NEW ISSUES IN REFUGEE RESEARCH

Between homes:
post-war return, emplacement
and the negotiation of belonging in Lebanon

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

 In West Beirut, Rafin T. runs a small beauty salon. On the façade, a sign states that the owner received her training in Germany. Therefore the salon is a bit more expensive than other salons, and customers have to make appointments before they come, something the local women find somewhat strange. Perhaps this is the reason why most of them come too late for their appointments anyway. Nevertheless, Rafin insists on running her salon as she would have done in Germany. This was the way she was taught to do it, and this is the routine with which she feels most comfortable.[1]

Rafin is a 40-year-old mother of two children. She and her family returned from Germany to Lebanon in 1997. They initially fled southern Lebanon to Beirut after the Israeli invasion in 1982. Yet, the civil war continued, and Rafin's family joined their fellow villagers in the Lebanese business community in Congo. They became merchants and had established themselves well, when the 1990 civil war in Congo broke out. Not wanting to go back to Lebanon, Rafin brought her two children with her to Germany. There she learnt German and received her training as a beautician while the children went to school. In spite of their efforts, the family never received a residence permit, and at some point they decided to return to Beirut, instead of living in limbo in Germany.

Having been able to make her own German place in Beirut, Rafin is quite satisfied with the return. The arrival was a struggle, but she thinks that she has integrated well into Lebanese society. In general, she feels at home because she has her closest family around her[2], she can practice her religion, and she is able to teach her children about their cultural background. Although they go to the German school, Rafin is convinced that life in Lebanon will strengthen their Arab roots. Moreover, she is much more satisfied being a self-reliant businesswoman in Lebanon than being a state-dependent asylum seeker in Germany. Yet, there are also times when Rafin questions whether she really belongs in Lebanon.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the issue of post-war return migration. More specifically, I will examine how returnees construct and negotiate different forms of home and belonging after post-war return from Germany and Scandinavia[3] to Lebanon. Rafin's story illustrates some of the main themes that I will discuss. It points to the continued importance of life abroad in the making and understanding of life in Lebanon, and it stresses the necessity of negotiating cultural practices with the local social surroundings. Also, it shows how migration during the war was carried

[2] Although six of her nine siblings live abroad.
[3] Scandinavia is here delimited to Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. I did not meet any returnees who had lived in Finland or Iceland.

out within a previously established tradition of movement. Most importantly, it illustrates that the challenge of post-war return essentially is about claiming a place of one's own – within local society or at a more abstract level. During my fieldwork in Beirut, I found that many of the returnees' stories and practices centred on reconciling a sense of belonging to multiple places with the everyday life in Beirut. On the one hand, many returnees, like Rafin, had managed to establish a well-functioning daily life in Lebanon. On the other hand, although they had lived in Beirut for at least two years, they still frequently shifted between having a sense of belonging and not-belonging. Likewise, they continued to compare former and present life situations and former and present places of residence. In this way, I found that returnees were always involved in processes of emplacement, i.e. through stories and practice they actively tried to create relations to places where they could belong. In this way, they constructed and negotiated different notions of home.

Surprisingly, the issue of emplacement has tended to be underplayed in studies of post-war return. These often focus on the immediate return situation and thereby overlook the creative process of homemaking that takes place in the everyday life to follow once returnees have passed the initial process of settlement.[4] However, in the long-term perspective, the everyday life actually strongly affects how returnees experience their return (cf. Hammond 2000:282).

Against this background, I will discuss the construction and negotiation of home and belonging as it takes place in the daily life of Lebanese citizens who spent between one and two decades abroad, but have now lived for at least a couple of years in Lebanon. More specifically, I will examine how the material, social, and cultural contexts of everyday life affect the process of constructing and negotiating different forms of home and belonging. A sub-question to this focus concerns how the returnees' transnational relations constitute part of the context of everyday life. Although I do discuss the initial return situation, my main focus lies on the returnees' present day experience of life in Lebanon.[5] Nevertheless, it will become apparent that previous experiences and life abroad still play an important role in everyday life.

The paper attempts to make several contributions to the study of post-war return. First of all, by focusing on individual returns taking place some 5-10 years after the end of the Lebanese civil war, the paper departs from the main trend of repatriation studies, which tend to treat the organized mass-repatriation in the immediate aftermath of conflict. Secondly, by focusing on what actually happens when people return to their post-war country of origin after having lived for many years abroad, it responds to the need for documentation of the experiences of post-war returnees themselves (cf. Cornish et al. 1999). Furthermore, the movement that I examine was carried out in the interface between forced and voluntary migration. In this way, the paper may provide a different angle on the issue of post-war return, as well as contributing to the recent trend in migration studies, where the analytical distinction between forced and voluntary migration is being increasingly abandoned. Finally, in addition to its analytical relevance, the paper fills an empirical void. To my knowledge, there are no English-language studies of post-war return migration to Lebanon. In fact, only few

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[4] A notable exception is Hammond 2000.
[5] Since the people I interviewed returned to Lebanon up to 8 years ago, my knowledge of the immediate return situations is only based on the returnees' stories about their experiences. In contrast, my knowledge of their present life is also based on participant observation.

studies have examined the effect of return migration on Lebanese society (Khater 2001, Hourani 1992). In general, studies of migration have tended to focus on how immigrants draw on resources from and memories of their 'homeland', but seldom on how returnees draw on their experiences from abroad once they are back in their country of origin. In order to include this focus in my discussion, I have chosen an analytical approach that draws on points from studies of repatriation, migration, and placemaking. In the following pages I will discuss the analytical framework of the paper, starting out with a discussion of the issue of post-war return.

Approaching the notion of home after post-war return

The issue of post-war return gained increasing attention in the last decade of the 20th century. During the Cold War, many refugees escaped from the so-called communist countries, obtained asylum in the West, and were expected to face a lasting settlement in a new country. Thus, until the end of the 1980s, most studies on forced migration focused on the assimilation and integration of refugees into new societies or on the perceived uprootedness that such movement implied (Malkki 1995a). 'Home' tended to be associated with a homeland, but the attachment to this home was either not discussed, or home simply figured as a place to which the migrant was expected to want to return (for example, see Marrus 1985).

Since the end of the Cold War, the global pattern of warfare has changed and so has the willingness of Western states to grant asylum. Before 1989, refugees in general escaped from one ideological regime to another, and it was in the interest of states to incorporate citizens from the other bloc (cf. Kibreab 1999:388). In contrast, during recent years, there has been an increase in discourses on national identity and cultural difference, and today's refugee discourses rather focus on national membership and the difficulties in integrating foreigners. Thus, post-war return and repatriation[6] have emerged as politically attractive and possible solutions to refugee movements. In fact, repatriation as a policy has become the most preferred durable solution to the 'refugee problem' and in 1992, the then UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, named the 1990s "a decade for voluntary repatriation" (Allen & Morsink 1994:1).

There have been relatively few studies of post-war return. The studies that exist argue that repatriation does not signify the "end of the refugee cycle" (Black & Koser 1999). Rather than constituting the final homecoming after a long journey, post-war return is the beginning of a new and protracted process of reintegration (Rogge 1994, Hammond 1999, Cornish et al. 1999). The 'home' that refugees left no longer exists, because places, social relations, and culture have changed with conflict and time (Warner 1994, Stepputat 1999, Ranger 1994). Indeed, the notion of a return to a static home in itself denies temporal reality and change (Warner 1994:171). This is underlined by the fact that due to processes of internal displacement, many people who return to their country of origin cannot necessarily return to their former localities. Moreover, the people who escaped the war have themselves had new experiences during their life abroad, and their own change becomes visible upon return (Dahlbäck 1998:218, Stefansson 2000a:52). Consequently, they do not

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[6] I make a distinction between post-war return and repatriation. The latter defines the voluntary, but *organized* return of *refugees* to their country of origin. Post-war return refers to the individual return of people who can be both refugees and other migrants.

necessarily wish to return to their former way of life (Hammond 1999:235, Cornish et al. 1999:266). All in all, one cannot assume a clear continuity between leaving home – being away – coming home.

This conclusion stands in contrast to public and political discourses on repatriation which emphasize the natural and evident continuity of post-war return or repatriation. As has been pointed out by many studies, the ideology of repatriation seems to be based on implicit political and cultural perceptions of a natural link between people, identity, and territory (e.g. Stepputat 1994:176, Warner 1994, Ranger 1994). A person's identity is seen as intimately connected with his home, his land, his culture, and his nation(-state), all factors that together constitute 'the homeland', or, the fatherland, the 'patria'.[7]

The perception that the world is made up of distinct places, each with their culture, people, and language, has at least two implications for the approach to post-war return. First of all, the concept of 'country of origin' is conflated with a notion of 'home', thereby neglecting the difficulties of post-war return in favour of unquestioned positive associations. Secondly, in the "national order of things" where people belong in a particular homeland, those who are forced to leave their nation state are seen as 'uprooted' and stripped of identity (Malkki 1995b, 1992:25ff). People are perceived as linked to a place which often is equated with the nation, and belonging to more than one place, or one nation, is not possible. This kind of thinking not only takes for granted the importance of the nation-state in individual experience, but is also based on a sedentary understanding of life (Malkki 1992). However, as Malkki has also noted, many people and refugees themselves maintain such perceptions of being rooted or uprooted, of belonging to a place and having a particular cultural identity (cf. 1992:56, Schwartz 1997:258). Many studies of refugee populations have been concerned with diasporas' preoccupation with the homeland, or individuals' dream of home and return (cf. Tölölyan 1996, Cohen 1997, Stefansson 1997). Thus we are left with a collection of contradictions between policies and practices, dreams and realities, discourses and lived life.

Conceptual approach

It is within this complex field of notions of home, place, and belonging that this paper takes its starting point. I am inspired by the insights from studies of repatriation that post-war return does not imply 'coming home'. However, with few exceptions, studies of repatriation have not examined what home actually means. It is argued that the existence of home cannot be taken for granted, but at the same time discussion is limited regarding what 'home' was or meant to the returnees who have now supposedly lost their home. Likewise, it is striking that almost no post-repatriation studies attempt to examine how new forms of home and belonging may be created after return. This study is an attempt to provide knowledge on this topic. In the present approach, this implies examining not only how returnees enter the local community, but also how they maintain relations to their other place of residence abroad. As

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[7] As commented by Ranger, the notion of 'patria' "implies that an individual's primary identity, rights, and obligations derive from membership of a 'nation'. The nation encapsulates 'home' in terms of language, culture, rights to citizenship and land" (1994:289). The word re-patria-tion thus not only carries the connotation of return to the fatherland, but also to the 'home'.

shown in many studies of transnational migration, transmigrants establish social fields across borders, within which they maintain social and economic ties between their different places of residence (Glick-Schiller et al. 1995, 1992). In the development and sustaining of transnational economic, social and familial relations, migrants may develop multiple identities and feelings of belonging to communities within both the country of origin and the country of residence (Sørensen 1994).

While there has been a tendency to study such ties from the point of view of the immigrant, this paper will argue that return migrants maintain similar transnational relations, however only from the place to which they have 'returned'. In fact, the return experience is greatly affected by the experiences of and continuing ties with life abroad. Not only do social and economic connections abroad continue to be an important part of people's everyday lives, but also experiences of return and reintegration in local society are negotiated and narrated in a continuous comparison with previous experiences abroad.

The fact that return migrants maintain strong ties to their other place(s) of residence necessitates a critical attitude to the concept of return. When used in an unreflective manner, the notion of return implies both that a person comes back to something familiar and that this movement is final (Hammond 1999:230). I wish to underline that my use of the terms 'return migration' and 'returnees' does not imply an understanding of the described migration as the second part of a two-way movement. Instead, return here signifies one leg of a potentially on-going migration. Likewise, my usage of the concept 'returnees' does not imply that I believe that these people intend to remain permanently in Lebanon. In fact, my data show that even when people do not have an immediate or real possibility of renewed departure, they tend to nourish the idea that one day they may possibly leave Lebanon again. In this way, the term 're-migration' may be a more appropriate label for the kind of mobility studied here (cf. Peleikis 1998).

By using 'return' I wish to imply that people nevertheless arrive at a place where they have lived before, although this place has changed in many ways. The catch of post-war return is exactly that people go to *a new place which they already know* (Warner 1994:172). Moreover, the term 'les returnees' is used in Lebanon to denote the people who have returned since the civil war – either from another country or, as internally displaced, to their village of origin.

My decision to conceptualize the re-migration to Lebanon as return rather than repatriation opens up a discussion of the distinction between refugees and migrants. Conventional migration studies have tended to categorize movement into voluntary or involuntary migration. The differentiation between migrants and refugees is based on people's motivation to move (Stepputat & Sørensen 1999:85). In the country of arrival, the distinction furthermore denotes the person's legal status (cf. Koser 1997), while the popular use of the term 'refugee' reflects society's perception of a group of immigrants. However, the distinction does not necessarily correspond with the 'movers' (Stepputat & Sørensen 1999) own self-definitions, nor is the status of migrants necessarily constant. All movement involves degrees of choice and coercion, and 'movers' may change from being refugees to being migrants or vice versa over time (Van Hear 1998:41f). Therefore, more and more studies question the strong separation between forced and voluntary migration that has been maintained within

the social sciences (Olwig & Sørensen 2002, Al-Ali & Koser 2002, Stepputat & Sørensen 1999). This point is particularly relevant in the case of civil war, where it is difficult to distinguish between different motivations for departure and where the degree of coercion may vary. It is therefore my argument that in the present study, the distinction between refugees and migrants does not serve an analytical purpose. Consequently, I have chosen to consider the people treated in this paper as migrants.[8]

This terminology is in keeping with the common perception in Lebanese society, where those who left during the war are generally considered migrants. However, the circumstances surrounding a person's departure influence their return, as well as affecting their relationship to their country of origin while they live abroad (cf. Kibreab 1999).[9] While I therefore acknowledge that the migration discussed here took place within a context of war, the point is that, instead of simply assuming the importance of this context, how the return is impacted by the fact that the out-migration took place during a civil war needs to be examined. Different aspects of this topic are discussed in Chapter 4.

Place and mobility

The arguments presented in studies of repatriation build on changed notions of place and culture. Leaving behind previous perceptions of place and culture as static, homogeneous and congruent entities, anthropology today has shifted towards emphasizing the fluidity and continuous remaking of these notions. Place and culture are seen as dynamic constructs that are historically produced in social, economic, and political processes (Gupta & Ferguson 1997a, Liep & Olwig 1994, Hastrup & Olwig 1997). This implies that places are continuously attributed with meaning. We practise them, we narrate them, and we live them, thus constructing their meaning through social interaction over time.[10] In this way, places are negotiated and different actors contest their identity within specific relations of power.

The analytical shift from focusing on cultural essence to examining processes and practices of placemaking (Gupta & Ferguson 1997a:6) implies an increased awareness of the interconnectedness of places. Doreen Massey suggests conceptualizing place as formed out of the particular set of social relations which intersect in a particular location (1994:168). In addition to highlighting the shifting identity of places, this definition captures well the fact that, while place is constructed through everyday practices, such practices are not necessarily local (cf. Smith 2001). The everyday

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[8]This argument is supported by the observations of Khalid Koser (1993). In a discussion of self-repatriation (also known as spontaneous repatriation), Koser writes that while there are many differences between a 'classic' refugee and a migrant, in the case of self-repatriation, a repatriate can be viewed as a return migrant (1993:173). The defining factor is whether or not a person is able to plan his return.

[9] It is my impression that the people who left Lebanon due to personal persecution have not returned.

[10] The distinction between place as physical entity and place as a social construct is invoked in Michel de Certeau's distinction between place and space (1984). According to de Certeau, a space is created when a physical place is used and given meaning. Thus "space is a practised place" (1994:117). However, I do not apply de Certeau's distinction between place and space, because in my definition, 'place' implies more than a purely physical location. Moreover, when de Certeau discusses practising place as for example the everyday physical actions (e.g. walking the street) and the telling of stories, he focuses on *local* practices. However, as I argue above, everyday practices are not necessarily local.

practices of individuals in a particular place may well extend far beyond that place, and the context defining those practices may well be set by factors, structures or social relations outside that place. Likewise, leaving the physical place does not necessarily imply leaving the social field. Arjun Appadurai exemplifies this in his concept of the 'virtual neighbourhood' (1995).

According to Appadurai, neighbourhoods are "life-worlds constituted by relatively stable associations, by relatively known and shared histories, and by collectively traversed and legible spaces and places" (ibid.215). Due to modern communications technology, it is today possible to speak of both lived (spatial) neighbourhoods and 'virtual neighbourhoods' that transcend territories and borders. People may be situated in one part of the world and actively engage in practicing place in another part. While such virtual neighbourhoods differ from lived neighbourhoods in their lack of immediacy, they are still able to "mobilize ideas, opinions, monies and social linkages that flow back into the lived neighbourhoods" (ibid.219).

The concept of the virtual neighbourhood is a good tool to illustrate that the social relations that extend between places often function independently of formal structures. Relations of marriage/family, work, business, and leisure cross national borders, thereby transcending the nation state. In this way, it is shown that while places may have a formal identity (for example as villages, as cities or as nation-states), they are not necessarily practised as such. Therefore it is important that places are treated not only as the formal administrative unit which they may also be (in particular, perhaps, the nation-state), but also as the social fields that are practised in daily life (Olwig & Sørensen 2002:9).

As will be shown in Chapter 2, rather than being practised as a unified nation, Lebanon exists as the nodal point of networks extending around the world. As Peleikis comments, for villagers in South Lebanon, Abidjan (Ivory Coast) is mentally much closer than Beirut (1998:78). However, this does not imply that people do not at the same time consider themselves as being Lebanese, thereby relating themselves to the nation-state. In this way we see that the nation state figures in people's identification, although it does not necessarily impact their everyday lives.

The notion of home

In this paper, I study placemaking from the perspective of how returnees construct home and belonging in the experience of post-war return. The concept of homemaking challenges the assumption that home is fixed and static. Home has tended to be conceived as "the stable physical centre of one's universe (whether house, village, region, or nation), and a principal focus of one's concern and control" (Rapport & Dawson 1998a:6). Although home is always relative to its context (the non-home) it is defined as a place to leave and return to (1998b:27).[11] In contrast, I argue that 'home' may be multi-sited, and the notion of home may – over time or

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[11] In many cases, the notion of home is directly equated with the house or the dwelling. Studies focus on the way dwellings are constructed, used, and given meaning as home (see Douglas 1991, Layne 1994:79ff, Ingold 1995, Herzfeld 1994:130ff).

simultaneously – have many different meanings for any one person.[12] The evolution of the notion of home after repatriation is illustrated in Laura Hammond's study of a Tigrayan returnee settlement in Ethiopia (2000). Having followed the settlement over several years, Hammond shows that while the 'returnees' initially had no relation to the area to which they were brought, over time they developed a relationship to the place and accordingly a sense of home. The process of transforming an unfamiliar physical space into a personalized, social place, Hammond terms 'emplacement' (2000:9). She shows how emplacement is carried out initially through the securing of a material base of living and the creation of routines of daily life, and later also through community formation and the development of other kinds of attachment to the place. However, the Tigrayan returnees originally came from the highlands and were returned to the lowlands, where they encountered a completely empty space in which they had to form a new settlement.

Due to this fact, Hammond's study concerns a very particular case that highlights how the physical place becomes inhabited. Most other times, as in the Lebanese case, return takes place into an already existing social context where the room to manoeuvre may not be as wide. Against this background, I have chosen to study emplacement by combining a focus on the returnees' construction of a material base of living with a discussion of how returnees negotiate different notions of home and belonging within private and public social spheres.

As a concept, the notion of home was not something that I discussed extensively with the returnees. Rather than being verbalized, home was something that was enacted. In this sense, I use the concept of 'home' as an analytical concept that covers the issues concerning belonging that I discussed and observed with the returnees. More specifically, in the analysis I focus on three different meanings of home that appeared as particularly significant. These three meanings are, firstly, home as a personal space of identification, secondly, home as "a nodal point of social relations" (Olwig 1998:236), and, thirdly, home as a physical place that exists within specific material and economic conditions. Regarding home as a personal space of identification, Rapport and Dawson write:

> Being 'at home' and being 'homeless' are not matters of
> movement, of physical place, or of the fluidity of socio-
> cultural times and places, as such. One is at home when one
> inhabits a cognitive environment in which one can undertake
> the routines of daily life and through which one finds one's
> identity best mediated – and homeless when such a cognitive
> environment is eschewed (1998a:10).

This implies that home is found in actions and narrations rather than in physical placement. It is found in "a routine set of practices, a repetition of habitual interaction, in styles of dress and address, in memories and myths, in stories carried around in

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[12] In a study of young people returning from Zambia to Malawi, Cornish et al. writes that for the returnees "saying Zambia was home did not necessarily preclude saying at another time that Malawi was home" (1999:277). Whereas this makes the authors conclude that "the notion of 'home' was somewhat confused" (ibid.277), I would argue that it precisely shows how home may have different meanings for the same person. It is very likely that Zambia and Malawi provided the young people with different kinds of homes.

one's head" (Berger in Rapport & Dawson 1998a:7). This approach highlights the individual's sense of belonging and allows for a conceptualization of home in which home is plurilocal and may be "brought along" to different places. It furthermore highlights that being at home is about being unselfconscious, about having the possibility of carrying out one's daily life in a familiar way. To capture these considerations, Rapport & Dawson suggest a working definition of home as "the environment in which one best knows oneself" (1998b:21).

Rapport & Dawson's approach is very applicable in a migration study, because it incorporates mobility into the concept of home. However, narrowing the feeling of 'home' and belonging to a question of individual identity is to ignore other factors. Like identity, home is necessarily constructed within a particular social field (cf. Olwig 1998). For instance, the experience of returning to Lebanon is not an experience shaped by returnees alone. As argued by Jackson, experience is situated "*within* relationships and *between* persons" (1996:26). In other words, notions of home and belonging are mediated in intersubjective relationships (Armbruster 2002). Home is not only constructed in a dialogue with other actors, it is also contested and constructed within a social context of power relations.

The point is that individuals are not necessarily free to construct home according to their own will, they must act within certain constraints, and constructing home thus also demands a certain amount of personal resources (Olwig 1998:232). Not everyone is free to define his or her own space. This brings forward the crucial point that home is not necessarily to be considered a "happy place" (Rapport & Dawson 1998a:9, Olwig 1998:230). It is therefore important to question the common conception of home as a site of ultimate and unquestioned belonging. Instead, in this paper it will become apparent that issues of home and belonging evolve around processes of inclusion and exclusion (Armbruster 2002, Brah 1996). As argued by Brah, "[home] is centrally about our political and personal struggles over the social regulations of 'belonging'" (1996:192).

Finally, while home may be a negotiated socio-cultural construct, it cannot be separated completely from physical places. The possibility of constructing home is affected by physical conditions of existence, material possibilities, and the economic situation of that place. In addition, as noted by Kibreab, in certain societies identity does indeed derive from a livelihood closely related to territory (1999:387).[13] Home may thereby be seen as related to place, because place provides resources, rights and livelihood routines. Likewise, home may be related to place in the sense that it may be associated with a particular physical environment. Some of my informants, for instance, mentioned that the view of the sea or the land in Lebanon was part of their association with home. In this sense, place is often the repository of actions, narrations, and feelings of belonging.

The different meanings of home are exemplified in the case of Rafin, who was introduced at the beginning of this chapter. She makes her own personal space of identification by incorporating different routines and cultural habits into her daily life, but she nevertheless has to negotiate this space with her customers. They make appointments, but come late, and she accepts that. At the same time, her family

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[13] Kibreab's argument is based on studies in East Africa.

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provides the context for a social home. Finally, Rafin lives in a particular locality, which impacts her present daily life. She has experienced different life conditions according to whether she lived in Lebanon, Congo, or Germany. In this way, the analytical distinction between the three different meanings of home can be used to tie the abstract notion of homemaking to specific everyday practices and experiences. However, while the different meanings of home may analytically be separated, in reality they overlap. As will become apparent in the following chapters, the meanings of home as a physical and material place, a social construct, and a space of identification cannot be understood in isolation from one another.

In sum, I study the construction and negotiation of home and belonging after post-war return by focussing on processes of emplacement. In my definition, place is more than a physical entity, it is also a social construct. In order to incorporate a focus on the translocal and transnational relations[14] that are part of returnees' construction of belonging, I draw on points from studies of migration. In my analytical discussion of home, I have distinguished between three different meanings of home that concern respectively a personal space of identification, social relations, and physical and material conditions of life. Since they are empirically closely interrelated, in the following chapters these three meanings of home will not be treated separately. Nevertheless, they constitute the basis for my analysis.

Outline of the paper

In the remaining part of this chapter, I will discuss my fieldwork and methodology. In order to set the context for the study, Chapter 2 provides the reader with an introduction to Lebanese society, migration, and post-war return. In addition to providing the reader with knowledge about the political and economic contexts of present-day society, I apply my analytical framework regarding place and movement on the case of Lebanese migration. The analysis of my own data starts in Chapter 3 which focuses on material and social meanings of home. I discuss the process of emplacement by presenting different examples of return and examining the returnees' use of local and transnational resources in the establishing of an everyday life. Moreover, I discuss how the political and economic conditions of the Lebanese state impact returnees' sense of belonging and the extent to which they maintain transnational relations to their other place of residence. Hence, Chapter 3 serves as the basis for the discussion in Chapter 4, where the focus moves from material conditions to the personal and social constructions of home and belonging. Emplacement is here discussed as a process of identification.

After examining a case that illustrates the dynamics of emplacement and belonging, I analyze the social spheres in which returnees negotiate belonging. In particular, I

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[14] Throughout the paper, I use both the terms 'transnational' and 'translocal'. In the recent years, the term transnationalism has been criticized for being too vague and imprecise (e.g. Olwig & Sørensen 2002:2). Moreover, the term suggests that the nation and the crossing of national borders have a larger significance in the movement of migrants than may actually be the case (Olwig 1997b:115). For this reason, I make a distinction where I use 'transnational relations' to refer to formal or public relations to a nation state (e.g. citizenship), and 'translocal relations' to refer to relations between people or places that function independently of the nation state. However, in cases where I refer to both meanings I use the term transnational. When referring to arguments from other studies I use the term that they use.

discuss how the historical contexts of the civil war and the tradition of migration affect social relations after post-war return. Thus, whereas the first part of the chapter focuses on emplacement as a translocal event, the second part of the chapter analyzes the negotiation of cultural practices and belonging within the local society. Finally, in Chapter 5 I present my conclusions and further perspectives regarding the study of post-war return migration.

Fieldwork: informants and methodological approach

The fieldwork was carried out in Beirut over a period of 7 months (September 2000-April 2001). I interviewed 22 returned individuals or families, but my main informants consisted of a group of 10 cases.[15] The main informants all returned to Lebanon from Scandinavia and Germany within the last 8 years, after spending between 8 and 21 years abroad. They were 35-60 years old, and with one exception they belonged to the middle class, broadly defined. Some lived in only one country outside Lebanon, others lived in several. Although they had varied reasons for their emigration, they all left Lebanon during the war period (as single men or with their families), either in the early war years of 1975-76, or in the late 1980s. Some became asylum seekers, others had student, work, or residence permits and, when possible, became citizens in their new country of residence.[16] Now they live in Beirut or in the near vicinity of the city.

The decision to return is often based on an interplay of factors. Apart from the forced return of those returnees who were denied asylum in Germany, there are two main reasons for the decision to come back. A number of people returned mainly in relation to a job. These returnees often either studied or worked abroad and returned quite independently of their former social relations in Lebanon. In general they had distanced themselves from the kinship ties that are otherwise very strong in Lebanese society. Another group of people came back to join their families and they were often dependent on relatives for access to resources and the establishing of a social network.

However, the motivations for return coincide. For instance, some people returned to a prominent position in the family business and thus combined the return to the family with career advancement. Moreover, motivations such as wanting to take care of elderly parents or even having been persuaded by the family to return were not uncommon. Finally, a large number of the people with whom I spoke made the decision to return partly because of dissatisfaction with life in their other place of residence. Maybe they could not get a job, maybe they experienced discrimination, or maybe they came in financial or personal difficulties. Some said that they did not "feel at home".

Whatever the reasons for the return, it is important that this return is not assumed to be permanent. A few people openly stated that they only returned in order to have the advantage of a low-taxed income for some years, before they were to depart again. Other returnees still had houses and close family in their other country of residence,

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[15] One returnee household is defined as one case. Thus, a case either consists of a single person or a family.

[16] This did not mean that they lost their Lebanese nationality, because Lebanon accepts dual citizenship.

and they frequently travelled back and forth between the two places. Yet others just maintained the idea that one day they would probably leave Lebanon again.

The field

Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson have pointed out that even though anthropology has moved away from the notion of the local as a bounded entity, to a large extent it is still based on a methodology (fieldwork) where the idea of the local (the field) is taken for granted (1997b:4). Therefore, it is necessary to redefine the concept of the field from referring to a place to referring to social, cultural and political *location* (ibid.5). In relation to my fieldwork, this observation is very pertinent. The common denominator of the people I interviewed is not that they live in Beirut, but that they have participated in post-war return migration.

Although the majority of my informants live in the same city, most of them have nothing to do with each other. Since I chose only to interview people who had returned from Scandinavia and Germany, the delimitation of my field is based on people's experiences abroad, rather than on their life situation in Lebanon. I chose to maintain a geographical distinction because I wanted my informants to have had fairly similar experiences in terms of the practices and immigration laws that they encountered in their country of exile.[17] Although this methodological choice allows for an interesting comparison of experiences of movement, it also implies that my field is very heterogeneous and that I have not been able, for example, to make a community study. Consequently, my paper is not concerned with collective constructions of notions of home and belonging. Instead, I have chosen to focus on the local and transnational social relations that were of significance to the people I studied (cf. Hastrup & Olwig 1997).

During my fieldwork a Lebanese friend argued that one cannot study return to 'Lebanon' as such, because the country is so fragmented that people do not return to the country, but to their own family or ethno-religious group in a particular location. Therefore one should choose to study the return of a particular socio-religious group in society. However, I have chosen to interview people from different religious denominations (Sunni and Shia Muslims, Greek Orthodox and Maronite Christians), and my informants also generally live very different lives.

I have done so, because even though people do in fact return to a specific ethno-religious community, I find that while these communities may be different, the returnees go through similar processes of re-integration. To put it simply, whether being Christian or Muslim, people re-integrate through their family or a job, and they experience many of the same difficulties. The difference in return experiences is due to a combination of factors such as e.g. age, class, social network, *and* religion rather than to religion alone.[18] I therefore find it important to balance the categorization of

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[17] When I embarked on the fieldwork I expected that my informants would have had refugee status abroad, and it would therefore make a difference in which countries they had asylum.

[18] Religion was given most importance by female practising Muslims. For them, the return facilitated public social life in relation to the display of religious identification. They were relieved that they could carry a scarf without feeling stigmatized and hence expressed a sense of belonging in a Muslim society.

people into religious groups which is otherwise so dominant in Lebanon (cf. Schwartz 1997:265).

Due to my geographical delimitation, meeting returnees was not as easy as it would otherwise have been. I gained access to returnees through various channels, but the important tool of the 'snowball method' was not as effective as expected. To my surprise, very few of my first informants knew other returnees from the same country, and there were no networks between people who had returned from the same country. Being a returnee from a particular country was, in itself, not enough for people to establish relations if they did not know each other from before. Moreover, the returnees from Scandinavia and Germany were not in any way organized[19], whereas returnees from for instance France or the United States have more possibilities of participating in 'returnee gatherings', due to the strong French and United States-related communities in Lebanon. The (un-expected) lacking returnee network is therefore also one reason why the community focus has been downplayed in this paper.

Methodology

The fieldwork was carried out with the use of semi-structured interviews, conversations, life history interviews, participant observation, and a small questionnaire survey. All the main informants were interviewed at least three times. When possible, I started the first interview with asking for the person's life story, because I wanted to gain information about the person's background and migration experience. In this way, I used life story interviews as an entrance point to a returnee's story, not as a method of data collection once the relationship had been established.[20] As Olwig writes, the life story is important in the context of movement, because:

> Stories allow, indeed require, persons to define and explicate
> to others their own fields of belonging and identification and
> how these fields are articulated with the socio-cultural and
> physical boundaries which they experience in their everyday
> lives (Olwig 1999:29).

As a methodological tool, the life story thus encompasses the mobility that was part of returnees' construction of home and belonging. In the present case, it soon proved impossible to discuss the return without also discussing the informant's previous life in Lebanon and, especially, abroad. However, while I attempted to incorporate a longer time perspective into the interviews, it is clear that the related narratives told the most about the returnees' present day lives. The stories about the past must be

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One younger woman appreciated that she no longer had to negotiate between her own life style and the life style of young Swedes at the same age.

[19] Actually, the German Goethe Institute has an "Absolventen Club" [Alumni Association] that arranges bi-annual events for people who studied in Germany. However, many of the members only lived there for one or two years, and obviously people who sought asylum or worked in Germany do not participate in the events.

[20] There has been discussion whether it is useful to carry out life story interviews before the anthropologist has established a rapport with the person to be interviewed (Langness & Frank 1981:39, Crapanzano 1984, Olwig 1999:29).

seen to reflect the life conditions of the present and, not least, the perceptions of the future (Bruner 1986:141f).

During the fieldwork, I gave much importance to narratives because arranging an interview often became the main method to gain access to returnees. In the beginning, as there was no particular place to meet returnees, it was difficult for me to just 'hang out' and observe returnee life. However, in the subsequent period of analysis, the participant observation that I had nevertheless carried out gained a much larger role than I had expected. It turned out that it was in participant observation that I had received most information about the social field in which returnees interacted and negotiated their belonging (as will be further discussed in Chapter 4). In addition, my visits in people's homes and at their work places gave me an impression of the more material aspects of their living situation (to be discussed in Chapter 3).

It was also during these visits that I accidentally overheard a telephone call from Germany, noticed Norwegian artefacts or borrowed a Swedish book. Finally, I became involved with the local German speaking church, Die Evangelische Gemeinde. They were attempting to establish a network and a youth group for German speaking returnees (mainly aimed at rejected asylum seekers with bad living conditions in Lebanon). Unfortunately their attempt encountered many difficulties and the meetings eventually stopped. Nevertheless, I participated as much as possible in their activities.

In the middle of the fieldwork, I chose to return to Denmark for a one-month break. Upon my return to Beirut, I found that my relationships with returnees had become closer. As pointed out by both Anne Knudsen (1995) and H. Russell Bernhard (1995), the action of leaving and returning to the field confirms to the informants that the anthropologist is not only an interested observer, but also someone committed to maintaining social relations. In this respect, I was received like an old acquaintance that was part of the social setting. Furthermore, my situation – being in-between two countries – was the same as that of some of my informants who often travel between northern Europe and Lebanon, and we spent much time comparing "here" and "there". Moreover, upon my return, I moved into a building where some of my informants lived. They owned a four-storey house and on the different floors the six brothers and sisters lived with their families. The rest of the apartments were rented out. This move incorporated me into Lebanese family life, and it also increased my involvement with 'stayees'.[21]

The context for interaction in both interviews and participant observation is set by the issue of language. With the people I interviewed, I spoke in Danish, English, German and in one instance, French.[22] In the interaction with my informants, my limited knowledge of Arabic was therefore not a problem. However, in group situations, people often switched into speaking Arabic, and I therefore missed the opportunity to follow the conversation in detail. The fact that my informants spoke different languages furthermore prevented me from a more extensive comparison of the concepts and expressions used. Nevertheless, the persons I interviewed generally

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[21] I use the term 'stayees' to denote the people who did not leave Lebanon (for a longer period) during the war.

[22] When I quote returnees who spoke another language than English, I inform the reader from which language the quote is translated.

enjoyed speaking their other language with me, and this often served to create a positive atmosphere. Moreover, this aspect of our relationship contributed in positioning me in the social field.

The anthropologist in the field

Today it is an evident fact that the anthropologist's own identity affects the process of data collection (Steffen 1995, Knudsen 1995:21, Langness & Frank 1981:35). In terms of my mobility in Lebanese society, I benefited from my identity as a white, European female. Being a European, I could access almost any public place, and I could move within many spheres of society. In many situations, I would have been questioned, had I been a Lebanese student or a foreigner from a developing country. Even though some people in Lebanon have learned to be very suspicious of others, I believe that my identity as a woman in political terms made me appear less threatening.

In relation to my informants I was always both an outsider and an insider. On the one hand, I was an outsider because I came from Denmark and I had a different life style than most people in Lebanese society. I was a married woman living alone and far away from her partner, and the fact that I have no children often positioned me as something in-between a child and an adult. On the other hand, for many of the returnees I represented an affiliation with the country where they had lived, and I was in general received well. They would often introduce me to others as German, Norwegian, or from wherever they had returned, and they would ask me when I was going back to Sweden, or whether I had brought German coffee, etc. It was often 'we Scandinavians' talking about 'the Lebanese'.

At times this was an advantage, at other times it was a disadvantage because some would try to please me by exaggerating their attachment to Northern Europe. However, my double position as an outsider in local society and an insider with knowledge about life in Northern Europe sometimes made returnees share stories with me about their more negative experiences abroad that they did not relate to their Lebanese relatives or friends. In this way, I also benefited from my Scandinavian background.

In chapters 3 and 4, I discuss the continuous comparisons that the returnees made between places and countries. Obviously, such comparison was to some extent provoked by my presence. Encountering a person from Scandinavia made people think yet again about the differences between their two places of residence. Nevertheless, this comparison cannot be reduced to a direct result of my presence, it was carried out also before my arrival.

Certainly, an interview is a constructed situation, and when returnees and I engaged in a discussion about countries we compared many aspects of places with which one is not normally confronted in such a short period of time. In this sense, the question of negotiating belonging to different places may have been more uncomplicated in everyday life than in an interview about the topic. This point underlines the advantage of having participated in events and engaged in conversation that did not directly

concern the topic of return. Due to other social interaction I was able to observe that comparisons were also made in situations outside of the interviews, and also in public forums by people who were not my informants.

Finally, fieldwork examining this kind of topic poses the ethical question whether it is legitimate to interview people about a time of their lives that may have caused them great pain. Nowadays, most Lebanese are very tired of speaking about the war, and some are also tired of being an object of study for all the (foreign) researchers who want to examine why 'the events' [*al-hawadith*] occurred or whether the Lebanese are now able to live in peace. My solution to both issues was to emphasize that there was certain information that was not necessary for me (cf. Knudsen 1995, Malkki 1995b:51). Hence, I explained to the informants that I did not need to interview them about the war or about the exact circumstances that caused them to leave. Some people chose to tell me anyway, others told their story without specific details. In any case, the study of post-war return migration was generally considered relevant and important by the people I encountered.

CHAPTER 2
A HISTORY OF LEBANON AND LEBANESE MIGRATION

The purpose of this chapter is to situate my study in the historical context of Lebanese society and migration. However, in addition to providing this background, I wish to show that 'Lebanon' can be understood as two different kinds of places. On the one hand, it exists as a territorially demarcated nation-state. This is the way that it is normally conceived. On the other hand, Lebanon is an open social space that stretches over territorial borders and forms a worldwide network. The migration that took place during the war was in many ways carried out within this network, which had been formed prior to this.

Lebanon: a brief socio-historical overview

Lebanon is a small Middle Eastern country. To the north and east, it is bordered by Syria, and to the south by Israel. Stretching only 225 km from north to south, and no more than 90 km from west to east, Lebanon nevertheless encompasses a varied geography. The western coastline stretches along the Mediterranean and is the location for Lebanon's three major cities: in the north Tripoli, in the centre Beirut, and in the south Sidon. The Mt Lebanon range rises off the coast and is the home of many villages. Further to the east, the fertile plains of the Bekaa valley provide the land for the country's main agricultural production, before the altitude rises again to the Anti-Lebanon mountain range on the border to Syria.

The present Lebanese territory was first defined as the state of Greater Lebanon in 1920, when France and England divided Greater Syria (present-day Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan) after the demise of the Ottoman Empire. Made up of former Ottoman districts, Lebanon thus became a French mandate, comprising different areas and confessional groups with little previous contact.[23] Not surprisingly, from the very beginning, the creation of the state involved dispute. In the words of Kamal Salibi, the French "had put together a state but failed to create a special nationality to go with it" (Salibi 1989:30). The numerous religious and social groupings in the area had different allegiances and different interests, and while the mandate was supported by the Christian Maronites, particularly the Sunni Muslims remained loyal to the idea of a larger Arab nation (Hourani 1966:24). Nevertheless, in 1943, Lebanon was proclaimed an independent republic. The internal divisions were formally incorporated into the political system through a confessionally based system of proportional representation. According to the 1926 Constitution and the 1943 National Pact[24], power was distributed in such a way that the President must be Maronite, the Premier Sunni, and the Speaker of Parliament Shiite. This representational division is still maintained today.

With the exception of a short civil war in 1958, Lebanon became known as "a happy democratic exception" from the authoritarian states in the Arab world (Picard

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[23] It is here important to note that, in the Lebanese case, the concept of a religious group defines not only a community of faith, but more often a tribal entity, knit together because of kinship, political interests, and local solidarity (Salibi 1989).

[24] The so-called National Pact is in fact an unwritten agreement that acts as a supplement to the Constitution (Salibi 1976:14). It still regulates Lebanese political life.

1993:16). Particularly in the late 1960s and the early '70s, the economy boomed, development increased, human capital was plenty, and a multitude of political parties were formed. Yet, within the formally democratic political institutions, traditional political structures of patron-client relations continued to exist.[25] In other words, personal loyalty was more important than political programmes. Studies such as those by Gubser (1973), Johnson (1977, 1983), and Gilsenan (1986) underline the continued importance of these structures, showing how state resources were distributed through private connections rather than through state institutions. An early consequence of the malfunctioning state was the lack of attachment to the nation-state by both the general population and the elite (Shils 1966:2). The dominance of family, religious, and local ties was maintained.

The civil war

On 13 April, 1975, a Christian militia attacked a bus full of Palestinian refugees and killed the passengers.[26] This incident is often quoted as the beginning of the "not always so civil war" (Segal 1999:3). The explanation of the causes and intrigues of the war is beyond the objective of this paper.[27] Suffice it to say that the conflict erupted and continued due to domestic problems and structural inequalities, regional tensions, and international interests. In particular, the domestic problems were shaped, on the one hand, by a political proportional system that no longer reflected the actual proportional relation of sects, and, on the other hand, by the de facto autonomy of the Palestinian camps and guerrillas who continued their military campaign against Israel from Lebanese territory (Jung 1991:240f).

In spite of its political roots, the war was expressed in ethno-religious terms, as fighting took place between different religious militias. However, the major actors in the war were not only various Christian and Muslim militias, but also the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Israel, Syria, and an international peace force.[28] During 15 years, fighting took the form of a series of little wars in different parts of the country, and in international media 'Lebanization' became a label for the total disintegration of a state into ethnic conflict and militia fiefdoms (Picard 1996:155, Harris 1999:161). In 1990, the war was officially ended by the Taif Accord, but low-scale conflict continued for a little longer. Furthermore, external interference in domestic affairs did not cease with the end of the war. South Lebanon was occupied by the Israelis and served as their self-proclaimed 'security zone' until May 2000, and Syrian military and secret services are still operating in the country.[29] Finally, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has been surveying the border with Israel.

Not surprisingly, the war had a multiplicity of impacts. One major effect was the changing of the country's demography. Around 150,000 people were killed.

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[25] For instance, in 1966, the great majority of deputies could be considered as patrons (zu'ama), rather than as party representatives (Hottinger 1966:85).

[26] There are 350,000-400,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The majority of them live in permanent refugee camps, excluded from public services and skilled employment in Lebanon (Sayigh 1995:28).

[27] For extensive accounts, see Picard 1996, or, for a more journalistic approach, Fisk 1990.

[28] Many Lebanese today consider 'the events' (the war) as a war fought by others, for others, within Lebanese territory.

[29] The Syrian military entered Lebanon in 1976, and after the end of the war their forces remained in the country as part of the Taif peace agreement. At present, there are large inter-communal disputes in Lebanon concerning exactly how long the Syrians are supposed to stay.

Moreover, during the fighting, approx. 900,000 Lebanese left the country, and up to 810,000 people were internally displaced (Nasr 1993:67, UNDP 1997). Given an estimated total population of 3.8 million citizens[30], this amounts to almost half of the population – including all segments of society – who at one point or another were either temporarily or permanently forced to leave their home as refugees, emigrants, or internally displaced. The internal displacement led to an unprecedented ethno-religious homogenization of the population in many areas (Nasr 1993:64, Khalaf 1994:277, Davie 1992:633).

In the course of the war, the public identity of a person became increasingly one-dimensional, i.e. firmly associated with his or her communal affiliation (Picard 1996:148). Consequently, people moved (or were forced to move) to and from areas on the basis of their religious, family, and political markers. At the same time, emigration decreased the workforce with 25% and resulted in a 'brain-drain' and a loss of human capital that is still felt in today's society (Picard 1996:142).

Post-war society and return migration

Despite the fact that the war ended more than a decade ago, Lebanon is still heavily marked by its recent past. The reconstruction of the capital has been a priority for the government, but so far the new, expensive buildings in downtown Beirut have almost no tenants. In the rest of the country, reconstruction is slowly taking place. It involves not only the physical construction of buildings and infrastructure, but also the resettlement and rehabilitation of the hundreds of thousands internally displaced people. It has been argued that the government's reconstruction efforts have focused on a physical rebuilding of Lebanon at the expense of broader socially oriented programmes (Nauphal 1997:18). Such programmes are needed because of the brutal persecution and killings that took place during the war. Patterns of residence largely preserve communal affiliations, because the war-imposed spatial distribution of the population is still in place.

Economic and political factors further influence the situation of post-war Lebanon. First of all, after 1982 the economy collapsed, and so far it has not recovered. In 1999-2000, the economy stagnated and national growth in GDP equalled zero (Tabbarah 2000a:11). According to 1999 estimates, 28 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line, and the unemployment rate reached 18 per cent (CIA Factbook 2002).[31] Foreign investors are slowly returning, but Lebanon has lost its former image as a centre for finance and trade, and the continued political unrest in the region does not have a positive impact on its rehabilitation. Likewise, Lebanon's recent image as a war-torn country means that tourism has not regained its previous flow.

In terms of political life, the war did not change the structure of the system in any significant way. Although political representatives are democratically elected, politics is still not based on party representation, but on temporary coalitions, patron-client relations, or clan and sectarian loyalties. Many former militia leaders are now

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[30] The number of inhabitants in Lebanon is only an estimate, as the last population census was in 1932.
[31] I do not have current figures, but according to public debate and newspaper articles, the situation has not improved.

deputies, and with few exceptions they try to secure the interests of their solidarity groups rather than the interests of Lebanon as a whole (Picard 1996:162).

The issue of post-war return migration has not received particular attention in Lebanese society. There are no estimates of the number of emigrants that have actually come back, because the government does not keep any statistics on return migration. While there are many programmes in place to facilitate the return of internally displaced people, there is no state assistance to returning emigrants. As with other migrants, their subsistence and reintegration is the responsibility of the family if they are not able to handle this themselves. Moreover, as pointed out by an official from the Ministry of Emigration, although the country is in need of returning professionals, the state does not have the resources to convince skilled migrants to return.[32] The official further added that the state has so many reconstruction issues to deal with that it cannot afford allocating funding to returning emigrants, who supposedly have their own resources.

In general, among officials and the part of the population that remained during the war, migrants are perceived as being in a better position than those who spent the war years in Lebanon. This image is partly created because some return migrants construct large houses and in other ways display status symbols. Moreover, a certain number of successful returnees have become members of the local elite (Peleikis 1998, 2001). As I will discuss in the following chapters, this image nevertheless stands in sharp contrast to the actual situation of many returnees.

While there are still some emigrants returning to Lebanon, the post-war depression of the country has led to even higher rates of emigration. According to year 2000 figures, since 1992, some 690,000 people are believed to have emigrated (UNDP 2000:26).[33] Considering the fact that the majority of migrants are between 25 and 50, educated, and male, the present rate of emigration constitutes a danger to society. However, using emigration as a means of access to resources is not new in Lebanon, and it is thus very relevant to discuss the issue of migration in a Lebanese context.

The role of migration in Lebanese society

I have now described Lebanon as would probably be done in most traditional ethnographies: I have described the changes that took place within a given territory, focusing on the national entity. However, as more recent ethnographical work has told us, migration is central to the study of place (Hastrup & Olwig 1997:5f). In the

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[32] However, since 1993 Lebanon has participated in the UNDP TOKTEN programme (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals). From 1995 to 2000, 40 expatriates participated, of whom 6 decided to resettle in Lebanon after the end of their project (http://www.undp.org.lb/tokten/history.htm). According to a UNDP official, the programme was discontinued in 2000 due to lack of funding (personal communication, 2001). However, according to the 2002 homepage, the programme seems to have been revived.
[33] This figure may include a certain number of returned emigrants who found it difficult to re-establish their lives in Lebanon and consequently departed again. In this respect, one of the most frequent comments made relating to my project was that "you won't find any returnees, because they have all left again". However, I am not certain whether re-migrants are included in the official statistics. In many cases, for instance, they do not need to apply for a visa, because they already have citizenship abroad.

Lebanese case, the number of migrants may even be higher than the number of inhabitants within the country. According to casual estimates, some 10 million people of Lebanese origin are spread around the globe (Ministry of Emigrants, unofficial statistics).[34]

The significance of migration in Lebanese society is apparent in everyday life. Not only does almost every extended family have members abroad, but also the country even has had a Ministry of Emigrants to administer contacts with migrant organizations abroad.[35] Moreover, Anja Peleikis notes a lack of distinction between the concepts of migration (*hijra*) and journey (*al-safar*) in the colloquial Lebanese vocabulary of the inhabitants of a Lebanese village (1998:21). People speak of a journey (*al-safar*) whether they go on a short vacation to see relatives abroad, or whether they depart on a more permanent basis. In this way, in Lebanese society, movement seems to be "definitive of social life more often than it is exceptional" (Appadurai 1995:215).

Our understanding of Lebanese society will thus be helped if, rather than only looking at the national entity, we conceive of Lebanon as a place in Massey's sense of the word, i.e. as the intersection of "open and porous networks of social relations" extending across the globe (1994:121). Michael Humphrey in fact argues that Lebanon never existed as an entity in itself:

> Lebanon cannot be understood as a national entity which fragmented through the failure of modernity but an internationalized social space where the relationship between different social classes was mediated by their relationship to the outside world (1998:62f).

Thus, the migration that has taken place since the end of the 19th century has established ties between continents that are perhaps stronger than the ties between local regions within Lebanon. In the following I will discuss the ties that exist between Lebanon and the diaspora[36] and how these ties facilitated emigration during the war.

The early migration from Lebanon went to the Americas, West Africa, and Australia. According to Khater, the early migrants departed because a change in legislation gave

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[34] I do not know how the Ministry defines "Lebanese origin", so there may be reason for caution with the figures. More modest estimates rate the number of self-declared Lebanese abroad at 2.2 million (Cohen 1997:99).

[35] After the last election in October 2001, the Ministry of Emigrants was changed into the Directory of Emigrants under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Rumour has it that the downgrading was part of a political dispute. Nevertheless, since its foundation in 1992, the Ministry never had much funding allocated. Some of the funds were used to arrange summer camps and expatriate business conferences in Lebanon, but the Ministry was also supposed to "assist in solving the problems that make migrants depart" (personal communication).

[36] While I am aware of the specific meanings originally attributed to the term 'diaspora' (cf. Tölölyan 1996), I use it in Van Hear's more loose definition, i.e. as a population that is dispersed from a homeland to two or more territories, with an enduring presence abroad and where some kind of exchange (social, economic, political, cultural) exists between or among the spatially separated populations comprising the diaspora (Van Hear 1998:6).

them the freedom of movement and they wanted to achieve a better life (2001:52f).[37] They settled abroad as peddlers and factory workers and particularly in West Africa, the Lebanese managed to establish a flourishing trade community (Khater 2001, Hourani 1992, Naff 1992, Cohen 1997:94ff). However, this does not mean that they cut the ties with their country of origin. Already in the period between 1920 and 1939, most Lebanese did not easily fit into the simple model of migration as a one-way flow (Hashimoto 1992). Migrants moved frequently and possibly adopted multiple places of residence, thereby maintaining social and economic activities within Lebanese society (ibid.67). In her study of current migration between a south Lebanese village and West Africa, Peleikis (1998, 2000) shows one example of the mutual influence and various ties that exist between the Lebanese diaspora and its mainland.

Although the inhabitants of the two places live different local lives, their lifeworlds remain connected. Migrants in Abidjan influence social, political, or economic matters 'at home' through communication (phone, fax, and email), visits, and remittances. Social networks are also maintained through the exchange of letters, tapes, photos, and videos where relatives can follow events and celebrations taking place in the family living elsewhere. Peleikis argues that in this way, current-day migrants construct and reconstitute their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one locality (1998:12f). Her study thus exemplifies the existence of the "virtual neighbourhood" (Appadurai 1995) in practice.

Along similar lines, other studies mention the importance of ties to family, village, and sect in the diaspora and how Lebanese cultural habits such as eating particular foods or dancing the *dabke* are practiced abroad as part of the maintenance of socio-cultural relations across borders (e.g. Naff 1992, Humphrey 1998). With the improvement in communication and travel technology, such interaction becomes even more common. Unfortunately, such links can also be negative. During the civil war, for instance, many of the divisions emerging in Lebanese society were reproduced in the diaspora (Humphrey 1998:132f).[38]

Transnational relations as capital

For the Lebanese, transnational social and economic relations have served as different forms of capital (Bourdieu 1999). The traditional social spaces of family, community and sect were never nationalized, but they were internationalized through migration (Humphrey 1998:60). Thus, instead of engaging in national integration, some people gained access to resources through channels of migration. These channels served different purposes for rich and poor. The former developed command over cultural capital which would ensure their privilege, and the latter received remittances and had the possibility of migration, which lessened their dependency on the patronage of the rich and powerful (ibid.62). During the war, transnational ties further facilitated emigration.

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[37] Khater thus argues against the myth of Ottoman persecution against the Christians. For a detailed history and discussion of Lebanese migration, see Hourani & Shehadi 1992.
[38] Cohen argues that the ties between Lebanon and the diaspora might have weakened, had the civil war not rekindled emigration and flared a renewed interest in the 'homeland' (1997:100).

While much of the movement during the war was involuntary, emigration still took place as another form of chain migration. Many chose to join relatives who had already established themselves abroad. This is shown by the fact that there are many villages in Lebanon (particularly in the north and south) where all the migrants have moved to the same places abroad.[39] The fact that there were no existing Lebanese communities in Scandinavia and Germany may be one of the reasons why these countries received a relatively small number of migrants.[40]

It was, however, not only social relations, but also possibilities of establishing oneself that influenced the choice of destination. Skilled tradesmen and educated persons thus primarily went to the United States, whereas many businessmen and technicians chose to move to other Middle Eastern countries, and groups with less education or training travelled to Africa (Labaki 1989:46).[41] In Europe, France and Great Britain became the major destinations, receiving mainly businessmen and students. In this respect, Scandinavia and Germany were not attractive, as integration into these countries required learning new languages. However, Scandinavia and Germany were, in addition to Canada, the only countries that provided Lebanese the possibility of achieving political asylum.

For the people who remained in Lebanon, their connections abroad may have ensured their subsistence level. During the war, groups of expatriates simply took over the socio-economic responsibilities of the state by (re)building infrastructure and sending money for relief (e.g. Peleikis 2000:10). In 1996, approximately half of the personal income in the country derived from remittances from abroad (Picard 1996:144).[42] Today, many women live in Lebanon and take care of their children while their men are working in another country. Against this background, it is clear that migrants are part of Lebanese society and thus also part of the historical and social construction of

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[39] One example of increased possibilities of flight/emigration is the case of Lebanese with relatives in Australia. In 1976, the Australian government eased their immigration policies and allowed the Lebanese in Australia to sponsor the arrival of their family members from Lebanon. For six months, until the policy was changed, nearly 1,000 Lebanese immigrants arrived each month (Batrouney 1992:430). Naff also notes that settlement in the US became easier due to the already existing Lebanese communities and established Americanization precedents (Naff 1992:163).

[40] The following figures may give the reader an idea of the size of the immigration discussed: In Denmark, only 4,242 Lebanese citizens applied for asylum between 1984 and 1989. (There are no country specific numbers before 1984). Of these, 1514 people were recognized as refugees. Between 1990 and 2000, the number fell to 560 recognized refugees (source: The Danish Immigration Service). (For a discussion of the Danish immigration policy towards Lebanese refugees from the civil war, see McGuire 1992.) In Sweden, 12 581 Lebanese citizens applied for asylum between 1984 and 2000. 7,033 people received a residence permit during these 16 years (The Swedish Immigration Service, http://www.migrationsverket.se). In Germany, the numbers of immigrants was higher. First of all, there were previously some Lebanese labour migrants in the country, and secondly, the number of asylum seekers was also higher. In the five years between 1986 and 1990, more than 27,542 Lebanese citizens arrived as asylum seekers in Germany (The figure from 1987 is missing in the statistics). (Source: Bundesamt für die Anerkennung Ausländischer Flüchtlinge, http://www.bafl.de/bafl/).

[41] This seems to follow previous emigration patterns, which Humphrey argues were based on different kinds of resources or capital. The rich had the cultural and financial means to become cosmopolitans, the middle class acquired technical and professional qualifications to become labour migrants or emigrants, and the poor depended on the family as a means of emigrating (1998:62).

[42] Michael Humphrey writes that more than 50% of the households in his study of Lebanese immigrants in Sydney reported sending remittances on a regular basis to family in Lebanon. In the case of the Sunni community, almost three-quarters of the households reported doing so (Humphrey 1998:56).

Lebanon. Lebanon exists as a socio-cultural field that reaches far beyond the country's geographical borders.

The village as a 'cultural site'

Humphrey's point, i.e. that Lebanon is the nodal point of different internationalized social spaces rather than a single national entity, is underlined by the fact that most migrants do not maintain ties to Lebanon as a country, but rather to their family and their village, which come to represent Lebanese society (Peleikis 1998). In this way, ties are maintained to a locality rather than to a nation state, and therefore such ties should be termed 'translocal' rather than 'transnational' (ibid.13). Considering that Lebanese migration began more than one hundred years ago, it is not surprising that the major point of reference for migrants was the village, and not 'Lebanon' – a state that did not yet exist.

Today, both abroad and within Lebanon, the village continues to be the focal point.[43] A large part of the population has migrated from rural to urban areas in Lebanon, but many (also abroad) still identify with their village background. This is particularly so because family genealogy is often traced back to a specific locale, town or village of origin (Khalaf 1971:239).[44] A young person born in Beirut to parents who have lived there for the last 30 years will often still say that she comes from Baalbek, if this is the village where her father is born. The family may keep a house there, which is visited at least a couple of times a year. Most likely, the father will be buried there at his death[45]

Lebanon's Personal Status Law also reinforces the rural-urban link. In all personal affairs, a person is registered in his father's place of origin. This means that papers regarding birth, marriage, death, etc., have to be obtained there. Likewise, at elections, a person must travel to this place in order to carry out his civil duty. It is possible to change the registration, but not many people do so (Peleikis 2001:2). The rule applies equally to citizens within Lebanon and to migrants abroad. Thus, these structures encourage the establishment of translocal relations (Peleikis 2000:3).

The Lebanese village may be conceptualized as a 'cultural site', i.e. as a cultural institution that is identified with a particular place while at the same time accommodating global conditions of existence (Olwig 1997a:17). The village accommodates such global conditions, because it exists as the anchor of an unbounded network of social relations.[46] Thus, for migrants the village is an institution

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[43] According to conversations with other researchers, the significance of the village is not only a Lebanese phenomenon; it is common for all of the former Greater Syria area.

[44] Family genealogy is very important in Lebanon. The family name gives you much information about a person's background, place of origin and religious denomination. It is because the family name includes so much information that I have chosen only to mention my informants by their (anonymized) given name. If I made up a new family name for them, it would imply giving wrong information about their background.

[45] In some villages, the family has to own land in order for a person to be buried there. This led the brother of one of my informants to buy land in their father's village in order to secure the father a burial place.

[46] This corresponds with Peleikis' understanding of the 'globalized village', which she characterizes as a "network of translocal kinship relations" (2000:3).

in which social relations and attachment to place are combined. For instance, as ownership of land is very important in Lebanon, some migrants choose to build or own a house in their village of origin.[47] In this way, a migrant can maintain his belonging and membership in the village, leaving him with the opportunity later to return (Peleikis 1996:7). Likewise, a large part of the wartime expatriate (economic) support was channelled through village associations, i.e. communal societies where membership is based on kinship ties and relations with a particular village (Batrouney 1992:433).

The importance of the village as the site of a social network may be illustrated in the following example. During the riots in the Democratic Republic of Congo that followed the assassination of President Laurent Kabila in March 2001, ten Lebanese were arrested and killed by Congolese military. After the bodies had been handed over to the Lebanese authorities, eight of them were brought to their villages of origin in south Lebanon. Here a mourning procession and a funeral were staged with thousands of participants who travelled from Congo and different parts of Lebanon in order to participate in the funeral of fellow villagers that they may never have met (The Daily Star, March 20, 2001). This was a strong expression of attachment to the social relations linked with a particular place.

However, this does not mean that the village is not a contested site. In Joun, for instance, migrants and locals struggle to define the village. The people who only come to visit have different attitudes and understandings to the ones who actually live there (Peleikis 2001:3).[48] This points to the multiple identities of place.

Conclusion

I have attempted to show the importance of place and belonging within a Lebanese society that is, at the same time, very fluid. When migrants leave the physical territory of Lebanon, they do not necessarily leave the society. However, the high degree of mobility does not automatically imply less attachment to place (Olwig 1997a). While 'Lebanon' is the name used to define a specific nation-state, it is not necessarily equal to the place that is practised by its citizens. Instead, in the study of Lebanese migration it seems more important to focus on attachment to particular localities, 'cultural sites', and networks than to focus on attachment to the nation. 'Lebanon' is rather a category used to define the origin of Lebanese migrants when they travel the world.

The chapter has highlighted that the post-war return to be discussed did not take place in a historical vacuum. The 15-year civil war still heavily influences society. Moreover, post-war return migration only represents one of many waves of movement. Obviously, the construction and perception of 'home' in the Lebanese context must be closely linked to such a tradition of mobility. Nevertheless, returnees from Scandinavia and Germany may have had different experiences abroad than migrants who lived in the more typical places of residence of the diaspora. Compared

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[47] On inherited family land or on newly bought property.
[48] See also Gilsenan (1996:43ff) for a discussion of the social stratification within a village. The different social positions of the inhabitants imply both different kinds of use of the village space and different meanings given to the place.

with places such as the US, South America or West Africa, the Lebanese community in northern Europe is not particularly strong. In fact, the difference between the Lebanese migrant communities in countries such as the US or France and the migrant communities in Scandinavia and Germany seems to correspond to Tölöyan's distinction between a diaspora and an ethnic group (1996:16).

Whereas many of the former communities are organized and seek influence in Lebanese society on a community basis (e.g. through political organizations, via religious institutions or as village associations), the Lebanese in northern Europe seem rather to be involved in an individual manner. With few exceptions, in Scandinavia and Germany the Lebanese have not organized themselves, and they originate from different places in Lebanon. Whether this affects their return and homemaking is a question that I choose to leave open, but which it would be interesting to answer through a comparative study of Lebanese return migration from different countries. At the present, I will turn to a discussion of the material aspects of emplacement upon post-war return.

CHAPTER 3
PLACE AND RESOURCES

> Sometimes I think "Why am I here?" You know, when the electricity is cut in the middle of a stressful working day or when something else doesn't function. You always have to be on guard, life is more stressful here, it gets on your nerves. This anxiety, you always have this feeling of anxiety. I have a job, thank God my work is going well, but you never know what will happen with your job tomorrow. You have no feeling of security. This is the big difference between here and other countries. In Europe, you feel secure, because you know that your life is organized.
>
> [Rafin, my translation from German].

With the quote from Rafin we enter the heart of the topic of this chapter. Building on the argument that post-war return necessitates an active process of re-integration and emplacement, Rafin's statement nicely highlights some of the challenges that individuals face upon their return. They not only have to re-build their everyday life, they also have to relate to the conditions of life in Lebanon. Since I found the material aspects of homemaking to play a crucial role in the daily lives of returnees, in this chapter I focus on the practical aspects of the process of emplacement.

As Hammond writes, the initial steps of emplacement concern "getting on with life", i.e. returnees have to clarify practical matters and identify how life in a particular place is made possible (2000:19). My purpose here is to demonstrate how returnees gain access to and use both local and transnational resources in the process of homemaking. As a tool to discuss the different resources that returnees may need in the process of emplacement, I use Pierre Bourdieu's concept of capital. This concept denotes the resources that a person may possess within a specific social field. Bourdieu distinguishes between four different kinds of capital: economic capital, social capital (social connections), cultural or educational capital (mostly different kinds of legitimate knowledge, whether inherited or acquired through education), and symbolic capital (prestige and social honour) (Bourdieu 1999, Jenkins 1992:85).

The value of the capital that each individual possesses is relative to the context, and cultural capital that is valued in one context is therefore not necessarily valued in another. Capital is thus a social relation (Bourdieu 1999:113). In this respect, the concept highlights that material aspects of life cannot be treated separately from a social context. Hence, the process of emplacement does not only concern establishing a material base of living, it also concerns the negotiation of social status. Whereas some returnees experience that they do not have the right capital to establish themselves in Lebanon, others experience that they have more capital there than abroad. In either place, the lack of the right capital – whether economic, cultural or social – is an obstacle for integration into local society, and thus to some extent for the construction of different forms of home.

Making a living: access to resources

Among the people I interviewed, it was generally agreed that the return proposed challenges. However, the challenges were not produced by the movement in itself. When migration takes place 'between homes', it does not have to be arranged in detail or prepared over an extended period.

With dual citizenship, the immigration restrictions of nation-states are not obstacles, and many of the people I met carried out their return during a period of repeated moves between places. Other times, they moved to Lebanon almost coincidentally, choosing to stay after what was meant to be a visit. The finality and permanency with which such moves are often described can therefore be questioned. Instead, the challenges of return were related to the process of establishing a daily life once the move to Lebanon had been carried out. In this respect, most people told that particularly the first year was very difficult. It required that they go through the same kind of integration as when they moved abroad. However, when talking about their initial difficulties upon return, many returnees emphasized that any move is difficult. They found that wherever they had to establish themselves (whether in a new town or in a new country), it always took a while to adapt.

The difficulties arose not just from moving between countries, but also simply from the process of finding a place to live, integrating the children in school, adapting to a new job, etc. It is therefore worth noticing that many returnees did not expect an easy 'homecoming' to their country of origin. They expected yet another move with all that this implies in terms of integration efforts. In the following, I exemplify three different kinds of return in order to discuss how access to resources affects the process of emplacement.

Case 1: The forced return of asylum seekers

Nadine S. is the 34-year-old mother of three children. She and her husband fled to Germany in 1990 and became asylum seekers. During the eight years that they stayed, they had some illegal employment, but they did not in any way manage to improve their life situation. They had no education, were not able to save money, and finally did not receive a residence permit. After appealing the legal decision for several years, they were forced to leave the country in 1998.

Upon their return, they first lived with Nadine's parents and later they rented the first floor in the house of her sister. The place is austerely furnished, with most of the furniture being borrowed from relatives. Nadine's husband is working with his brother, but he has no guarantee of a stable income. Nadine herself sometimes has a part-time job, but she can only work in the mornings, since she has to take care of her children in the afternoon. She often cooks together with her sister in order to save money and labour. The three children speak good German, but only after their return are they learning proper Arabic. For this reason, the 16-year-old daughter had to move from the 9th to the 2nd grade in the government school.

Case 2: Voluntary return to the family

Samira D. is the 50-year-old mother of four children. In 1987, her husband went to Norway, and two years later, Samira and the children joined him through family reunification. They chose to go to Norway because Salim's two brothers were already living there, and he initially started working in his brother's company. Later Samira and Salim started a business of their own. Eventually, they obtained Norwegian citizenship.

Very unusually, their return to Lebanon was initiated by their youngest daughter, who wanted to spend one year studying in Beirut. Having lived with her aunt, she felt so comfortable in Beirut that she talked her parents into returning. Samira went to Lebanon after a year, and Salim came one year later. Their three adult sons chose to stay in Norway.[49] Upon their return, the family moved into their former apartment, which had remained empty. Salim became a partner in his father's business, and Samira became a housewife. Their daughter is finishing her education in a renowned, private English-language school.

Case 3: Return as part of the career

Ghassan is a 42-year-old man. When the civil war broke out he was 16 years old and he used some contacts in Sweden to go there to study. He ended up spending almost 20 years in Sweden, although he also worked a few years in other countries. He not only gained an education in Sweden, but he also became a citizen and even joined the Swedish Home Guard in the conviction that one should serve one's country.

In the following years, Ghassan built up a good career, and in 1994 he was headhunted for a job in Beirut. After a difficult decision-making process where he moved back and forth several times, Ghassan decided to stay in Lebanon. Nevertheless, he kept his apartment in Sweden for another three years, just in case he wanted to move back. Later he sold it, because he felt that having it limited his integration into Lebanese society. In Beirut, housing and a car were immediately provided to him by his employer. In this sense, he carried out a return that was very independent of his previous social networks. After the return, he married a Lebanese woman with whom he has two children.

Economic, social, and cultural capital

The three cases highlight the diversity in return situations and the different degrees of access to resources that returnees have. Not surprisingly, in a material perspective the return was the most difficult in the first case. They were the poorest of my main informants, but they are representative of other cases of forced return where families struggle to cover their daily expenses. Their financial situation meant that they could

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[49] A common problem for emigrants with sons at the age of military duty is that the men fear having to serve in the Lebanese army. The Lebanese parliament was in 2001 considering a change of law so that young returnees did not have to serve if they had lived more than 5 years abroad. The argument for re-drafting the law was that in this way more young male emigrants would have an incentive to return to Lebanon.

not afford extra expenses such as taking out insurance or paying for Nadine's asthma medicine. Likewise, they could not afford to send the children to a better school. While Nadine was happy to have returned to the social network of the family – and particularly that she managed to see her mother while she was still alive[50] – she felt that in the process of return she had "dropped her children on the floor".

In comparison, in case 2, the integration of the daughter was furthered by the family's economic capital. Lebanon has several foreign-language schools and universities, and here returnee children can continue their education without breaks, having the advanced courses in English, German or French while they learn Arabic at a beginner's level.[51] In this way, the young returnees can expand on the cultural capital that they acquired abroad. Last, but not least, these children go to school with other children that are in a similar situation. Beirut's rather international environment thus facilitates the arrival of those children whose families have the means to access that particular social field.

The fact that cases 2 and 3 had the necessary economic means thus allowed them to have a higher standard of living and also provided them with better security. Lebanon is an expensive country, and the need for a financial basis was acknowledged by many returnees as perhaps the most important aspect for the success of return. This is illustrated in the responses of many returnees when I asked them the simple question: If you were to advise a Lebanese abroad about whether or not to return to Lebanon, what would you say? Most responses emphasized the financial situation. "You can come back, but only if you have money," "Because of the economical situation, the time is not right for returning to Lebanon," "Do not try to invest here," and so on.

All in all, there was only one (financially well-off) person, who replied: "He should follow where his heart is, where he feels most at home". The quotes thus illustrate that for many returnees the primary considerations regarding return focus on living conditions rather than on questions of identity and belonging. These last issues gain most importance in the lives of returnees for whom a material base is well-established.

In the two cases first presented, the role of social relations in many return situations becomes obvious. The example of Nadine S. clearly illustrates how, for less independent returnees, the family is the only means of access to resources such as housing and jobs. The fact that relatives have a moral responsibility to assist one another means that it is seldom that any person returns without having some sort of social network – even if this network is only reluctantly providing help. In cases where the returnees do not have any close relatives left in the country, they are almost always able to rent or borrow an empty apartment from a relative living abroad.

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[50] Since they were asylum seekers, they were not allowed to leave Germany if they wanted to maintain their status. For 10 years the family was therefore not able to visit Lebanon.
[51] The high number of European missionaries in Lebanon means that Lebanon has always had many French, English, and even German-language schools (mainly French). However, the number of foreign language schools may have increased since the civil war. According to parents that I spoke with, in 2001 they paid around $6,000 a year for having their child in the better private high schools, and around $12,000 a year for the better universities (for example, American University of Beirut).

Unfortunately, such dependency creates a very insecure living situation, because returnees never know whether the support will be continued. Moreover, many find it degrading to be so dependent on others. However, also for more independent returnees, the family network is significant. This is clearly apparent in the 22 cases which I studied. In the first period after their return, 14 families lived with relatives, two moved into their previous apartment, two had housing provided by their employer, and four I have no information on. At present, 14 have their own place (but three apartments are in a building owned by the family) and eight live in an apartment owned by relatives.[52] These figures show that in many cases, extended family relations serve as a major resource for re-integration.

In addition to the contacts gained through the family, social capital is necessary in Lebanon, because much access to resources is achieved through *wasta*. *Wasta* is an Arabic term which connotes access to a person with more influence than oneself. Whereas the term formally means 'intermediary' (in relation to patron-client relations), in popular use *wasta* more specifically refers to a person who has influence with the state authorities or who at least has other access to resources. Hence, by knowing the right person to contact one may be able to secure oneself a job, access to the right school for the children, preferential or just proper treatment when dealing with public offices, and so on.

Some returnees with few resources complained that due to their stay abroad, they had lost the *wasta* that they previously had. Others – the ones who already had access to resources – now resented this mentality and stated that they would never make use of it. Nevertheless, I know few people who did not make use of *wasta* if they were in a situation where it would be beneficial for them. While they were perhaps able to use their Lebanese contacts in the reintegration process, returnees were seldom able to transfer their social capital from abroad to Lebanon. Contacts in another country were not able to facilitate the return itself. Only in relation to professional life were such contacts and networks of use.

Whereas social capital from abroad may not have been transferable, this was not the case with cultural capital such as education. Foreign education served as access to good jobs in Lebanon, often with a higher salary than that of locally educated colleagues. Of the 22 cases that I studied, in 12 cases, one or more persons managed to finish an education or training in their other country of residence.[53] Upon their return, they were all able to use their foreign education. In the remaining 10 cases, the returnees had all worked in Lebanon before their emigration and therefore they did not seek education abroad.

With the exception of those who returned in order to retire, they also all found employment. Nevertheless, this was often low-paid and more unstable employment than the contracts of returnees who were educated abroad. All in all, we see how the returnees' different kinds of capital provided them with different chances to acquire resources and thereby influenced their possibility of establishing a material base of living. Moreover, their different kinds of capital affected their social status. The

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[52] This includes living with relatives (mainly parents) or renting an apartment from relatives.
[53] Of the 22 cases, 12 men returned alone (some left their wives abroad), and in 10 cases the family returned together. In these latter 10 cases, it was only in two cases the wife who first found employment.

interrelation between capital, social status, and belonging is examined in the following section.

Social mobility

Due to their centrality to maintaining a livelihood, the issues that I have discussed here were not matters that were only dealt with during the initial period of settlement, although this was when they were most important. Instead, they were matters that returnees continued to focus on, just as they focused on social integration. Even though they first returned up to eight years ago, for the people I interviewed the question of re-integrating into Lebanese society was still present in their lives. Most of them lived their daily lives without problems, but they continued to compare people, places, and habits, particularly in situations of distress.

Often, differences in the life situation were projected onto the differences between places. When life in Lebanon was good, the other place was presented in a more negative manner – and vice versa. In this way, 'here' and 'there' played a dominant role in the returnees' lives. As Sørensen writes about Dominican migrants in New York:

> Whether Dominicans relate to, interpret, or articulate
> themselves about prices, weather conditions, gender roles,
> electricity supply, or racism, they construct their world views
> by constantly contextualizing and interpreting events in 'heres'
> and 'theres' (Sørensen 1994:14).

However, return migration is not to be viewed solely as physical movement between countries, but also as part of life trajectories. As Olwig writes, migration may be only one instance of many different movements in a person's life course (1997b:124). Upward social mobility may be a more important motivation for movement than crossing borders (ibid.116). In this way, for some people, the return implied the possibility of using their different abilities better than they were able to do abroad. Whereas many rejected asylum seekers encountered a worsened material situation, for others, the return led to further inclusion in society. This is illustrated in the case of Ayse B.

Ayse's story

Ayse is a 50-year-old woman, married and with two children. She has a university degree and before her departure from Lebanon she had a good career in a well-established firm. She and her husband Hussein chose to leave Beirut in 1989, which was a particularly bad year of the civil war. They had both studied or worked abroad before, and when Hussein found a job in a Lebanese company in Sweden, the recently married couple took a few belongings and travelled north.

In Sweden, Ayse gave birth to their second child. Both before and after the pregnancy, she followed different courses at a local school. She learned Swedish, improved her

computer skills and tried to stay updated within her field. Despite her efforts, Ayse did not succeed in finding a job. Being used to independence and work, this was a difficult situation for her. When I first met the family in Beirut to interview them about their return, Ayse immediately said:

> I didn't find a job. I don't want to take money from *socialkontor* [the welfare office]. [...] I am proud, I have my university degree, I work in a big company, I had a big position, I <u>had</u>. So it was very difficult for me to take money from the social office. So...And the money which Hussein took from his work, his salary, it wasn't enough. So I should work. I didn't find anything. So we decided to come back to try here [Beirut]. And *now* it is better.

This aspect of Ayse's situation in Sweden is an important context for the understanding of her attitude to the return. She was one of the people I interviewed who was in general the most satisfied with the decision to return and who was well-integrated into Lebanese society. Through her return, she was able to live up to her cultural values about independence. Moreover, her participation in Lebanese society was different from her life in Sweden, where she was in reality excluded from participating in society on her own terms. The lack of an important resource, namely fluency in the language, in Ayse's own words limited her sense of belonging. She was not able to carry out conversation in Swedish on the same intellectual level as in Arabic. She said:

> If there is a conversation in Swedish at a certain level, even though I speak Swedish, I cannot participate. I can say "How are you?" "How are things going?" "The weather is nice," "The sun is shining," etc., little things like that, everyday things. But if I want to make a conversation at a certain level…it's impossible. In Arabic, yes, we can discuss. But in Swedish I can't. If I want to speak with them, about philosophy or maybe psychology, I can't do that! […] The language is very, very, very important.

The two quotes demonstrate that Ayse herself was aware that she did not have the necessary cultural and perhaps social capital to join the social environment in which she felt that she belonged. Although she had an education, in Sweden it was obviously not valued as cultural capital. When Ayse spoke about her dissatisfiction with her competence in Swedish, it illustrates that for her the language was a social marker. It shows to other people that you have the same intellectual insight and competence as them. It frustrated her that she could not express to the Swedes that there are also some immigrants (like herself) who are well-educated and knowledgeable.

In this way, although Ayse emphasized that there were many good aspects of her stay in Sweden, the return to Lebanon represented a recovery of her social status. Upon her return in 1996,[54] Ayse immediately found a job through a cousin. Despite the fact that it was not related to her former occupation, it was a good position. At the same time,

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[54] Ayse and Hussein stayed in Sweden until they had received Swedish citizenship.

she more or less re-established her social network, which was centred around the extended family. In general, Ayse and Hussein perceived themselves as being very lucky, because their return was fairly easy. They moved into their former apartment, Hussein also found a job and their oldest son was able to continue his education at the French school, as he had been doing in Sweden.

Ayse's case shows that a move between countries may be initiated in order to achieve upwards social mobility. As Salih points out, migrants are often in different social positions in their country of origin and host country (2002:61). Rafin is another example of this, because in her moves between different countries she changed from being a housewife in south Lebanon to a merchant in Congo to an asylum seeker in Germany to an independent businesswoman in Beirut. Although she was also poor in Congo, she preferred her status there to her status in Germany. After all, in Congo she was a member of a respected merchant community and she was "the boss" in their business, whereas in Germany she had to realize that the identity as asylum seeker was stigmatized. Rafin became aware of how much her social status had changed over the years when she realized that her Ethiopian maid in Beirut had the same status there that she herself had had in Hamburg.

Ayse's case also illustrates well the dynamics in the perception of movement, place, and belonging. While her return and integration was easier than for many others, her life later became more difficult. Unfortunately, some two months after I met her the first time in December 2000, Ayse lost her job. The worsened economic situation in Lebanon resulted in cutbacks or bankruptcies in many companies. During the rest of my stay in Beirut, Ayse remained unemployed. She was considered over-qualified for many of the jobs for which she applied, and jobs on her level were not available.

Ayse's new life-situation influenced her attitude to the return and her expression of belonging. She maintained that coming back was the right choice for the family, but she started speaking more about the positive aspects of life in Sweden and about the fact that if only she had a job in Sweden, they would not have returned. She said that they were actually not planning to come back, but their parents asked them to come and told them that the situation in Lebanon had really improved.

Ayse's attitude is thus an example of how returnees changed their explanations for their return in relation to changes in their life situations.[55] In Ayse's case, she started considering re-migration, although not to Sweden. In this way, the case also illustrates that re-integration is a dynamic and on-going process and that return does not necessarily imply permanent settlement in Lebanon.

The family as a translocal network

One aspect of Ayse's return that remained positive was her social inclusion in society. Differently from many of the other well-educated returnees, she was closely connected with her family who assisted her with integration. Taking into account the importance of family relations not only for Ayse, but also for the integration of other returnees, I argue that in many cases, the return to the family came to represent

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[55] At other times she said that she had always wanted to come back and never forgot the idea of return.

continuity in a story of movement that otherwise emphasizes breaks. During their migration, a majority of the returnees had maintained frequent contact with their close relatives.

While communication was difficult during the war, during the 1990s people maintained social relations through letters, emails, phone calls, videos, visits, money transfers,[56] and so on. In the situation of return, the family perhaps gained particular significance because many returnees had lost contact with former friends and acquaintances and their initial meeting with Lebanon was thus carried out in the context of the family.[57] As argued in chapters 1 and 2, leaving the physical place of Lebanon did not necessarily equal leaving a particular social space (cf. Appadurai 1995, Glick-Schiller et.al. 1995, Sørensen 1994, Peleikis 1998). The case of Samira D. (case 2) illustrates how a person's network can remain the same both while living abroad and after return. Her migration story is permeated with signs of the family's importance as a means of resources and as a "cultural medium" (Humphrey 1998:21) through which she and her husband entered different societies.

Samira's story

Samira and Salim first left Lebanon in the early 1980s when they went to the United States, where they joined and initially lived with one of Salim's brothers. However, Samira did not like the States, and after a couple of years, she convinced Salim that the family should return to Lebanon. They did not spend much time in Beirut before the war made Samira want to leave again. The family could not afford to go back to the States, but as already mentioned, Salim instead went to join his two other brothers who were working and living with their families in Norway. After a year, in 1989, Salim applied for family reunification, and one of Samira's brothers escorted her and the children to Scandinavia. While starting a new life in Norway may have been difficult, Samira had the advantage that she already had the social network of Salim's family there. Furthermore, she stayed in close contact with her relatives in Lebanon, both visiting Lebanon a couple of summers and receiving visitors in Norway. Moreover, when they started their own business in Norway, Salim's father sent them the money for the down-payment.

When they returned to Lebanon, the family moved into their former apartment in a four-storey building constructed by Samira's brother. Each of Samira's five siblings also had apartments in the building and members of the families therefore interacted on a daily basis. Samira's siblings helped her integrate back into Lebanese society, they showed her good places to shop, drove her around in the city, and assisted with

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[56] I did not extensively pursue the question of remittances, but most of the people I interviewed stated that they had not sent remittances to their family while abroad. They made a distinction between living in northern Europe and other parts of the world, saying that Scandinavian taxes and living costs are too high for sharing savings with relatives. Thus, only a few persons stated that they had contributed to their relatives' subsistence during the war. Some returnees even said that their families did not need it. In contrast, they said that their Lebanese relatives had sent them money in order to support their livelihood abroad. In this way, in relation to remittances, the northern European war migration seems to deviate from migration to other parts of the world (compare the findings of Humphrey (1998) mentioned in footnote 42).

[57] During the war, communication was so expensive and difficult that most people were only able to keep in contact with their relatives.

any practical issues that might have occurred. The family therefore has always been very important in Samira's life, in fact, her relatives were the main focus of her lifeworld. She said: "You see, for me the family comes first. Not the friends. When you have the family around you, you are not alone".

In fact, Samira did not have many friends left, but she saw at least one of her siblings or sisters-in-law every day, and they had lunch, bought the groceries together, drank coffee, and assisted each other with the cooking or other practical matters on a very frequent basis. This social responsibility was coupled with financial support, and Samira, for instance, often covered expenses for her unmarried sister. In this way, the family responsibility meant that subsistence and challenges of everyday life concerned not only the nuclear family, but also the extended family, whether they lived in the same country or in another. Samira's return to Beirut did not mean that she cut her ties with the family in Norway.

In fact, many of Samira's everyday practices were focused on the lives of her sons in Norway rather than on her local everyday life. She sent them food and other packages, she telephoned them at least once a week, and they came to visit for months at a time. When I was there, the oldest son came to become engaged to a young woman in Beirut. Likewise, Salim and Samira managed to return to Norway every summer after their return. All in all, the case is a typical example of how Lebanese family networks and mutual responsibility span continents.

Hence, in addition to implying many difficulties and challenges, post-war return may also imply the reunification of families. A return means that responsibilities can be shared not only on a general level, but also in daily life. This was particularly noted to me by female returnees. Ayse several times emphasized her gratitude that her extended family was now able to support her on a daily basis. She told me how in Sweden she had felt somewhat alone with the responsibility for the family. Telling a story of a sudden hospitalization where she had to go alone in the middle of the night while her husband stayed at home with their children, she ended with the sentence "and I knew, that if I had been in *my country*, my family would have been there to help me." This echoed the words of other women. Many told stories of birth or sickness abroad where they had to manage on their own, whereas they knew that in Lebanon they could have shared their joys and sorrows with the family, and they could have counted on family support.

In addition to gender differences, I noted that the importance given to extended family relations varied according to generation. The older generation of my informants, i.e. those aged 50 - 65, were old enough to have lived an adult life in Lebanon before the war, and they, to a larger extent than the younger informants, were able to re-establish social relations with former friends and colleagues. Moreover, they had lost their parents and had adult children. In comparison, the returnees around the age of 40 tended to focus their social life much more on the relatives. At this age, they often still felt a sense of responsibility towards the parents, which was the one social relationship that linked them the most with Lebanon. Similarly, they also still had younger children, which was another relationship that seemed to tie them more closely to the extended family.

Living in Lebanon

Creating everyday life after post-war return is not only a question of establishing oneself and entering into particular social relations, it also involves the new experience of living in a post-war society. While returnees can influence their own physical environment, in daily life they are subjected to some structural conditions that are difficult to affect. The nature of state services, infrastructure, macro-economy, environmental issues and politics are very different in Lebanon than in the northern European countries, and these issues were among those that returnees compared the most. Again, 'here' and 'there' were referents of daily life. Electricity cuts, water shortage, high living costs, corruption and clientelism, pollution and the like were difficult conditions to accept after living for several years in a better-functioning state.

Although returnees enjoyed the low tax and the general absence of rules and regulations, the lack of infrastructure and state-provided resources in Lebanon was experienced as a very negative factor. The time abroad had led to more critical attitudes towards Lebanese society and people had incorporated new aspects into their view on what constitutes a good place to live. In this way, the returnees' experience of and attitude to Lebanese society also carried within it a realization that they had distanced themselves from the country. As Fuad M. said at a dinner, after he had recounted the practical matters that annoyed him in daily life: "But I am just not ready to accept that Lebanon is a Third World country. I never thought of it as Third World." Although it is clear that these more negative attitudes cannot be separated from Lebanon's present situation with economic and political difficulties (and high emigration rates), it is likely that in particular returnees' attitude to the Lebanese state and its lacking functions are shaped by their experiences during migration.

Having lived in countries with strong states, the returnees continue valuing a functioning state structure. In this respect, the state gained an importance that it would probably not have gained had the returnees' migration taken place between two countries with weaker states.[58] In their criticism, returnees adopted a very Scandinavian discourse by attributing the state an important role and emphasizing the salience of welfare for a well-functioning state. In northern Europe, the state is expected to provide welfare services to its citizens, and it has thus taken over the responsibility for tasks formerly left to the domain of the family. As commented on by Rafin, in Lebanon it is still practice that "every family must be its own state". Access to good schools, hospitals, insurances, etc., are not secured only on the basis of being a citizen of Lebanon.

Instead, access to such resources is dependent on money and contacts. Since places are always defined in relation to each other, the Northern European state came to symbolize a political system devoid of the corruption and clientelism that is so widespread in Lebanon. In some cases, the disappointment with Lebanon led to the idealization of how well everything functioned abroad.

One important aspect which is associated with a well-functioning state is the issue of security and the possibility of assuring a safe future for oneself and one's children.

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[58] In his MA thesis on post-war return and repatriation to Somalia, Peter Hansen also notes that the idea of the nation-state was more important for returnees from the West than for other returnees (2001:118f).

Samir, who kept his house in Norway while working to save up money in Lebanon, summed up the point in the following statement:

> Well, I mean, in Norway you can live, you feel yourself safe, you have everything. I mean, we have social security. You know if you get sick, you don't have to worry. You know, if you get old, you don't have to worry. You see, these are things, very good in life. That's what everybody wants. And if you want to get an education, no problem at all, you get support from the state. […] And actually, you feel in Norway that you have a future. In Lebanon you don't know what the future is hiding for you.

In this way, the conditions of the place in which returnees live limit the extent to which they can construct a secure home. In Lebanon, there is no national safety net that guarantees the children's education or the individual's retirement. Furthermore, due to the country's geopolitical situation, there is always a certain risk of renewed conflict or even war. In combination, these factors encourage the maintenance of relations to the other place of residence.

Transnational relations

In an article on transnational return, Elizabeth Thomas Hope (2002) describes how Jamaican return migrants construct transnational livelihoods. While the professionals return to join the Jamaican labour force, they maintain strong social and economic relations to their former place of residence. These relations are partly based on pragmatic evaluations of the necessity to maintain security. For example, returnees leave their savings abroad, as well as some of them maintaining access to foreign health care in case of future sickness (Thomas Hope 2002:368ff). In this way, the possibility of leaving Jamaica is kept open should moving again become desirable.

Thomas Hope's article illustrates that the maintenance of transnational relations concerns both the issue of belonging to different places and the issue of securing future possibilities. This was also the case for many Lebanese return migrants where those who had the chance maintained public links to their former country of residence. Some returnees received resources such as a pension, others kept a house[59] or a business abroad, or they continued paying overseas tax in order to remain members of the society. Obviously, the ultimate tool to maintain transnational relations and keep open future possibilities is to obtain foreign citizenship. As illustrated in the quote from Samir, this ensures access to resources. Furthermore, it secures the right to mobility.

The usefulness of a passport is exemplified in the case of Khaled N. While living in Germany for 12 years, he was active in immigrant politics and never felt a need to obtain citizenship. Had he received a German passport, he could no longer represent

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[59] In addition to providing the legal advantage of having an address in the country, owning a house leaves open the possibility of coming back and signals membership of the community. In this respect, the returnees' practice of keeping houses abroad is similar to emigrants' practice of keeping houses in their country of origin.

the organization in which he worked. However, when he decided to leave Germany in order to work in another European country (after which he returned to Beirut), he made sure that he received the citizenship before his departure.

Having the passport is not only a question of securing one's own future, but also securing the future for one's children. In Beirut, Ayse was searching for a person to teach her children Swedish. She asked the embassy, but did not receive any help. Obviously they did not consider her a citizen to the same degree that she herself did. The purpose of teaching the children Swedish was both to maintain their connection to Sweden, and, not least, to make sure that they are able to cope themselves should they one day choose to enrol in the university in Sweden. There they would receive a better education than the one which their parents can afford in Beirut.

A strategy of mobility as a way of optimizing one's resources is also exemplified in the case of Karim N. While he did not wish to leave Lebanon, he wanted his wife to obtain German citizenship and his 4-year-old daughter to learn the German language properly. Even though they spoke German together, he felt that she could no longer learn more from him, and just as Ayse, he considered the possibility of one day sending her to a German state-sponsored university. Since they did not want to have to move to Germany for the period of three years that his wife must live there in order to become a citizen, the family chose to divide the period into separate phases. They stayed three to six months in Germany, then they returned to their house in Lebanon for the same amount of time, went back to Germany, and so forth. In this way, the family could achieve their goal and yet not lose contact with their life in Lebanon.

Thus, the returnees who have the financial and legal means can rely on two countries as a way of optimizing their resources (cf. Salih 2002). Obviously, those people who do not have the means or right to travel are excluded from such practices, although they are often the ones who may also lack resources in their own country. The relationship between access to resources and citizenship is discussed in an article by Gaim Kibreab (1999), where he criticizes what he considers the exaggerated focus on deterritorialization within the field of repatriation literature. Kibreab argues that in the African context, place still remains a "major repository of rights and membership" (1999:385). National membership secures access to resources, and while repatriation may not be an end in itself, it remains the most important durable solution, because it provides the returnees with access to resources simply due to their right to membership.'

Although Kibreab has a legitimate argument in the sense that people do gain recognition through the association with 'their own country', it is questionable whether, upon return to Lebanon, access to resources is really gained simply by being a Lebanese citizen. On the contrary, my data show that the people with most access to resources are those who are able to benefit from an association with multiple places. A similar point is brought forth by Fink-Nielsen & Kleist (2000). They argue that in the case of post-war return to Somaliland, foreign citizenship actually facilitates return, because the security of a passport allows the Somalis to take the risk of moving to Somaliland. The decision is more easily made when the potential returnees know that repatriation does not necessarily imply a permanent settlement (ibid.154). Bearing this in mind, one may question the association of citizenship with rootedness and belonging that is common in Northern Europe.

Conclusion

Post-war return to Lebanon necessitates building up a life in an environment which was once known, but to which one is now a stranger. The initial challenge of return concerns the establishment of a material base of living. 'Returnees' are not a homogeneous group who approach the matter in the same way. Particularly due to class and their various kinds of acquired capital they have different access to resources and thus encounter different return situations. In this way, the making of a material home is limited or enabled by the access to local and transnational resources.

In this respect, the chapter has shown that return and reintegration is not only a local, but also a transnational event. First of all, returnees use their other place of residence as a frame of reference in relation to which the standard of daily life in Lebanon is compared. Moreover, returnees also use foreign citizenship as another form of capital that allows them to negotiate their living situation in Lebanon. In the previous chapters I have argued that social relations across borders often function independently of the nation state (Appadurai 1995, Humphrey 1998, Peleikis 1998). However, in this chapter I have illustrated that in relation to access to resources, the state is part of the context of everyday life.

The process of homemaking is influenced by the question of achieving security. In this respect, a foreign passport makes it possible for returnees to establish different kinds of homes. While they may seek a social home in Lebanon, they can maintain a secure home abroad.[60] However, as the different examples show, access to mobility is a resource that not everyone has. In this way, the situation that returnees managed to create for themselves abroad may now affect their return situation. This does not just concern citizenship. For example, Rafin is an exception from the other former asylum seekers, because while living in Germany she was able to finish an education and earn money. This improvement in her life situation was transferable to her life situation in Beirut, where she has now opened her beauty salon.

The latter point underlines that the making of a material context of life is closely interrelated with the social context. Firstly, the extended family often provides access to resources. Secondly, acquired capital interrelates with social status and recognition. In this way, physical movement may also entail social mobility. I have illustrated that changes in both the material standard of living and social status affect the relationship that returnees have to their place of residence. The cases of both Rafin and Ayse highlight that an essential part of the construction of belonging takes place in the comparison of life situations in different places. Since these aspects of life are ever changing, the construction of a sense of belonging is dynamic. Sometimes returnees may belong more in their local environment than other times.

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[60] In relation to Lebanese migrants living in Abidjan, Peleikis distinguishes between a "place of work" and a "place of life" (1998:216). While many find it necessary to stay in Abidjan (their place of work) in order to make a living, they maintain a desire to 'return' to their Lebanese village which is their "place of life", because they still feel socio-culturally connected with their village. This exemplifies the maintenance of different kinds of homes.

Hence, establishing everyday life after post-war return is not only a matter of making a material base, it is also a question of entering into particular social relations. Whereas the common perception of war-related migration and return focuses on the breaks in social relations that this movement entails, I argue that in relation to the family, the return may represent a form of continuity in returnees' lives. Emigration from Lebanon did not necessarily imply that people left the social field, and social relations have thus been stretched to reach between different countries. This was true in relation to emigration and it is true for the return migration also. As we saw in the case of Samira, the people who left relatives abroad now simply reversed their translocal relations to stretch from Lebanon and outwards.

The creation and maintenance of translocal networks during migration may have been facilitated by the fact that a tradition of migration existed in Lebanon already before the war. Although there were not previously Lebanese immigrants in Scandinavia and only few in Germany, the Lebanese were used to maintaining migration networks. Likewise, the situation of having relatives abroad was already common. In this way, the family served as a "field of belonging" (Olwig 1999:38), no matter where the migrants were actually living.

However, the migration that I am describing was particular in the sense that it took place during a civil war. In this chapter, I have discussed effects of the war as a political context that impacts the material and economic situation of Lebanon. However, the war also constitutes a social context in relation to which belonging is negotiated. Most of the people I interviewed would not have left had the war not taken place, but by emigrating during this period they got a particular position in Lebanese society upon return. In the following chapter, I discuss how returnees articulate and negotiate notions of belonging within this context. In the discussion of how returnees manoeuvre within specific social spheres, I will mainly focus on the returnees who returned with resources. As already argued, they were the ones who had the best possibility of defining their own place, and they were also the ones who discussed notions of belonging the most.

CHAPTER 4
NEGOTIATING BELONGING

> I know people who have a German passport. You are lost between Germany and Lebanon. […] Even though you have a passport and you live there 20-30 years, you are never a true, original German. You always say 'I am not German'. When you come here, it is the same. You see how the people here live, and you think 'I don't want to live like that'. So you are not German, and you are not Lebanese, you are something in-between. Then I prefer just being Lebanese. Then you know which world you belong to, not in-between.
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> [Rafin, my translation from German]

Rafin's words bridge the topics of the previous and the present chapter. Her statement highlights that the same mobility which in a material context provides access to transnational resources and thus allows for the construction of a secure home, may simultaneously in a socio-cultural context lead to displacement and the loss of a socio-cultural home.

In other words, Rafin makes us aware that transnationalism not only entails the enriching participation in multiple societies, but it may also imply tension for the individual (Armbruster 2002:32, Salih 2002:52). The quote is taken from a conversation where Rafin explained why most returning emigrants choose to leave Lebanon again within a short period of time.[61] She expresses that it is difficult to negotiate an attachment to different places, because places are associated with different material and socio-cultural life styles that are continuously compared. In the encounter with different societies, returnees experience that they are neither German nor Lebanese.

Throughout the paper I have argued that returnees move not only between countries, but also within and between translocal social spaces. However, Rafin's quote illustrates that, for many returnees, the movement is still mainly perceived as a movement between countries and as a movement between cultures. In her statement she maintains what is, to some extent, an essentialized and territorialized perception of identity (Mørck 1994:149f). However, although returnees often discussed their sense of socio-cultural belonging in national terms, I found that they spoke about their identification with places in two ways. On the one hand, they attributed national identity with the meaning of origin. In these situations they would say that "Lebanon is my country," thereby referring to the fact that this was the place where they were born and received their upbringing, where the language was their mother tongue, and

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[61] Rafin's statement of preferring to be Lebanese is partly a reaction to the fact that Rafin herself does not have the option of movement, since she never received German citizenship. She mentioned that if she had had the choice, she would probably also have returned to Germany before she really got settled in Beirut. According to Rafin, most people leave Lebanon already before the most difficult integration period is over, and therefore they do not have the real possibility of actually comparing life in two countries. In this way, Rafin also points to the encounter with Lebanese society as a very challenging aspect of return.

where their family was rooted. In this sense, they belonged in Lebanon. On the other hand, returnees expressed identification in relation to daily practices. Returnees might say that "You are speaking with someone who is more German than Lebanese," thereby referring to their behaviour, which included adopted practices differing from the ones they had learned in Lebanon. With reference to his lifestyle, one person termed himself a *Wahldeutscher* [a German by choice]. In this respect, many returnees did not feel that they belonged in Lebanese society. Hence, there was often tension between the identification that was associated with origin, and the identification that was associated with daily practice.

Against this background, in this chapter I examine emplacement as a process of identification. I discuss how returnees use their attachment to places as part of their homemaking and their identification in everyday social interaction. The chapter thereby focuses on the returnees' construction of belonging in relation to different places and different social spheres. As I argued in Chapter 1, post-war return takes place in a context where both society and the returnees have changed. In this respect, my field of study is actually not how returnees belong in society, but mostly how they experience that they do not belong.

However, belonging is not static, and therefore it is continuously negotiated in processes of inclusion and exclusion. Returnees emplace themselves, but they have to negotiate their forms of emplacement with their social environment. In this way, the particular living conditions in the local environment influence the returnees' constructions and articulations of home (Al-Ali & Koser 2002:6). As a consequence, emplacement does not simply take place in the local society.

In the difficult meeting with Lebanese society, some returnees developed stronger ties and a sense of belonging to their other place of residence than they had when they were actually there. In this way, returnees made homes and constructed belonging not only in relation to that with which they identified, but also in opposition to that with which they did not identify (cf. Armbruster 2002).[62] These points will be illustrated in the following case. I present it in order to introduce to the reader the dynamic and active constructions of notions of home in which returnees engage.

The case continues the story of Ghassan B., who was discussed as case 3 in the previous chapter. He seemingly found it very difficult to accept life in Beirut. While this is one of the more extreme examples of dissatisfaction with the return, it nevertheless illustrates many of the problems encountered by returnees in Lebanon.

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[62] The dynamics of identity construction are also examined by Liisa Malkki in her study of Hutu refugees in Burundi (Malkki 1995). Malkki argues that the local, everyday circumstances of life (in exile) influence how identity is constructed. In the case of the camp refugees, identity and belonging are constructed in response to the experience of exclusion (ibid.3f). As the camp refugees are treated as 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966) in between nations, they create their own nation through the construction of a mythico-history about their collective identity. In contrast, the refugees living in a town environment pragmatically manage different identities in order to avoid being labelled as refugees (Malkki 1995:156). In this social setting, being a refugee does not define membership of a community, but it rather entails social stigma. Thus, as a matter of achieving social inclusion, the town refugees invent 'strategies of invisibility', such as finding various possibilities of claiming Tanzanian national identity (ibid.155ff). In this paper I do not discuss the issue of collective identity, but I am inspired by Malkki both in my view that particular living conditions influence migrants' articulations of home and in my argumentation that identification is related to strategies of inclusion and exclusion.

After a thorough discussion of the case, I move to an analysis of the social spheres in which belonging is negotiated. I show that the articulation and making of home and belonging differ according to the different private and public social spheres in which they take place. It is within the public sphere that the context of war migration becomes important.

A stranger to society: the case of Ghassan B

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Ghassan returned to Lebanon in 1996 after having spent almost 20 years abroad. According to Ghassan, although he has a good standard of living in Lebanon, hardly a day goes by where he does not think about returning to Sweden. As he presented his story to me, he had a very positive experience of migration, but now he is disappointed with his return. He argued that part of the reason for his return was that, through his education and knowledge, he would be able to contribute something to the reconstruction of Lebanon. However, he stated, "The country does not want to receive."

The Lebanese, in his opinion, did not want to benefit from the knowledge of those who had lived and worked abroad. He further argued that everything in Lebanon was troublesome, and many institutions in society did not live up to his expectations. His dissatisfaction concerned, for instance, the hospital system, the way insurance companies functioned, or the widespread corruption in public institutions. He used the chaotic traffic as an image of the lack of rules in society.[63] Finally, he told of the different work mentality where fixed dates and appointments are treated with indifference compared to the time-regulated Scandinavian societies. Summing up, he compared the Lebanese mentality with that of an Italian carpenter:

> You go to an Italian carpenter to order a round table. You agree that the table can be picked up after a week. One week later you arrive, but the table is not finished. Two weeks later you arrive, and the table is finished. But it is not round, as you ordered, it is oval. You know why? Because he thinks that fits you better - that's how the Lebanese are!
>
> [My translation from Swedish]

I would argue that Ghassan has lived abroad for so long that he has adopted views on interpersonal relations, work mentality, and societal structures that do not correspond with the practices of the local society. These views derived from both his experience of living in Swedish society and his long career in an international, professional environment at his former workplaces.

On moving back to Lebanon, his acquired habits and perception of how things should be done clashed with the actual conditions of Lebanese society. He was himself aware that his ways of acting, speaking and interacting with others were different from the behaviour of many other Lebanese. Using Rapport and Dawson's (1998a) terminology, he could not 'bring' his home with him, because the way society functioned limited his ability to carry out routines, at least when he had to interact

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[63] Lebanon is one of the countries in the world with the highest rate of traffic accidents (Tabbarah 2000b:25).

with others. He lacked the proper social knowledge. He was annoyed when people came unannounced to see him, when others came late, or with what he regarded as the shortsighted nature of many business projects. Moreover, the cultural capital that he had acquired in Sweden and which he thought that he could bring with him (e.g. his education or knowledge of forms of interaction) was not valued in Lebanon. In Sweden he had done a lot to conform to society, to learn the language, to ski, go fishing, to 'do as the locals do'. Integration in Lebanon was not nearly as attractive to him.

Ghassan's experience of return and of lacking a sense of belonging must be seen in the context of his life abroad. He had completely moved his base to Sweden. Because of his young age on arrival in Sweden and the duration of his stay, Ghassan spoke Swedish fluently, he had many Swedish friends, and he basically adopted Swedish cultural habits. Although he lived and worked in other countries at various stages of his life, he had always returned to Sweden, not Lebanon. While abroad, his level of social and cultural contact with Lebanon was not very extensive, apparently limited to a monthly phone call to his parents. This was also true for the other male informants who had left Lebanon at a young age and stayed abroad for a long time. The sense of belonging to Sweden meant that Ghassan continued to maintain strong links with his former environment. In addition to keeping a bank account and paying off school debts, he had frequent email and telephone contact with friends, who also came to visit him in Beirut. He had visited Sweden several times since his return. He read Swedish papers on the Internet, had Swedish books at home, and also had sporadic contact with the (small) Scandinavian expatriate milieu in Lebanon.

However, when considering Ghassan's attachment to Sweden, it is worth remembering that his time abroad was not only associated with a particular place, but also with the making of his career and his achievement of professional success. An additional explanation for his longing for Sweden is thus that Sweden represents a particular experience of social inclusion. The time in Sweden represents his youth, his years of education and his personal development. Hence, it may be argued that Ghassan's close attachment to Sweden expresses a yearning for the *experience* of being in a place that is transferred to the idea of the place itself.[64]

If we compare the stories of Ghassan and Ayse (Chapter 3), the close interrelation between the attitude towards the return and the experience of life abroad is highlighted yet again. For Ayse, the return implied upwards social mobility and an inclusion in a social network, whereas for Ghassan, the move to Lebanon seemingly rather made daily life more difficult. When compared, the two cases further point to the influence of variables such as gender, family status, and age. As a young man, Ghassan probably found it easier than Ayse to integrate into a new society. He came to Sweden alone and had no responsibilities towards others. Being a woman and a

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[64] My thoughts on this matter are inspired by Ghassan Hage's presentation 'Nostalgic Strategies: On the Usage of Nostalgia among Migrants in Sydney' (American University of Beirut, February 21, 2001). Hage argues that while nostalgia appears as a yearning for space, it is actually a yearning for the experience of space. The individual yearns for a kind of being that it has experienced within this particular space. Memories awoken by the smell of coffee are one example where the memory does not concern drinking the coffee, but perhaps the childhood experience of sitting in an aunt's living room. The specificity of migrants' nostalgia is that the yearning for a past can also be expressed as a yearning for a particular place.

mother, Ayse may have been more confined to family life. At the same time, life with the nuclear family may also have made it easier to reproduce daily life. In this way, 'home' is brought along with the family in a different way to when individuals travel alone. Finally, the fact that Ayse was almost 20 years older than Ghassan when she left Lebanon may have also made the return easier for her. She had lived longer in Lebanon before the departure and also knew more people upon her return. As already mentioned, she had a strong family network. In contrast to some of my other informants, she did not find it very difficult to re-adjust to life in Beirut. She said "I had lived here for 35 years before! I understand the people, I understand the mentality. For us it was normal."

Among the people I interviewed, I found that the older returnees generally had a different attitude to the return than the younger returnees. The former tended to associate Lebanon with their youth, and some people expressed the desire to become old in the place where they had grown up. For the younger returnees, the past in Lebanon was rather associated with war. Hence, although I do not treat these issues extensively, my data suggest that individual constructions of home and belonging were affected by variables such as gender, age, and religion.[65] Mainly, those variables became important in processes of inclusion and exclusion in Lebanese society and abroad (for example in relation to discrimination). When the return established continuity with one's self-identification, constructing a sense of belonging became easier.

In Ghassan's case, the challenges that he experienced in his local environment in Lebanon led him to distance himself verbally from Lebanese society. In conversations with me he therefore dissociated himself from the Lebanese and Lebanon, presenting himself as an outsider. In relation to me, having lived abroad became Ghassan's symbolic capital. He constructed Sweden as a sort of moral home, where things were carried out correctly and where people were treated as humans. In other words, he constructed Sweden as a place where he belonged. This corresponds with his definition of home: "Home is a place where there are some values that you agree with. [It is a place] where you are treated as a valuable human being that has something to offer to society. They don't do that here. Where you have obligations, but also rights."

While speaking, Ghassan looked at his jacket lapel, where he had placed a pin with the Sweden flag, saying, "Look at my chest. That's where home is." The quote is a good illustration of the duality that runs through Ghassan's narrative of movement and belonging. On the one hand, he constructed his personal space of identification on the basis of values with which he agreed and practices with which he identified. On the other hand, he constructed 'home' in opposition to an exclusion from being Lebanese. Home is where you are treated as valuable – "They don't do that here" – or where you have rights, not only obligations.

However, the fact that Ghassan and I together created a narrative of Scandinavia as a home site does not necessarily mean that he did not at all belong in Lebanon. Upon my inquiry he did relate that his upbringing in Beirut constituted an important part of

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[65] As discussed in footnote 18, in relation to processes of inclusion and exclusion, religion played the most significant role for the sense of belonging of female practising Muslims. In addition, people from different religions also often enjoyed being able to celebrate religious holidays with their relatives and the local community instead of celebrating them more isolated abroad.

his experiences. Nevertheless, with this exception, his possible attachment to Lebanon was a part of Ghassan's life story which remained almost untold. We always met in his office, and telling his story to me, he emphasized his work life and his many activities in different countries. He presented to me the 'official life story'. He hardly ever spoke of his private life, and when I asked about it he gave me the feeling that I was intruding into something irrelevant to me. In other words, he categorized his belonging to different social spaces in the same way that he categorized his identity by shifting between business cards depending on whether he was in the Middle East or the West.[66] His private life seemed to be reserved to a sphere in which I was not involved.

Ghassan is married to a Lebanese woman whom he met shortly after his return. It was seemingly out of consideration for her and their children that he stayed in Lebanon. Perhaps he came back to marry and create a family in a more traditional Lebanese fashion. Perhaps, at the time of return, he actually did feel that he belonged in his country of origin and that he did not really belong in Sweden.

Since I only knew Ghassan for 6 months, the changes taking place over time are difficult to judge, but the case points to the importance of time and the relevance of speaking with migrants both in their country of origin *and* abroad. A multi-sited approach (Marcus 1995) may give further insights into the construction and negotiation of notions of home and belonging. The narrative of a person's identity and belonging is formed according to when and where the narrative is told - 'at home' or away (Wilson 1997:16).

A note on translocal movement

The story of Ghassan's professional migration seems to represent a different kind of movement to that of Samira (Chapter 3), who used family relations as a translocal network and despite her migration remained within a particular social space. In comparison, Ghassan seemingly engaged much more with Swedish society and thus broke out of his Lebanese social network. The differences between Samira and Ghassan could correspond to Hannerz' (1996) distinction between 'locals' and 'cosmopolitans', which Peleikis (1998) for migration purposes has re-termed 'translocals' and cosmopolitans. According to Hannerz, 'locals' may travel between places, but they remain within the same social network and cultural space. In contrast, cosmopolitans engage in interaction with 'the other' and are concerned with achieving competence in previously alien cultures (Hannerz 1996:103).

Projecting the distinction onto migrants' construction of home, Peleikis writes that "[Translocals] do not replicate 'home' but they are involved in constructing 'home' on the basis of their memories and information that they regularly exchange with their areas of origin" (1998:200). Indeed, whereas a person like Ghassan and others with him engaged in the activities of their host society, people like Samira remained on the outskirts of that society, maintaining a rather Lebanese life style. This does not mean that they did not adapt to Norwegian society, but they maintained a focus on a

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[66] Ghassan has two given names, and he uses the more European name in the West, whereas he uses the Arabic name in the Middle East.

Lebanese identity and a Lebanese social network. However, one may argue that Ghassan also performs translocal rather than cosmopolitan movement.

Whereas he may have left his Lebanese family network behind, he entered a professional social space, in which he moved between different countries and which he is now concerned with reproducing in his present daily life. It seems that it is the difficulties with reproducing this environment that cause him dissatisfaction. Thus, although Ghassan moved in professional circles rather than in kinship circles, he is in reality no more cosmopolitan than Samira. In this way, one may criticize Hannerz' distinction, which seems to equate the cosmopolitan with the professional migrant and the local with the family migrant. Moreover, the point underlines that post-war return is carried out within different social spheres rather than in Lebanon as such.

Emplacement in different social spheres

In my analysis of Ghassan's story I have discussed the construction of home and belonging on the basis of the migration story of one individual. Although in Ghassan's case my knowledge about his personal social relations was scarce, the case makes clear that Ghassan's process of identification was affected by his life in a specific socio-cultural context. In the rest of the chapter I wish to examine the socio-cultural context of returnees' emplacement and homemaking more closely in order to discuss how they constructed and negotiated home and belonging in the everyday social interaction with others. My purpose here is thus to examine the negotiation of belonging as it took place in the local environment.

In the previous chapter I described how many returnees obtained foreign citizenship and maintained transnational relations with their other place of residence, thereby simultaneously maintaining formal attachments to two countries. It is interesting to note that this kind of belonging to different places was rarely negotiated. In Lebanese society, to obtain foreign citizenship is a culturally accepted practice and therefore this is not associated with a lack of belonging to Lebanese society.[67] In this respect, returnees' possibility of maintaining a material or secure home abroad was not affected by the local socio-cultural context of everyday life. However, in relation to everyday cultural practices, the case was the opposite. In daily social interaction, returnees continuously participated in processes of inclusion and exclusion in which their right to belong in Lebanon was negotiated.[68]

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[67] The acceptance of foreign citizenship seems closely related to the political and economic shortcomings of the Lebanese state that I discussed in both chapters 2 and 3. Since the Lebanese state does not really provide for its citizens, those people who have the possibility provide for themselves by gaining access to resources abroad. This supports the observation from Chapter 3 that the notion of citizenship in some contexts is dissociated from notions of belonging, but associated with access to resources.

[68] Again, it seems that on an official level, the returnees' belonging to Lebanon was not questioned. Since the Lebanese state accepts dual citizenship, migrants abroad are still legally (and rhetorically) included as part of the Lebanese nation state. Moreover, there was no official debate about whether returnees deserted the country by leaving during the civil war. For the Lebanese state, migrants are rather considered a resource that will benefit the country's financial and educational development if they return.

As shown in the case of Ghassan, this affected the possibility of creating a socio-cultural home. Yet, when one looks more closely at these negotiations of belonging, one will see that they took place in different social contexts that affected how the process of emplacement could be carried out. More specifically, returnees moved between private and public spheres. Whereas in the public sphere they had more difficulties in negotiating their belonging, in the private sphere they could more easily reconcile their attachment to different places. Likewise, the fact that their migration initially took place during a war was not something that returnees themselves gave much importance. However, in the interaction with other people, they where confronted with this particular political context of their migration. Since I will argue that the negotiation of belonging was easier in the private sphere, in the following discussion I will only briefly examine this before I move to a more detailed discussion of the public social sphere.

However, it is important to realize that my distinction between public and private spheres only serves as an analytical tool to discuss how the construction of home and belonging is impacted by the social sphere in which it takes place. In other words, the borders between the private and the public are continuously re-defined.

The private sphere - a place of one's own

As I argued in Chapter 1, making home to a large extent concerns the possibility of establishing routines of everyday life and carrying out this life in a familiar way (Hammond 2000, Rapport & Dawson 1998a). As Berger writes, home is produced in practices, habits, stories, and memories (Berger in Rapport & Dawson 1998a:7). This was reflected in the private sphere of returnees' lives. The private sphere of life may include not only returnees' home dwellings, but also their personal space of identification and their narratives. However, here I focus on the cultural practices that returnees carried out in their place of living.

In their home dwellings, returnees could combine their different practices, habits, and experiences of living into one social space. In other words, returnees emplaced themselves through making their interior decoration in a particular way or by participating in habitual interaction with the other members of the household. Just as Ayse and Hussein brought their Swedish pine furniture with them to Lebanon, Karim N. had all his German books, magazines, records, and even a cuckoo clock transported to Beirut. In this way, interior decoration established a sense of continuity in the home dwellings (cf. Douglas 1991), because the same things could be brought to different physical places.

While the decoration and the management of the home in the Middle Eastern context are often discussed as the responsibility of the women, both women and men used interior decoration as a means of creating a place of their own. Although I had a tendency to focus my observations on the geographical origin of returnees' household effects, these belongings certainly also symbolized other aspects of identity. For instance, Karim N.'s books signalled both his attachment to Germany, and his identity as an intellectual. Therefore it is necessary not to exaggerate the focus on nationality, but also to acknowledge the other meanings attributed to goods. Nevertheless, the meaning attributed to things from another place is illustrated in the actions of Nadine

S. I used to visit her in the mornings while the children were in school, and therefore we often had breakfast together. When we had tea, she inevitably handed the large German teacup to me, while everybody else had to drink his or her tea out of the usual small Lebanese tea-glasses. Thus, my perceived affiliation with Germany was practised when I drank out of a German cup.

Obviously, the ability to re-create the home is dependent not only on the desire to do so, but also on the availability of resources. Not everyone could afford to bring furniture with them, but even in poorer households, there were often small artefacts such as pictures, a Swedish calendar or souvenirs that signalled an attachment to somewhere else.[69] The way that translocal relations impacted the daily practices in the home is exemplified in Samira's preparation of a room, and later an apartment, for her sons in case they move to Lebanon.

The practices in the home also concerned daily interaction and habits. Karim, for instance, insisted on watching his German news every day. Likewise, Rafin told me that within the household, she and her children lived more or less as they did in Germany. The children had more personal freedom than other Lebanese children, but Rafin still raised them to respect the family values that are more important in Lebanese society than in Germany. Since the children went to a German school, they sometimes spoke German with their mother. Likewise, the family shifted between cooking Lebanese and German food, just as they used a German coffee machine that they had brought with them to Beirut. In this way, consumption and the import of products signal the family's attachment to another place (Salih 2002).

In addition to constructing a personal space of belonging, at times practices also served to express attitudes towards the surroundings. For instance, in most parts of Lebanon, there is no mail delivery service. This, however, did not keep 48-year-old Ziad D. from putting up a Norwegian mailbox at the end of the gravel road leading to his and his parents' house south of Beirut. He told the local mail staff that he wanted his mail delivered or he would complain to their central office. First, they tried to take down the box. Then they pulled off the door to the box. But now, in the open box, his mail is delivered, in the rare case that he receives any.

Telling the story to the disbelieving anthropologist, Ziad was happy that he had managed to introduce a little bit of Norwegian 'civilization' to his local community, and his action thereby signalized his attitude towards how Lebanese society ought to be. However, most of the time, the way that returnees constructed home in daily action and interaction was not a topic that was verbalized to any great extent. Rather, this sense of belonging was expressed in more or less unquestioned practices which I observed. This illustrates that, within their private social space, returnees could act in unselfconscious ways, and in relation to cultural practices, they were free to negotiate their sense of belonging as they wanted. Yet, only to a certain extent. My distinction between the private and the public is most relevant in the cases where returnees lived in their own household.

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[69] It would be interesting to compare my observations of homemaking with a study of how returnees had decorated their homes while they were abroad.

The case of Ghassan (who married a Lebanese woman who had not migrated) exemplifies a situation where the negotiation of cultural practices in the private sphere may not necessarily have been free of conflict.

In this respect, the border between the private and the public is not clearly definable. Nevertheless, I argue that within the place that was associated with their private sphere, returnees had more room to manoeuvre than they had within social spaces that were part of the public sphere. Ziad's mailbox at the entrance to his driveway represents the very limits of the private sphere. When returnees entered the public sphere, the conditions for the articulation and negotiation of belonging changed. In the rest of the chapter, I will examine various aspects of the social interaction that took place in the public sphere.

The public sphere: the social mediation of belonging

In order to discuss the issue of belonging upon post-war return, it is obviously necessary not only to focus on the personal lives of the returnees, but also to include their everyday interaction with other people – often those people who chose to stay put when others left. The social context that I discuss here consists of public social spaces in which returnees had to interact with other people and where they were often confronted with their own dissimilarity. In the close social relations, the changes that had taken place over time became apparent. For example, 35-year-old Charles told of his parents' reaction to the lifestyle he and his wife led:

> Accepting us the way we are, how we changed in these years, was not easy for them. I still remember when we used to come in the summer, my parents still had a certain eh…vision or picture of us, like I was when I was 17, when I left. They didn't see me grow up, so for them I was still the 17-year-old. Although I was already …35, for them, the first months, it was not easy for them to accept, I don't know, just leaving and not telling them when I was coming back. "Where are you going?" "What are you doing?" you know. It was not easy for them to accept that. It wasn't easy for me either, to report everything [we laugh]. Eh…it was not easy for them to accept that we needed our privacy. In Lebanon, when you live in a family, there is no privacy at all. But they got used to it. And we got used to it, not to be that private [laughing]. I think it helped a lot to live with them for a while.[70]

Even though I have argued that a return to the family in many ways represents a form of continuity, the example illustrates that the negotiation of practices was still necessary and sometimes caused disagreements, also with close relatives. I also observed that, for instance, Samira censored her opinion in the company of relatives. Although she was happy to have returned, she still felt a tension in belonging to – or between - different places. First of all, she felt divided because her three oldest

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[70] This case provides another example where the border between the private and the public sphere is blurred.

children stayed behind in Norway. Somewhat ironically, she had managed to join her extended family, but in the same act she had split her nuclear family.

Secondly, she also felt the practical difficulties of life in Lebanon. Similar to what was previously discussed, Samira found that daily life could be very impractical. She often compared everyday practices in Lebanon and Norway: living costs, different forms of shopping, different kinds of heating, different ways of paying bills. However, when Samira and I spoke about the negative aspects of her return, our discussion tended to take place in the female space of the kitchen rather than in the social space of the living-room (where we were often drinking coffee with other people). The expression of conflicting feelings about home and belonging was, in other words, socially mediated.

While her public return story focused on the joy of rejoining the family, the private stories in the kitchen expressed more ambiguous feelings about belonging. If she had had a difficult day, she would tell me that Norway was really better. The option of returning to Lebanon had not been as obvious as it was often presented. Likewise, the option of going back to Norway was still somewhat attractive, even if this was not expressed in public. Samira's restraints on her communication in this way highlight the negotiation that takes place when the individual's private sense of belonging encounters the attitudes of the social surroundings.

I believe that Samira censored herself because in the social interaction with stayees it was necessary to display a sense of belonging to Lebanon. In order to be included in Lebanese society, returnees often had to downplay their 'foreign side'. They had to learn to control their behaviour to fit in with their surroundings. This is illustrated in the case of Nadine, with whom I often went on a walk after we had enjoyed breakfast together. Nadine was a very social person, and she always greeted almost everyone we met along the way. Sometimes, because we were speaking in German, she would accidentally say "*Guten Tag*" instead of the usual "*Merhaba*" or "*Sabah al-khair*". I laughed, but she always made a face, expressing that now she had messed up again. She told me that her sisters became very embarrassed when she spoke German in public. Such obvious displays of being an outsider were not appreciated. Since Nadine did not speak German on purpose, the action clearly expressed to her sisters that Nadine was not only the person they knew, but also somebody else who had ties to another place.

One may wonder why such actions were important, considering that Lebanon is a country in which migration is common. However, in the described situation the important point was not having been away, but rather not being able immediately to adapt. Returnees were expected to have the necessary social knowledge to conform to social norms and to express that they were part of Lebanese society. In this way, it was the ability to act in culturally accepted ways that displayed whether or not one belonged. An action as simple as putting on a seatbelt just to drive within the city was, for instance, something that immediately displayed to others that the person had not lived all her life in Lebanon.[71]

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[71] It is not common practice to use seatbelts while driving in Lebanon, particularly not for driving within the cities.

Although this form of negotiation was widespread, it is necessary to differentiate between the social environments in which returnees interacted. I have claimed that returnees needed to display 'being Lebanese', but certainly different social groups have different understandings of exactly what that means. Within another social group, it is not certain that Nadine's *Guten Tag* would have been renounced in the same way. In addition, in the upper levels of professional life, returnees had more interaction with other returnees, who probably did not sanction each other in the same way. The reason that I am not treating this issue in further detail is that most of the people that I knew did not interact much with other returnees. Upon return people joined a local social environment consisting of kin, sect, neighbourhood, and perhaps professional relations. As previously mentioned, few of the people I met maintained contact with people whom they had met abroad if they did not know each other from before. In this way, the returnees that I interviewed did not enter any returnee community.

Another point to be taken into consideration is that returnees' own definition of what it meant to be Lebanese did not always correspond with the definitions of others. The country had changed while they were abroad, and the return thereby also implied the confrontation of nostalgic images with reality (Dahlbäck 1998:211). This issue is well illustrated by the disappointment of a woman who had returned from Australia. While abroad, she had been active in a Lebanese community organization in which they celebrated many Lebanese events. Personally, she had taught *dabke* (folk dance) for many years. Upon her return to a small Lebanese village, she immediately offered dancing lessons in order to contribute to the community. With disappointment she had to realize that in Lebanon, there were no customers for Lebanese culture.

Returnees and stayees

Seemingly, the necessity of displaying belonging in the public sphere is closely interrelated with the fact that the movements discussed here took place within a context of civil war. Never before did so many Lebanese migrate at the same time, and never before have there been so many members of society who have lived outside of Lebanon. The social relations between returnees and stayees after post-war return are a topic that has not been widely discussed in the literature (Kibreab 2002:55). However, studies point to strained relations, in particular due to both stayees' and returnees' lacking understanding and acknowledgement of the suffering and sacrifices made by the other group (ibid.61).

Contrary to Kibreab, I have not studied the returnee-stayee relationship as the interaction between two communities, but rather as an aspect of inter-personal relationships.[72] Regarding the interaction between returnees and stayees, two comments are necessary. First of all, the categories of 'returnees' and 'stayees' are dynamic and relative. Even among the people who are considered stayees, many left their home and often Lebanon during the war when the fighting became too intense.

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[72] Gaim Kibreab's study (2002) focuses on the community relationship between the local residents and returnees in two regions in Eritrea that have experienced major population movements. He examines different variables that affect the relationship between the two groups and argues that when returnees are considered as bringing resources to the area, their settlement is welcomed by the local residents (ibid.77).

Thus, it is not the fact of having fled the fighting that really counts. Those who are considered as having left during the war are rather those who did not come back at the first possible opportunity, regardless of their time of departure.

A similar point is made by Macek, who writes that those who are resented for having left Sarajevo during the civil war are the ones who did not say goodbye or who did not keep in contact with the stayees (2000:142). Secondly, while there may be explicit tension between returnees and stayees, this tension often evolves around a number of related issues. In other words, rather than just being a matter of who stayed and who left, tension is based on perceptions of inequality, access to resources, and personal changes over time. Fuad M. related that, when he first came back to Beirut, his former colleagues and friends were very happy to see him. They were looking forward to reviving the friendship of the old days. After a while, however, they told him, "You have changed". "Of course," he replied, "and so have you."

The different life experiences of migrants and stayees shape different attitudes to life in Lebanon and cannot avoid affecting interpersonal relationships (Habib 1996:101). Likewise, the people who return after many years abroad may not have updated knowledge on present day Lebanese society. When Samira's sister Naila came on a two-month visit from the United States,[73] she had a tendency to question matters that others now took for granted. Her attitude made one relative comment that "She still thinks that Lebanon is like when she left it 20 years ago. People who come back from abroad often think that we are a bit behind."

This last comment reveals how power relations and ideas of relative status are inherent in returnee/stayee relationships. Stayees were quite sensitive to the criticism that returnees might bring forth, because in the criticism there was sometimes the implicit meaning that Lebanon is a more backwards country than the European countries in which the returnees had lived.[74] When returnees criticized aspects of the situation in Lebanon, they often situated their criticism in time or space by referring to the conditions in pre-war Lebanon or in another country. Thus, they juxtaposed the country with another, better place. While almost everyone in Lebanon was critical of some aspects of the country, returnees had to be careful that their comments about the country were not perceived as comments about the Lebanese, i.e. the people who stayed. One stayee told me that in her opinion, returnees always think they know how life during the war was and therefore also how life after the war should be. They came during breaks in the war and started criticizing the condition of the country.

As an example, she mentioned how some would criticize the garbage in the streets as if they thought that Beirut's inhabitants did not realize that the garbage was there. Since the emigrants visited Beirut during cease-fires, they did not understand that during the fighting, life was focused on one thing only: surviving. Hence, the garbage was not left in the streets because 'the Lebanese' were lazy, but because they lived under conditions of war. According to the woman, the lack of understanding for life conditions during the war nowadays results in a lack of understanding for why

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[73] When the civil war ended, Naila and her husband actually chose to return from Kuwait to Lebanon, but after living in Beirut for 3 years, they decided to re-migrate to the United States.
[74] Indeed returnees at times expressed a perception of differences between Lebanon and Europe as being differences between traditional and modern societies. This is exemplified in the comment of one person I interviewed, who suggested that my thesis should be titled "East and West".

Lebanon's post-war situation is not better, which consequently leads to tension between stayees and returnees. Her point was supported by another person, who said that he did not blame people for leaving or criticizing when they came back, but he became angry when "they think that they are better than us". Hence, the relationship between returnees and stayees was mediated by assumptions or perceived assumptions about inequality. Therefore, the freedom of returnees to express belonging to other places or scepticism towards Lebanon was contested by the people who did not leave during the war. When returnees criticized too much, they would frequently be met with the phrase "If [Sweden] was so good, then why did you come back?" In this way, the possibility of the returnees becoming accepted by their surroundings depended on how they performed their return (Søfting 2002). Yet, whatever way they acted, returnees many times could not escape a classification as returnees, because they were inscribed by others in the Lebanese tradition of migration.

Myths about life abroad

In Chapter 2, I discussed how, for more than a century, Lebanese society has been affected by migration. This tradition of migration serves as the context in which movement during the war took place. Particularly among the working class, returnees are confronted with myths about emigration. These myths seem to be based on the image of the late 19th century figure of a young man who leaves his country as a poor person, establishes himself in business abroad, and returns as a rich person.

While some migrants may have made a fortune abroad, it is definitely not all migrants who have managed to excel equally. Nevertheless, upon their return to Lebanon, many migrants have not hesitated to show their accumulated wealth in status symbols such as big houses, cars, and consumer goods (Peleikis 1998:41). Thus, this dominant narrative about migration influences the way that many post-war returnees are viewed. Squarely put, they are expected to return in a better financial situation than they enjoyed when they left. Particularly among the working class, no differentiation is made between those who went abroad to make money and those went abroad mainly to escape the war. The implications of this are illustrated in the following example.

While he was living in Germany, Karim once travelled to Tripoli to visit his family. At one point he was introduced to a man whose cousin also lived in Germany. The man told Karim that his cousin had done really well there. He had a well-paid job in a good company and had really become a 'big guy' at his workplace. He controlled all that took place, who was coming or going, who was leaving or staying. Intrigued by the success of this interesting man, Karim took his address and when he travelled back to Germany, he went to visit him. It turned out that the successful cousin was a car-park attendant.

This ideal-type anecdote brings to the fore the fact that many stayees in Lebanon actually do not know the truth about their relatives' stay abroad. The fact that migration also involves hard work and many difficulties is something that has

generally not been conveyed from the migrants' tales.[75] Consequently, out of concern for social stigma, returnees do not want to tell about their problems or low status abroad. Having to live with strangers, as asylum seekers for instance do, is not common in Lebanon and is almost only the case for domestic migrant labour.

Some returnees further explained that they did not want to speak negatively about their other country of residence, because they felt that this would give a wrong impression of that place. They argued that when they had experienced so many positive things there, why should they speak about the negative? Mostly, however, people felt that their sorrows were to be kept their own. Thus, they did their best to live up to the image of the successful migrant. On one of my previously mentioned walks with Nadine S., she put on a very fancy outfit, quite different from her usual style. When I expressed my surprise, she told me that it was her sister's. She borrowed it sometimes so that people did not think that she only had one set of clothes to wear. To match the outfit, she also borrowed her sister's shoes, thereby making the walk quite uncomfortable for her, because she wore a different size.

This form of self-presentation and self-censorship was coupled with the experience of not being able to tell negative stories about the time abroad. Many of the people who had never lived abroad had the impression that life abroad was much easier and much better. In Europe, they said, you do not have to struggle for your material survival. Thus, it was not welcome to complain about one's situation abroad when others perceived the possibility of migration as a privilege:

> Ayse: "The standard of living here has really decreased. So many people think that life abroad is much better. They do not understand that outside [Lebanon] it's the same thing. It's the same problem."
> Marianne: "But do you then tell them that it's the same problem?"
> Ayse: "No. I think it. I say to myself 'but not only here'. It's in the entire world, it's a global thing: Life is difficult! But they say 'no, there is a government that helps you, there is this, there is this, there is this… Yeah, it's true. But it's not worth leaving my life, my culture, my country to go there. You should rather try to make it work here. […] There <u>are</u> difficulties here. But they think that there are no difficulties in the other countries. Maybe they're not the same difficulties, but there are other difficulties that the people here don't know. […] They say 'Why did you come?' Go there, and you will see how difficult it is!"
> [My translation from French][76]

The fact that people were only seldom able – or willing – to communicate all the facts about their life situation abroad had the implication that some people were met with

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[75] Migrants who come to visit their families in the country of origin often save money the rest of the year in order to be able to bring the expected amount of gifts from abroad (Salih 2002:58). They do not tell their relatives about their actual life situation abroad. This was confirmed to me by a Lebanese woman who had travelled with her parents from Copenhagen to Beirut in order to visit their relatives.
[76] Ayse and I spoke both English and French together.

disbelief or even blame for their return.[77] The people who were deported from Germany and who, in some cases, returned only to become a burden on their relatives sometimes received harsh criticism for their 'decision' to return. Their relatives could not understand that they had come back to Lebanon when they had much better conditions abroad.

Exclusion from the 'war community'

Although migration was generally associated with progress and mobility (cf. Stepputat & Sørensen 1999), the positive image of movement was contested when inserted into the moral context of migration during the civil war. This was expressed in different ways in social interaction, which is illustrated in the following story.

During my fieldwork, there were times when the political situation in the region became more critical than usual. The second Palestinian Intifada continued to escalate, the Hizbollah engaged in border incidents with Israel, and there was turmoil in the domestic political community in Lebanon. One evening I had dinner with Samira and the family on a day when rumours of possible Israeli repercussions towards Lebanon had been circulating. Samira was scared. She was nervous about the political developments during the last two months and feared the outbreak of another war. She said, "I am ready to go to Norway tomorrow, if something happens." Her daughter Ruba laughed and said that in that case, she would not join her mother, she would stay in Beirut. Samira scolded her and pointed out that Ruba could only make jokes because she had never really experienced war. I asked Samira: "Do you really want to go to Norway?" and she replied "I want peace!"

The following day I had coffee with Samira's brother and his wife. I asked him his opinion of the political developments. He was not too concerned and pointed out that the Israelis were always very precise. In the last years they had only bombed the power station outside of Beirut, and when they targeted something else, they always hit exactly where they wanted to. When I mentioned that it was my impression that Samira was more nervous, he commented: "Samira is scared, because she is not used to the situation. She didn't stay here to suffer with us. We suffered a lot. But she was in Norway. Now she is not used to having no electricity, and she gets nervous. It takes some time to get used to that situation, and this is her first year here."

What Samira's brother said about her was actually not correct. Firstly, she had been back for at least two years, and secondly she had also spent large parts of the war in Lebanon. In fact, most of her time abroad took place after the war. The example thereby shows how returnees were morally excluded from the war community. Those who stayed behind developed tight social relations based on their common experience during the war, and some felt a moral superiority over those who left. They did not stay to suffer and defend their country. In reality, however, there are multiple explanations for the choice to stay. In her study of daily life during the civil war in Sarajevo, Macek supplements the ideological explanations for staying behind with a

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[77] In general I found that the higher the social status a person had, the more willing s/he would be to speak with others about the negative factors of life abroad. Since the person had already achieved a certain status, s/he could reveal that migration also involves difficulties. Nevertheless, the topic remained private for most people.

few other reasons: People also stayed for fear of losing their possessions, for fear of losing the socio-cultural security that a home town or country supplies, or for fear of not being able to start a new life in another country (Macek 2000:45).

Making the choice to stay worthwhile is reached by transforming the decision into a moral choice, thereby condemning those who left. In other words, having stayed becomes symbolic capital for those people who did not or could not leave. Particularly among the well educated, many stayees found that they had lost status in comparison to those returnees who were able to educate themselves, advance, and make new connections during their time abroad.[78] The skills that the stayees acquired for daily survival during the war were no longer valued cultural capital (Nauphal 1997:4). At the same time, the returnees came back and received higher salaries than those stayees who were now perceived to be a little behind. In this way, emphasizing the symbolic capital of having stayed was a way of gaining status.

It is my impression that the criticism for fleeing the war has decreased over the years. The issue today is rather disbelief or surprise about the decision to return.[79] However, when criticism is expressed, age and class are two of the lines along which such criticism is divided. Those who left at a young age did not receive the same criticism (and did not feel the same kind of guilt) as those who left when they were older. Likewise, in the working and lower-middle class, emigration is not really perceived to be a matter of choice. People left in order to survive and sometimes in order to support their families within the country.

In contrast, among the well-educated Lebanese, the group of people who is perceived as having had a choice, feelings of guilt and feelings of reproach are more widespread, although the issues are not openly discussed. Instead, they are subtly articulated in social interaction. I met a woman who together with her husband made the deliberate choice of staying during the war. When she encountered new people, she was always aware whether or not they had been abroad. She said that, during a conversation, at one point it would always become apparent whether or not a person was away during the war. She further had more or less conscious, and more or less subtle, ways of getting at those who had left. For instance, she would deliberately insert seemingly innocent comments like "Oh no, that's right, you weren't here." Perhaps a part of the explanation for this interaction is given in the autobiographical novel "Beirut Fragments. A War Memoir" by Jean Said Makdisi (1999). As one of the few people who have publicly addressed the emigrant/stayee issue, she writes:

> From the beginning, there has been a peculiar keeping of
> accounts of who was here for what and who went away when

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[78] The academic environment is one example of a field where emigrants had the time and opportunity to do research, publish and establish a network, whereas stayees did not have the possibility of doing much else apart from the occasional teaching and trying to survive.

[79] In his study of post-war return to Sarajevo, Anders Stefansson writes that the returnees experienced discrimination and were confronted with stayees who believed they had a "monopoly of suffering" (2000b:4ff). Although I experienced tension between returnees and stayees, I did not experience the same kind of bitterness and public display of anger towards returnees that he describes (Stefansson 2002). I believe that this difference between our findings is related to the fact that the Lebanese civil war ended six years before the war in Bosnia, and that people in Lebanon have gained more distance to the war than people in Bosnia. It seems that social relations change over time as society is reconstructed.

and why and for how long. This account-keeping becomes particularly feverish – bitter, almost or perhaps I should say, triumphant – after the most intense episodes of violence. It is at the most frightening times that being alone is most painful (1999:209).

Conclusion

In sum, I have examined the complexity of returnees' construction and negotiation of notions of home and belonging in a post-war society. My comparison of different kinds of belonging within the private and the public spheres has highlighted that home and belonging not only have different meanings within the different spheres, but are also negotiated differently. The findings seem to indicate that the difficulties in negotiating belonging are most apparent in the public sphere. In the private sphere, returnees can generally create their own personal spaces of belonging, where they may seek continuity in practices, routines and interaction. However, in the public sphere they have to negotiate their cultural and social belonging in social interaction. It may be that home is "where one best knows oneself", as Rapport and Dawson (1998a:9) have it, but in many cases, returnees are not free to express all the ways that they know themselves. Instead their construction of belonging needs to correspond to the display of belonging expected by their surroundings, even if their formal attachment to another nation state (through foreign citizenship) is not challenged.

In particular, the chapter has pointed to two fields of conflict in the returnees' interaction with others. First of all, the political-historical context of the civil war in certain situations influences how returnees are perceived as belonging in the country and to which degree they are free to express themselves. When compared with the generally positive perception of migration, this shows how movement is imbued with different meanings over time. Secondly, much of the tension in social interaction concerns the issue of cultural practices. Whereas in the private sphere, practices are simply enacted, in the public sphere they are continuously identified as different. In this respect, place is used as part of the returnees' identification, because different places are associated with different forms of cultural practice.

As illustrated in the case of Ghassan, the lack of a sense of belonging to Lebanese society may lead to increased identification with another place and a different society. In this way, the returnees' articulations of home and belonging are influenced by both the daily interaction with a particular local environment and the interaction – whether practised or imagined – with a translocal environment. Assuming that the sense of belonging to another place may have been enhanced by the lack of belonging to Lebanese society, the data show that migrants' nostalgia is not just a phenomenon among migrants living abroad, but also among migrants who have 'returned' to their place of origin. Against this background, the points that I have made in this chapter lead to the concluding discussion of the study of post-war return and homemaking.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS ON POST-WAR RETURN AND 'HOME' IN A TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT

The overall purpose of this paper is to discuss the issue of post-war return. My point of departure was the assertion that post-war return does not imply "the end of the refugee cycle" (Black & Koser 1999). Rather it is the beginning of a prolonged process of re-integration (Rogge 1994, Hammond 1999, Cornish et.al. 1999, Stefansson 2000a). On the basis of my findings, I have argued that even several years after the return, the questions of re-integration and the negotiation of belonging remain significant to the returnees. Yet, I have also illustrated active processes of emplacement. Although returnees arrive in a place that is no longer 'home', this does not imply a lack of agency. Returnees act and engage in constructing new meanings of home in relation to the post-return environment, but with reference to previous life experiences abroad and adopted cultural practices (Hammond 2000, 1999:129). Thus, my focus on the everyday life has provided a more differentiated description of the experience of post-war return than can be achieved when focusing on the immediate return situation.

In addition, the everyday life that I have examined has proven not only to comprise daily life in Lebanon, but also the returnees' translocal and transnational relations to their other places of residence. In this conclusion, I will discuss these major points of the paper, first, by summing up how material, social and cultural contexts of everyday life affect the process of emplacement and the negotiation of belonging, secondly, by discussing the meanings of home upon post-war return, and finally, by pointing to the analytical relevance of my paper for the further study of post-war return.

Returning to a post-war country implies returning to a society that is still under reconstruction. In chapters 2 and 3 I discussed the political and economic situation of Lebanon which heavily influenced the everyday life of my informants. They were often dissatisfied with the fragility of the Lebanese state and experienced difficulties in constructing a sense of security. Hence, many of them maintained transnational relations to their other place of residence, because particularly foreign citizenship ensures access to resources, the right to mobility, and the chance to choose between homes. However, foreign citizenship is not a resource accessible to everybody. In Chapter 3, I illustrated how different people have different access to resources.

In this sense, although I have used the term 'returnees' consistently throughout the paper, the term does not cover a homogeneous group of people. Instead returnees form a heterogeneous group, they have different kinds of economic, social, and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1999) at their disposal, and, thus, encounter different return situations. Consequently, the study of post-war return needs to take into account the particular material and economic contexts in which the return takes place.

In my discussion of the socio-cultural context of return, I have pointed to experiences of both change and continuity. Lebanese society has changed, and so have the returnees while they lived abroad. Yet, in some cases my data also showed aspects of social continuity. In Chapter 3, I argued that contrary to common perceptions of post-war return, family relations often represent a form of continuity in the lives of

returnees, because close social relations have been maintained across borders. In this way, the returnees may have remained within the same social space while moving to different physical places. The fact that the family served as a "field of belonging" (Olwig 1999) independent of place highlights how social relations may be stretched between places – both during migration and upon return.

This, however, does not imply that the returnees were not confronted with challenges in the re-establishing of everyday social relations. In Chapter 4, I illustrated how the returnees had to negotiate their sense of belonging when encountering family members and other stayees. Upon return, they were confronted with their personal changes over time and with cultural differences in daily practices. Moreover, the experience of civil war still affected returnee-stayee relations and, in addition, people who returned also had to relate to myths about life abroad. Hence, the experience of return is not only shaped by those who come back, but also by those who remained and their perceptions of the returnees (Eastmond 2002:15).

Post-war return is mostly discussed as a movement between places and often as a movement between nation states. However, for the people who are moving, the crossing of social borders may be more important than the crossing of national borders (Olwig 1997b). In Chapter 4, I discussed how the return is carried out within different social spheres rather than in Lebanon as such. This analytical distinction highlighted a part of the reason why my informants often shifted between feelings of belonging and not-belonging in Lebanon. In the different social spheres they had different possibilities and limitations of constructing and expressing belonging. In the private sphere, returnees had a better chance of reconciling their attachment to different places in daily practices, whereas in the public sphere they had extensively to negotiate these cultural practices.

Although formal ties of belonging to another country (through foreign citizenship) were culturally accepted, the display of cultural attachment to other places was often met with disapproval. Hence, translocal and transnational relations were imbued with different meanings in different contexts. On the one hand, they served as access to material and social resources, but on the other hand they also constituted markers of difference that were associated with strong ties to other places. In this way, my informants continuously participated in processes of inclusion and exclusion where they negotiated their sense of socio-cultural belonging to different places. Emplacement was not just a local event, it was also a translocal event. Home and belonging were continuously negotiated in an ongoing interaction between 'here' and 'there', inclusion and exclusion, and ideas of rootedness vs. experiences of change.

In the emplacement process, the identification with Lebanese society was based on different factors than identification with places abroad. Local emplacement took place by drawing on notions of origin through which returnees related to their background, family, childhood memories, religious affiliation, and so on. Emplacement abroad was rather based on changed values and attitudes to a place of living, adopted cultural practices, notions of security, and even nostalgic images of a place of belonging. As illustrated in Chapter 4, for some returnees the lack of identification with Lebanese society led to an increased sense of belonging to other places.
Consequently, for the people I interviewed, notions of 'home' were dynamic, complex, and multi-sited. The different contexts of everyday life implied that

returnees moved between homes – in terms of migration between countries and in terms of movement between different social spheres and social spaces. These homes – material homes, social homes, cultural homes, symbolic homes – do not necessarily coincide. Different places may represent different kinds of home, such as when the daily life in Lebanon provides a socio-cultural home and the relation to another country ensures a material home – or vice versa. Moreover, since the material, social, and cultural conditions of life are ever changing, the sense of belonging is not static and how returnees wish to be at home may change over time. In conclusion, the perception that it is possible to have an unchallenged, ultimate sense of belonging in a place may be nothing more than a nostalgic idea.

In my analysis of the construction and negotiation of home and belonging, I took my starting point in Rapport and Dawson's (1998a) argument that it is necessary to develop an understanding of home that incorporates movement. However, as previously discussed, Rapport and Dawson have suggested that the construction of home is about an individual search in cognitive and physical movement and that home therefore becomes "where one best knows oneself" (1998a:9). If we return to the analytical distinction between the three meanings of home that I have discussed in this paper (home as a physical/material place, a nodal point of social relations, and a personal space of identification), I believe that my findings raise a critique of Rapport and Dawson's approach.

Although many studies of (forced) migration tend to prioritize issues of identity, my findings show that the returnees were not free in creating home and belonging. They were both tied to particular material contexts of life and embedded in social relations. Hence, while home exists also as a "metaphorical space of personal attachment and belonging" (Armbruster 2002:20), the construction of this meaning of home is seldom to be separated from the conditions of home as lived experience, i.e. the material, social, and political contexts of daily life. As Olwig writes, in narratives home may be something very abstract, but in the everyday life it is often very concrete (Olwig 1998:235).

In the case of my informants, return seems to have been most successful for those returnees who had the possibility to combine different forms of home in their daily life. They were the ones who were materially and culturally able to make their own private space where different practices were incorporated and who also felt culturally and socially more at ease in Lebanese society. The people who could reconcile the private and the public were the ones who best managed to make a place of their own, rather than living 'between homes'.

As I argued in Chapter 1, the concept of return has been criticized in studies of repatriation and migration, because it implies that people come back in time and space to a previously existing, well-known place and condition (Hammond 1999:230, Warner 1994). Moreover, the notion of return implies a permanent settlement in the country of origin (Peleikis 1998). I have tried to move beyond this criticism by applying a transnational approach to migration on a study of post-war return. This perspective is seldom explored in studies of forced migration, where movement is often discussed as one unit of departure and return. Migration is analyzed as taking place *between* places rather than *within* social fields.

However, as already argued, also within war-related migration social relations persist across borders even when people leave the local place. Moreover, the people I interviewed provided examples of migrants who returned to their country of origin and nevertheless maintained strong economic, social, and cultural relations to their former country of residence. In fact, they had in many ways adopted cultural practices that corresponded to a Northern European way of life and thus, they did not necessarily leave 'our' society to lead their former life style in 'their' society. Instead, they drew on transnational and translocal relations that were created while they were abroad, in similar ways to what migrants and stayees do.

It may be argued that return migrants do not maintain the same degree or kind of transnational relations after their return as they did while abroad[80], but nevertheless, I believe that the data I have presented raise the awareness that the perspective used for the study of migrants abroad can also be reversed to migrants 'at home'. Also in relation to post-war return, migration does not mean abandoning one place for another (cf. Olwig & Sørensen 2002). In this respect, rather than examining what may initially have been forced migration as a two-way movement outward and homeward, it may be more rewarding to approach this migration as forms of continuous movements.

In the case of Lebanon, migration has always played an important role in society. Although much of the migration during the war was forced and took place under terrible circumstances, it did not necessarily differ much from previous migration concerning the networks through which it was carried out and the kinds of social relations that were maintained across borders. Likewise, post-war return is not necessarily more permanent than other kinds of return. On the contrary, both the country's post-war situation and the sense of belonging to other places that I have portrayed make it likely that new movements will take place. Lebanon's long tradition of continuous migration will thus be reproduced.

As in the case of migrants abroad, migrants 'at home' relate to their place of living in different ways. Likewise, they make different uses of and give different meanings to transnational relations, partly because they have different resources and thus different constraints on their access to the transnational field. It is therefore important not uncritically to endorse the notion of mobility (Stepputat 2002:202, Stepputat & Sørensen 1999).

As Armbruster has argued, the notion of transnationalism implies a sense of coherence and continuity that does not always exist (2002:32). In fact, my data illustrate this point. Some of my informants managed well to incorporate transnational relations in their daily lives, others experienced tension between attachment to different places, and yet others did not have access to the transnational field. Hence, future studies of processes of emplacement and belonging upon post-war return need to further examine the meanings that people themselves attribute to their situation, their movement and their sense of belonging to different places.

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[80] For instance, I do not claim that return migrants establish village associations based on their place of residence abroad, or that they form lobby organizations to increase the knowledge about Germany in Lebanon (as one lobby organization in Germany tried to bring attention to the situation in Lebanon). Hence, 'reversed' transnational relations are individual rather than collective, and they exist as relations to individuals (family, friends, business colleagues) or public institutions (citizenship, bank accounts, etc), seldom to society as such.

Even though I have focused on individual cases of return, my findings also question repatriation policies in general. I have demonstrated that the people who have lived in another country for many years do not return 'home' in the sense that public political discourses of repatriation often assume. Hence, one may ask who are the real targets of policies that still define repatriation as a one-way movement in which it is necessary to abandon one place in order to 'come home' to another place. Instead of assuming a particular meaning of return, it seems necessary to examine how this movement is understood and used by those involved. In many cases, they may prioritize the possibility to maintain attachment to multiple places rather than the necessity to make a choice between places.

In recent years, the study of homemaking has tended to become an established canon within anthropology and the social sciences. However, only in few cases a dynamic perspective on notions of home and belonging has been applied to situations of post-war return, let alone in societies where migration is commonplace. By combining different analytical approaches, I have tried to leave behind previous assumptions about differences between forced and voluntary migration, outward and homeward movement, and the meaning of place and belonging. I have pointed to complexity and change in notions of home, belonging, place, post-war society, and culture, and yet I have also pointed to lines of continuity in forms of movement and social relations within different social fields. In this way, my paper underlines that focusing on the everyday life and the movement that it implies might be an excellent method to study how returnees may – or may not – move 'between homes'.

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