be in need of care are less likely to be cared for as compared to those with good health. More significant, in the statistical sense at least, is the differential between the two groups in terms of receiving money, amounting to nearly 10 percentage points. It could be that those in bad health are too weak overall to earn a living but not so weak to care for themselves.

Camp residents are more likely to be exchangers compared to those living in other communities, but the differences are not significant. More important is access to relatives and familial ties within these communities. Those who are satisfied with distance to relatives in the neighborhood in which they live are slightly more likely to engage in routine exchange, and this is true with respect to care and money. However, the differences between the groups are quite small here, suggesting that proximity per se is not a determining factor in exchange behavior. One possible reason behind the lack of association between distance to relatives and exchange is that refugees in Lebanon as elsewhere in the regions tend to cluster according to kin relationship, making these camps more like 'transplanted communities.'

Concrete social tie matter and about 72% of those who never visited their relatives in the past two weeks are in the low exchangers' category. The corresponding proportion of those with 'thick' ties, visiting daily, is 55%. Those with daily visits are more likely to receive care and money, to exchange money and to be high exchanges compared to other, more weakly connected groups.

6.3. Multivariate analysis

Which of these factors best account for the presence of familial exchange? What is the relative merit of labor market disadvantage in explaining involvement in instrumental exchange relations? Do groups with different human capital and demographic characteristics exchange money, care and so on in similar ways? To address these questions, we turn to regression analysis.

The results of a multinomial regression model that includes all the above-mentioned factors are reported in Table 5. Both labor force activity and camp residence are the main independent variables indexing economic vulnerability, but the covariates include demographic composition, several socioeconomic factors as well as social ties. The model reveals how the probability of belonging to a particular exchange type (e.g., high exchangers) versus the likelihood of being in the low exchange category is affected by each independent variable included in the model.

Overall, the findings are remarkably similar to those reported by Hogan et al. (1993) study on inter-generational exchange in the American context. This is especially true with regard to the various control variables used in the models. Of particular importance however is the impact of economic vulnerability on familial exchange. The results show that persons in hardship are less likely to be involved in receiving instrumental help from their kin. The unemployed adults are more likely

Table 5
Multinomial logistic regression model of the structure of familial exchange

Independent variable	Odds ratios			
	High exchange versus low exchange	Money exchange versus low exchange	Receive money versus low exchange	Receive care versus low exchange
Labor force				
Inactive	0.81	0.50*	0.45*	1.12
Unemployed	1.18	0.60	0.65*	1.15
Employed	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Sex				
Male	1.66*	0.09*	0.92	0.22*
Female	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Age				
15–34	3.20	2.07	1.08	0.35*
35–44	2.50	0.96	1.06	0.19*
45–64	2.72	1.67	1.39	0.34*
65 and over	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Marital status				
Single	1.10	1.35	1.59	1.05
Married	1.40	2.97*	2.46*	1.35
Widowed/divorced	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Household type				
Loner	0.91	3.92*	0.94	3.12*
Nuclear	0.67	1.12	0.67*	0.96
Extended	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Education				
Less than elementary	0.84	0.51*	0.50*	0.61
Elementary	1.01	0.71	0.58*	1.03
Preparatory	1.13	0.94	0.88	0.84
Secondary and over	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Health status				
Bad	1.76	0.91	1.61*	0.74
Fair	1.29	0.88	1.21	0.73
Good	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Locality type				
Camp	1.85*	1.44*	1.50*	1.18
Community	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Distance to relatives				
Satisfactory	0.90	1.29	1.13	1.48*
Acceptable	1.42	0.90	0.80*	2.35*
Unsatisfactory	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Ties				
Daily visits	3.21*	3.51*	1.48*	2.08*
1–5 visits	1.23	1.73*	1.54*	0.98
No visits	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

* $P < .05$.

to be high exchangers and care receivers than the employed but the coefficients are not statistically significant. Unemployment and economic activity leads rather to less likelihood of exchanging or receiving money than the employed, controlling for the

effects of other variables. Although the connection between the two might be more complex than considered here, the findings seem robust.[3]

The pattern concerning gender is mixed. Males are significantly more likely than females to be high exchangers. As reported in the table, males are nearly 1.7 times more likely than females to fall in the high exchange category as opposed to the low exchange type. The category high exchange is really indexing reciprocal exchange in all items involved, and hence males tend to reciprocate as compared to females. Yet, males are significantly less likely than females to exchange money and receive household care net of other factors. It is not clear why women have higher likelihood of falling in the money exchange category than men, but the gender differential with regard to household care is easily interpretable. Household care is largely the domain of women in Arab society, and the reporting of household care by women indicate help received by the household as a whole rather than by women themselves. For some of the exchanges are exercised from within and by families.

Not surprisingly, younger persons are more likely to be exchangers, especially exchanges involving money, than older persons as noted above. However the reported odds ratios are not statistically significant. The only statistically significant finding is the one reported for household care where younger adults are less likely to be exchangers compared to the elderly. Likewise, household structure and marital status variables have the anticipated effects. The only significant differences across marital status categories are the greater likelihood that married persons will exchange and receive money, and the differences are large. A married person is 3 times more likely to exchange money and are about 2.5 times more likely to receive money compared to divorced or widowed persons.

Persons living alone are relatively old in age and hence are expected to be receivers of care. Indeed the results show that loners are more than three times more likely to receive household care compared to persons living in extended families. Less straightforward perhaps is the even greater likelihood of loners to exchange money than others—loners are nearly four times more likely to engage in money exchange than persons in living in extended household structures. Nor is it clear why adults in nuclear families are significantly less likely than their counterparts in extended households to receive money. One possible explanation for the found pattern is that nuclear households are economically better off and hence are less likely to be in need of monetary assistance than others.

The inverse relationship between education and patterns of familial exchange holds when controlling for other variables, and this is especially true with regard to monetary exchange. As shown clearly in the table, persons with incomplete elementary education are significantly less involved in money exchange or in receiving money compared to the secondary education.

[3] We have estimated additional models that include various interaction terms, but the findings pertaining to labor force behavior remain essentially unchanged. Results available upon request from the first author.

However, there is a lack of statistically significant differences among the groups in terms of their involvement in high, reciprocal, exchange and household care. Also, there is no significant difference between the more educated groups (preparatory and secondary) in their exchange behavior regardless of the exchange type. It remains however that education seems to play a role in furthering familial exchange, perhaps due to their vulnerability in the labor market as suggested above, or otherwise greater ability to manipulate their social resources for instrumental ends, or both.

Contrary to expectations, familial exchange is weakly related to health status. The only significant effect found is the one related to receiving money where the adults with ill-health are about 1.6 times more likely to receive money compared to those with good health. Surprisingly, families do not respond to ill health by providing their adult members with the needed care. One plausible explanation for this finding is that those with ill-health might be chronically ill, thus reducing their future exchange value in the 'field' of care giving. In other words, exchange motivations (or potential exchange) might be low for those with especially high needs,[4] and this is consistent with the reciprocal exchange perspective.

Consistent with previous findings and in line with theoretical expectation patterns of instrumental exchange are strongly related to the physical and social ties that adults forge with their kin members. Proximity to relatives seems to matter most in the case of household care. Adults living within a satisfactory distance to their relatives are about 1.5 times more likely to receive care than those with unsatisfactory distance. The association is even stronger (and equally significant) here for those who live within an acceptable distance to relatives and these are about 2.4 times more likely to receive care than their more isolated counterparts. However, residents with an acceptable distance to relatives are significantly less likely to receive money than the more isolated ones. This complementary picture of receiving money and care might have to do with the structure of neighboring among Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon, whereby a strong clustering of disadvantaged (and advantaged) persons is evident. Yet, the differences found between the groups with acceptable versus satisfactory distance to relatives is not that apparent and might have to do with measurement issues, particularly wording of the answer categories.

The influence of social ties is more consistent, and those who visit their relatives on a daily basis are likely to be exchangers across all the exchange types considered here. Daily visitors are about 3 times more likely to be high exchangers, 3.5 times more likely to exchange money, and about twice as likely to receive care or money when compared with non-visiting persons. Adults who are moderately engaged in visiting, 1–5 visits every two weeks, are significantly more likely to give or receive monetary assistance than the group with no such visiting habits. These findings are hardly surprising in the hyper social context of Arab society, where the family seems to figure highly in both the private and public spheres (see, Barakat, 1993).

[4] We thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion. In fact, the lack of 'potential' exchange might explain the more salient differences found for the effects of covariates across exchange types.

What is remarkable is the fact that our 'folks' apparently do not engage in familial social affairs for the sake of socialization but they do so for rather instrumental ends.

7. Conclusions

The main purpose of this study has been both to measure and explain patterns of familial exchange among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, using rather unique dataset. Our analysis has been informed by two alternative views of familial support—solidarity and reciprocal exchange—and focused on poorer refugees living in camps and (mainly squatter) gatherings where family support might be prevalent. We measured familial support by direct questions on receiving and giving financial as well as in-kind help from relatives. Our dependent variables are four distinct patterns of familial exchanges uncovered by Latent Class Analysis' technique. Although there is less inter-family support than expected from similar settings, we have nevertheless found clear differences in the patterns of exchange, and perhaps more importantly in the determinants of such patterns.

Our overall results concerning the determinants of family support largely confirm those reported by previous studies of inter-generational transfers in the American context; and this is striking. The old, loners, and those females heading households are high exchangers and receivers of care as expected. Social ties, as measured by visiting and residential proximity, are also crucial predictors of instrumental exchange relations regardless of type of exchange. However, the findings reported here are also surprising in that the unemployed and those excluded from labor market participation are less likely than the employed to exchange money or other valued goods. Similarly, the educated and those enjoying a healthy status are more likely to be high exchangers compared to their disadvantaged counterparts. These findings, and those pertaining to different patterns of exchange, lend support to a reciprocal exchange perspective at the expense of the solidarity account.

Evidently, the difficult economic situation of Palestinian camp refugees living in Lebanon does not put them in a solidarity-bound community with a common fate. Nor does the usual cultural argument about the uniqueness of Arab extended family in nurturing exchange seem to hold. While familial exchange is evident and varied, it only involves those who can reciprocate, leaving the disadvantaged with little option but to seek assistance from formal sources. One theoretical implication for these finding is that the reciprocal exchange account appear to square with reality, regardless of the context in question. The similarity of our findings pertaining to other salient determinants (e.g., social ties and distance) of familial help with those in previous studies in the American context also demonstrate the general nature of these factors—they can be generalized beyond specific, or otherwise idiosyncratic conditions.

Our findings have important practical implications. It is often argued that strong social ties (or more broadly, social capital) provide poor communities with valuable resources for common welfare. More recently, the World Bank and international aid organization have given great attention to the role of social capital in promoting economic growth and alleviating poverty, especially in the developing countries' context

(see, Woolcock, 1998). For, instrumental ties especially constitute important safety net for the poorest segments of these communities. Such views do not appear to square with reality, implying that external material resources as well as welfare assistance programs are needed to lift the poor out of economic hardship. While the extended family undoubtedly continues to play an important source of assistance for many segments of vulnerable household in contemporary society, its role is contingent on the availability of resources as well as on the propensity of individuals to provide future 'repayment' for the assistance received.

It should be pointed out, however, that our findings are based on a one-time cross-sectional survey data, and this is a major limitation of the study. Both the solidarity and exchange theoretical accounts are about highly dynamic process, often involving a multiplicity of actors engaged in a web of exchanges in flux. Some of the other relevant factors included in the models, particularly social ties, distance to family members and demographics are also subject to change in a relatively short span of time. Furthermore, the study relies on actual support received and given at the time of the survey with no information on potential exchange if need arises. Future research should aim at tracking both actual and potential exchanges as well as socio-economic fortunes of camp dwellers over time if we are to achieve a fuller understanding of the issues addressed here.

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