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DISCREPANCY IN ATTITUDES TO AUSTRALIA BETWEEN EDUCATED AND NON/LOW-EDUCATED LEBANESE IMMIGRANTS.

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Introduction

Educational experience prior to immigration usually influences the overall ability to adjust in a new culture, including formulation of attitudes, perception and indeed the ability to acquire a new language. The latter in particular can serve quite accurately in determining the degree of acculturation and a potentially successful interaction with the host culture.

Indeed an attainment of a high level of education (including the acquisition of a new language) does not imply a complete cultural integration. One can, however, safely state that the Lebanese immigrants who have attained a high level of education are better adjusted, more easily accepted by the host society and less vulnerable to exploitation than other members of their community.

Methodological Procedures

The research survey, which was administered in either Arabic or English, was conducted in 100 households in the Melbourne metropolitan area. 10 of these however, were non-responses due to a change of address, death or other uncontrolled circumstances. The sample was randomly selected from a total of 200 addresses which were obtained from various sources between May and August 1977.

The following criteria were set for selecting the sample: any household member who was 18 years and over qualified to represent his family. Secondly, the respondents should have immigrated to Australia after World War II. In all the sample consisted of 20 females and 70 males, whose characteristics are outlined below.

All of the interviews were conducted by the same researcher, thus making any possible bias constant. The method of personal interview was adopted because of the compelling advantages it enjoys in data collection over other methods. It permits, for example, a greater flexibility in clarifying questions and answers.

Sample Characteristics

The demographic characteristics in the present survey were such that the largest group of the sample (49%) fell between the ages of 25-35 years. Fifty five percent arrived between 1969-1977. Their religious background however was more evenly distributed. There are 31% Maronites, 23% Greek Orthodox, 14% Catholic, 23% Moslem, 6% Druze and 2% Protestant. The educational standards of different sectarian affiliates are marginally at variance. Comparatively, the largest proportion of persons with absolutely no education are Maronites (14.3%) and Moslems (14.3%). The second largest rating – though in comparison relatively small – is that of the Orthodox (4.8%); but no one from the three remaining categories, the Catholics, Druze and Protestants experienced a complete lack of education.

Level of Education

Because experience prior to immigration seemed to be a likely influence on the ability to acquire a new language, and subsequently to formulate shades of perception towards the host culture, it was necessary to take it into account. For example:

TABLE 1

Level of Education (90 Households)

Level of Education*	F.	%
None	8	9
Primary	30	33
Secondary	40	44
Tertiary	12	14
T = 90		100%

*Note: Level of Education for each category was defined as attendance at an educational institution during some or all years; with respect to 'None' it signifies all years.

When asked about the reasons for their insistence that their children speak Arabic at home 25 (out of a total of 58) parents stated that they had already decided to send their sons to Lebanon to choose their future brides which may also be a sufficient comment on their misgivings concerning Australian-Lebanese girls of the new generation.

TABLE 2*

Level of Education, by Verbal Fluency in English

Verbal Knowledge	Level of Education		
	None-Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Little English	68.4%	26 27.5%	11 -
'Fair'	23.7%	9 45.0%	18 16.7% 2
Quite Fluent	7.9%	3 27.5%	11 83.3% 10
N =	38	40	12
Total:			90
$\chi^2 = 36.89937$	df = 4	Cramer's V = 45277	
sig. = .01	N = 90		

*This table appeared in *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 1979, 4, 1.

The underlying assumption when introducing fluency in spoken English as an indicator, is that language is a major factor in the acculturation process. It is thus, expected that highly educated (Lebanese) migrants would adapt much more easily to the host community, however great their sensitivity to slights inflicted on them by members of that community. Table 2 illustrates that the direction of the results favours a high fluency of English amongst Secondary and Tertiary educated groups.

1. Favourable Attitudes to Australia, by Education

The variety of responses outlined in Table 3 are the outcome of statements which range from the very accurate and articulate to the vague and confused. For example, the following response was obtained in reply to the original question:

As you and I know . . . in Australia you can do anything you like as long as you don't make a mistake. Nobody tells you what to do . . .

where you are going or coming . . . why you don't like the Prime Minister. Over there (in Lebanon) if the police dislike you they will put in jail.

On a different note, it is relevant to note that the concept of social services is quite alien to the Lebanese. The system in Lebanon is based on a capitalistic form of free enterprise which dispenses with collection of income taxes. The economically deprived (who could be said to make up approximately 90% of the population) suffer the burden of astronomical hospital, medical and educational fees. The relatively high response rate regarding social justice (11 persons) and security of living (13 persons) is thus quite understandable.

TABLE 3
Favourable Aspects of the Australian Culture

Responses	Frequency of Response
1. Freedom	23
2. Social justice, law and order	11
3. Security of living	13
4. Employment opportunities	6
5. Peace	8
6. Individual rights and privacy	5
7. Standard of living	3
8. Social services	5
9. Friendliness and informality	3
10. Opportunities in education	1
11. Straightforwardness	2
12. Generosity to the needy	1
13. Making money	1
14. Absence of religious discrimination	1
15. Cleanliness	1
16. Absolutely nothing	3
17. Everything	1
18. Do not know	1
19. Absence of racial discrimination	1

N = 90

Question: *What is the best thing about living in Australia?*

TABLE 4
Responses to the Question: '-----?'; by Level of Education

Responses	None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Don't know	2 25.0%	1 3.3%	1 2.5%	--
Freedom	3 37.5%	14 46.7%	5 12.5%	6 50.0%
Social Services/ Economic Security	2 25.0%	7 23.3%	16 40.0%	5 41.7%
Law and Order	1 12.5%	6 20.0%	12 30.0%	--
Other	--	2 6.7%	6 15.0%	1 8.3%
N	8	30	40	12
$\chi^2 = 25.17597$ sig. = .01	df = 12 N = 90		Cramer's V = .30536	

The level of significance in the t-test (.01) suggests a very strong relationship between levels of education and attitudes about living in Australia. Results in Table 4 show a trend whereby the responses of a substantial majority of tertiary (50.0%), primary (46.7%) and non-educated (37.5%) groups are associated with 'Freedom', as compared with (12.5%) with secondary qualifications.

The most likely explanation of such polarized responses stems from two unrelated perspectives. Responsive to both social and ethical issues, tertiary-educated respondents would tend to view freedom as a philosophical entity. In contrast, people with little or no education probably tend to define freedom from the perspective of self-interest and opportunity for social mobility. While this group came from socio-economically deprived backgrounds, upon migration they are pleasantly surprised to find that their socio-economic movements are not restricted and superficially they have all the privileges and rights of other groups. The primary cause for their migration was to seek the very opportunities of which they were deprived, namely, for medical and social services, employment, and material possessions. It is likely that while their basic needs can be fulfilled in Australia, their primary worries can be eliminated. On this account, it becomes clear why 37.5% of non-educated and 46.7% primary-

educated gave 'Freedom' as a response as opposed to 25.0% and 23.3% respectively who stated 'Social Services/Economic Security'.

Having indicated the two most highly valued qualities in Australia for the Lebanese migrants, other qualities tend to be seen as superfluous, of lesser importance, or incomprehensible. This is particularly so as far as the non-educated grouping is concerned; while absolutely no response was obtained in the 'Other' category, as many as 25.0% indicated that they 'Don't know' what the best thing about living in Australia is.

2. Unfavourable Attitudes to Australia, by Education

TABLE 5
Unfavourable Aspects of the Australian Culture

Responses	Frequency of Response
1. Lack of family ties – lax familial discipline	7
2. Hedonism/Materialism	1
3. Sexual permissiveness	17
4. Necessity to compromise Lebanese identity	4
5. Inflation	5
6. Excessive emphasis on sport	1
7. Discrimination	8
8. Neglect of the aged	1
9. Drunkenness	4
10. Divorce rate	1
11. Trivial life style	5
12. Weather	5
13. Apathy towards migrants	2
14. Do not know	2
15. Nothing	4
16. Fragmentation of social ties	13
17. Taxes	2
18. Lack of free time	3
19. Poor medical care	1
20. Delinquency	1
21. Impoliteness	1
22. Factory work	1
23. Everything	1

N = 90

Like favourable responses, the afore-mentioned replies to unfavourable aspects of the Australian culture were numerous and diverse. The researcher was compelled to aggregate such responses into further categories for the purpose of effective cross tabulation. The responses are examined in detail while taking into account crucial factors such as educational background and age differences.

TABLE 6
Perceived Worst Feature(s) of Life in Australia;
by Level of Education

Worst Feature of life in Australia	Level of Education		
	None/Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
(a) Sexual Permissiveness	29.4%	18.4%	—
(b) Unfriendliness (including discrimination)	17.6%	34.2%	75.0%
(c) Lack of spiritual values	33.3%	23.7%	16.7%
(d) Other	17.6%	23.7%	8.3%
Total:	100%	100%	100%
	38	40	12

$\chi^2 = 15.33040$ df = 6 sig. = .01 N = 90

The results in Table 6 indicate that a significant association does exist between Primary, Secondary and Tertiary groups regarding the main disadvantage that they perceive concerning life in Australia. Of the four responses given, the most relevant to our analysis is related to "Unfriendliness", a category to which other similar responses such as "Avoidance" and "Sense of Superiority on the part of Australians" were aggregated.

With respect to the three different groups, the responses concerning unfriendliness of Australians point in the expected direction. The proportion of responses on this item increases in a positive correlation with higher educational qualifications, and diminishes with lower qualifications.

Question: *Have you ever been discriminated against personally by Immigration and Government Officials?*

TABLE 7
Discrimination Experienced from Immigration and Government Officials; by Level of Education

	Level of Education		
	None/ Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Yes	2.6%	7.5%	25.0%
No	97.4%	92.5%	75.0%
	38	40	12
x = 6.36046 df = 2 sig. = .04 N = 90			

The proportion of Tertiary respondents (75.0%) was very high on ratings regarding unfriendliness relative to secondary educated (34.2%) and primary educated (17.6%). Apparently, persons with a high standard of education are more sensitive towards matters involving social relationships. Other responses such as 'Lack of spiritual values' (16.7%) and 'Other' (8.3%) were less significant. The results suggest that persons with a low level of education signified a low response (17.6%) to unfriendliness, possibly because of its superfluity to other matters such as lack of spiritual values and sexual permissiveness.

With respect to the latter item the reverse pattern is observed where tertiary educated respondents signified absolutely no response on the matter. As an example of the gulf between the sexual mores of the two cultures, one may take the seemingly trivial example of the wearing of slacks by females. In the Middle East the wearing of such attire is condemned by conservative villagers, both because of its sexual "suggestiveness" and because of its implications of challenge to the male supremacy.

One of the most typical types of response is related to what low or non-educated Lebanese consider lack of spiritual values (33.3%) including lack of family ties and laxity in the upbringing of children. Of this group it seems obvious that the main concern is to maintain a traditional structure among members of the extended family; whilst the ratio of

response diminished gradually as the educational standards improved.

Figures illustrated in Table 2 are as striking in their tendency as those in Table 1. The proportion of tertiary educated respondents who indicated that they have been discriminated against by government officials (25.0%) is significantly higher than either secondary (7.5%) or primary/uneducated groups (2.6%). The question of whether the first group are merely less inhibited in their responses, or actually feel that they have been discriminated against, perhaps needs further investigation.

Conclusion

The interplay between the educational variable and the variety of attitudes towards Australia as expressed by the Lebanese immigrants is statistically supported.

Levels of education were observed to be a determining factor in the types of attitudes the sample displayed towards the Australian culture. Thus persons with a higher education gave responses associated with social and ethical issues while persons with low qualifications associated their responses with material and personal needs.

The educational and linguistic differences between the groups analysed will most probably narrow with the maturity of the second generation as they develop a distinct outlook and code of ethics, and as they play an increasing role in communication between the Lebanese and Australian cultures.

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