The 1975 Lebanese Civil War(s):

The Origin of Conflict and a Conflict of Origins

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Abstract

This thesis explores how the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), a ravaging and recent conflict, is interpreted and studied in scholarly works. The lengthy Lebanese historiography on the conflict is riddled with various contradictions on all matters regarding the cause and origin of the Civil War. In this essay, four carefully selected narratives will be introduced and dissected to ultimately reveal the fealties and boundaries in scholarly works. The essay is divided into several chapters in which both the specific type of narrative and its framing devices are demonstrated. The authors' point of emphasis – domestic dimension, international affairs, or regional actors – determines the differences in the stories they tell. The study is primarily concerned with the effects that the War has had on historical writing and secondly with how this writing has affected the memory of the conflict.

Résumé

Cette thèse rapporte la manière dont le début de la Guerre Civile Libanaise (1975-1990), un conflit à graves dégâts dévastateurs, est interprété dans les ouvrages académiques. La longue historiographie libanaise sur le conflit est truffée de contradictions diverses qui sont clairement en désaccord sur tout ce qui concerne la cause et l'origine de la guerre civile. Dans cet essai, quatre récits à motifs différents seront introduits et disséqués pour révéler en fin de compte les partialités et les limites de ces travaux scolaires. Dans chaque chapitre, un récit et ses méthodes d'encadrement seront élaborés. L'objet d'étude mis en relief par les auteurs, comme par exemple la dimension interne, les développements régionaux, ou la situation internationale, marque les différences entre les récits. L'étude s'intéresse notamment aux effets de la guerre sur l'écriture historique et, en second lieu, à la manière dont cette écriture a affecté la mémoire du conflit.

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Introduction

"What wish is enacted, what desire is gratified, by the fantasy that real events are properly represented when they can be shown to display the formal coherency of a story?"[1]

The remains of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) persist to this day in the memory of its participants, its victims, and its heirs. This much contested event remains alive not only in discourse and debates but in daily performances that create and maintain borderlands between Lebanese citizens. Though the War has ended in a traditional sense, it remains observable in mobilising citizens in politics and in governing their interactions with members of different communities in society. This monolithic event delineates the spatial limits where bodies can interact and configures geographic hegemonies where outsiders rarely venture or only venture with the motivation of discovering these supposed foreign territories and their customs. In a paradoxical structure, citizens often find themselves tourists in their own lands.

These material divisions are the outcome of the lived experiences emblematic of a civil war, the unresolved and persistent contradictions in the intellectual arena that shape all imaginable discourses, and the utilitarian objective of legitimating the current consociational political system. These partitions have dissuaded many historians from attempting to write a history of the War, and those who wrote histories were accused of bias and their works were left unread. The reason for this silence is as complex as the narratives. Incompatible explanations – of whom was battling against whom and for what reason, of what sparked certain episodes, of why the conflict lasted for so long, and most importantly of who is most culpable in instigating the War and perpetrating the crimes committed in its midst – remain isolated from one another and dialogue is either perverted

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[1] Hayden White, *Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 4.

as a show of fealties or completely absent. These divisions are witnessed not only in the grand scheme of a nation but within the country's households where politics is a sensitive topic, the discussion of which is bound to unleash a fight.

This (singular) event(s), written, told, and performed, is contested, deflected, opposed, and vilified. Though most would claim it officially broke out on April 13th, 1975, few would agree that this was indeed its beginning or its origin[2]. The interpretations agree even less on the nature of the conflict. Briefly, some have painted the conflict as a botched social revolution that was perverted by the hegemonic political class and its foreign allies. They describe the prewar years as a period of growing social unrest and intermittent social upheaval. Unequal economic development, political underrepresentation, and the mounting tide of leftist and pan-Arab ideology created a novel space for a growing civil society to contest exploitation, demand better living conditions, call for a representative regime, and support a number of political causes that were not limited to Lebanon. Eventually, civil channels proved unfruitful and armed resistance grew as the only possible alternative[3].

Others have portrayed the War as a sectarian conflict. This hegemonic perspective has had several social and political repercussions in the postwar years. Scholars and citizens alike defend this point of view depending on their sectarian affiliation. They can be divided into two broad

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[2] All of the narratives that will be analysed trace the origin of the War to a distant time ranging from the Ottoman Empire, to the French Mandate, or even to Lebanon's post-independence period specifically after 1967 when the Palestinian armed presence became prevalent.

[3] These are some of the works that are representative of this view: Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," *MERIP Reports,* no. 19 (August 1973): 3-14; Salim Nasr, "Backdrop to Civil War: The Crisis of Lebanese Capitalism," *MERIP Reports* no. 73 (December 1978): 3-13; Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbek, *Al-Judhur al-Tārīkhīyyah lil-Harb al-Lubnānīyyah* (The Historical Roots of the Lebanese War) (Beirut: Dar Nawfal, 1993); Mahdi 'Amil, *Al-Nazarīyyah fī al-Mumārasah al-Siyāsīyyah: Bahth fī Asbāb al-Harb al-Ahlīyyah fī Lubnā*n (Theory of Political Practice: a Study of the Causes of Civil War in Lebanon) (Beirut: Dar al-Farabī, 1990); Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007); Muhsin Ibrahim, *Al-Harb al-Ahlīyyah al-Lubnānīyyah wa-Azmat al-Wad' al-'Arabī* (The Lebanese Civil War and the Arab Crisis) (Beirut: Beirut al-Masā', 1985).

categories. The first group focuses on the increasing armed presence of the Palestinians. They argue that this factor destabilised not only the security and integrity of the Lebanese territory but also the sovereignty of the Lebanese State. This portrayal is often associated with the Christian Maronites and this religious group's actions during the conflict are justified as defending the Lebanese government and its boundaries. The other Lebanese actors in this narrative, under the umbrella of the Lebanese National Movement (LNM)[4], and predominantly considered Muslim, are blamed for causing antagonism between Lebanese citizens by associating with the Palestinian cause[5]. The leaders of this movement are seen as opportunistic in seizing the Palestinian struggle to pursue their own political ambitions[6].

The other, counter-sectarian, narrative portrays the prewar years as subjugation to political Maronitism or rather Maronite hegemony[7]. These narratives describe the political system as a partial and closed system acting in the interest of a single sect and a small minority of wealthy individuals. The government's supposed inaction towards the destructive Israeli raids coupled with economic policies that were seen to favor the Maronites alienated and disenfranchised part of the

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[4] The Lebanese National Movement was originally founded in 1969 by Kamal Jumblatt and several other leftist parties. It was at its peak a coalition of twelve parties namely the Progressive Socialist Party, the Lebanese Communist Party, the Organisation for Communist Action in Lebanon, and the Independent Nasserite Movement or simply Al-Murabitoun. They all espoused different ideological currents including Nasserites, Baathists, and Communists. It was one of the main fronts during the War and an ally of the Palestinian resistance.

[5] Fawwaz Traboulsi, "Organisation for Communist Action," interview by Michele Salkind, *MERIP Reports* no. 61 (Oct. 1977): 5.

[6] These are some of the sources that focus on the external dimension of the conflict: Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of the Internationalisation of Communal Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities: the Making and Politics of the 1943 National Pact* (Oxford: Center for Lebanese Studies, 1991); Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967-1976* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000); Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War: Lebanon, 1958-1976,* (London: Ithaca Press, 1976).

[7] These are examples of sources that focus on the internal dimension of the conflict: Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict: Looking Inward* (London, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998); Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Center for International Affairs, 1979); Fuad Faris, "The Civil War in Lebanon," *Race and Class* 18 no.2 (August 1976): 173-184; Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," In *Lebanon in Crisis: Participants and Issues,* P. Edward Haley and Lewis Snider (eds.) (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1979).

population. In this scenario, the Lebanese army is judged to have been an extension of Maronite control and a means to ensure continued exploitation[8]. Though both these narratives can be qualified as sectarian, their points of emphasis are radically different. While the "Maronite" narrative focuses on the external dimension, namely the nefarious influence of foreign actors, the "Muslim" perspective – this term should be used with caution since it is a not a monolithic group and later on I will outline the variations – focuses on the internal dimension, namely this governmental arena and the actions of the Lebanese army.

The third and last pattern comprises those narratives that emerged mostly in the later years of the War and especially after the general amnesty laws were decreed in 1991. A broad term "a war of and for others" describes this perspective. This term was especially popularised in the 1990s and can often be heard in informal discussions of the event[9]. With the passing of time, the meaning and the original intentions of the War became lost. Moreover, a desire to move past this violent event required a practical solution that absolved the Lebanese citizenry from guilt and responsibility. In this narrative, events are vaguely recollected and the status of victimhood is extended to all. Instead, the culprits become actors from beyond the Lebanese territory and the main instigators are those interested in reaping capital and influence. This interpretation governs memorial phenomenon in civil society.

I will analyse in-depth a few sources that exemplify each trend. As such, this thesis will not be a comprehensive historiography and some important works have been omitted. Despite my initial desire to combine scholarly works with cultural productions, certain limitations, namely the scope of this thesis, forced me to make the difficult decision of excluding the latter from this

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[8] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East,* 67-68.
[9] Ghassan Tueni, *Une Guerre Pour Les Autres* (Paris : J.C. Lattes, 1985).

analysis. Hopefully, future writings will take into consideration the various means citizens use to put forward their perceptions of the past. Cultural productions are some of the most direct mechanisms to bring about dialogue on a daily basis. This inclusion would also corroborate the scope of history as having expanded well beyond the confines of academic works despite the disapproval of some.

The selection I have followed seems untraditional and somewhat peculiar. I will divide the thesis into three chapters in line with the patterns I distinguished and briefly outlined above. I also acknowledge that this is a selective and categorical act that might obscure some elements by grouping them into a single framework. Moreover, the partisanship label might alienate some of the authors that I am analysing. Yet, given the divisive nature of the event, ideas that I have grouped are not homogeneous and the differences within each collective will be assessed. I have divided these three trends according to the types of silences embedded within the narrative and their respective implications. The first part, titled "Alternative Narratives", deals with those stories that reposition the evidence to deny the existence of an intercommunal conflict in the original spark. The authors tend to be left-leaning and they reveal parts of history that have been deliberately obscured in the postwar years. The second part is concerned with "Sectarian Narratives". These are evidently narratives that are divided according to the sect with which they affiliate. Within this part, I will introduce two main sectarian perspectives. Though these narratives are different from one another, they have been grouped in a single chapter simply because their methods of production are similar. They rely unevenly on different sources and archives in order to corroborate their points of view, which stand in complete opposition to each other. Finally, the third and last part, "A War of Others", reveals outright how scholars and then citizens attempt to reconcile conflicts of history or a history of conflict. This outlook deals primarily with the memory

of the War and its relationship to the present. Before analysing the framing devices in each chapter, I will attempt to bridge the various stories into a single narrative by using a first-person narration.

Before beginning the first chapter, "Alternative Narratives", which will primarily deal with leftist narratives and their portrayal of the Lebanese War, I will introduce some theoretical and methodological considerations that I have encountered throughout my research. These ideas and questions have emerged through readings that did not specifically concern the Civil War but did in fact shape my thinking about the conflict.

Theory, Methodology, and the Meaning of Narrative

Though these authors are narrating the same event and using similar sources to do so, they draw divergent conclusions[10]. My thesis is thus guided by a seemingly basic question: where do these persistent narratives originate from? To answer this question, I will venture into another contested borderland in historical writing between traditional social science and postmodernist critical theory. A historiography of origins will notoriously be categorised as partisan to the cultural turn. Yet, any form of social analysis, regardless of methodology and research rigour, will instantly alienate part of the audience. It seems paradoxical then to say that a social history of the War would be more divisive than an analysis of the divisions themselves. In a context of contradictions, a consensus would not only prove impossible but ahistorical. Approaching this event from a historical perspective has to complement the bifurcated narrations and understandings of the past as they were and as they are now. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, a Haitian anthropologist

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[10] This is a short sample of Lebanese scholars who were referenced often in several books: Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbek; Waddah Sharara; Kamal Salibi; Karim Pakradouni; Albert Mansour; Samir Makdisi; Samih Farsoun; Salim Nasr; Boutros Labaki; Samir Khalaf; Marius Deeb; Halim Barakat; Fouad Ajami; Hussein el-Husseini; Ahmad Beydoun; Antoine Khoueiry. Non-Lebanese scholars were mentioned even more frequently and many sources relied on the same cultural productions by Lebanese novelists and artists.

whose contributions to historical thinking and theory are invaluable, asserts that "human beings participate in history both as actors and as narrators"[11]. As such, mapping the intellectual arena of citizen-narrators can be a form of social analysis that reflects contemporary experiences of the War as well as the stakes present in its aftermath. It also pits these contradictions in a single playing field in opposition to the nature of the conflict and its aftermath, which have kept both ideas and citizens segregated[12].

Moreover, narratives are inherent to any fictional or nonfictional story. They are a means for individuals to organise the past into a causal sequence of events[13]. Thus, qualifying these stories as narratives does not endow them with a fictional dimension. The distinction between reality as past and knowledge as history created a binary between said objectivity and subjectivity. This partition originates in nineteenth century positivism and the making of history as science. This idea informs much of the public today and denies history as vernacular and process. This view becomes even more blurred in a society that values story-telling and the primacy of a single story over all others by rejecting them as neither factual nor objective. This segregation is worsened with experiences of civil strife, where the past falls under the jurisdiction of a collective and is not simply the reflection of a single citizen-narrator. Like all individuals, authors are products of a context and their position in society often informs their narratives. In an environment where attitudes and ideas about the War transfigure into markers of identity, subjects become contemporaries in a "continuous production of the past"[14].

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[11] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), 2.
[12] Ibid.
[13] William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," in *Journal of American History* 78, no.4 (1992): 1349.
[14] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 16.

Narrative as a literary form requires the past to be configured as a logical sequence of events. The various components of its single structure are then endowed with value, which allows us to recuperate the underlying motivations of the story. William Cronon, a well-known environmental historian, calls this process "a covert exercise of power: it inevitably sanctions some voices while silencing others"[15]. The component I have chosen to focus on is the given origin(s) of the War. This narrow emphasis is not only guided by pragmatism and the limited scope of a thesis; it is also chosen because historians and citizens alike obsess over the origin of an event, attempting to find in it, or endow it with, an overarching explanation of the causes and culprits of the War. Even if this fixation on the origin lends to a teleological explanation of the past and definition of the present, this structural planning and the value given to beginnings seems inevitable. Although it should be noted that what begins a War does not necessarily sustain it, the origin often transfigures into a metonymy of the War as a whole, its perpetrators, its deceitful ending, and its main victims. Moreover, the origin is under no single party's jurisdiction. Later events claimed many victims and those whose suffering was most acquired the right to claim that event as their own. Victimhood lends credibility to the story. The beginning, unsullied by future actions, can be refashioned to justify those very actions. Hence, all parties have an interest in reclaiming the start as their own.

The Origin of the War: A Controversy

In order to ground this analysis and examine the controversies surrounding the beginning(s) of the Civil War, I have selected a number of sources eclectically. As I mentioned earlier, this is not a comprehensive historiography. I will only take into consideration academic works even

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[15] William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," 1350.

though historical writing, especially in a context of civil strife, is mostly informed by sites outside of academia. In fact, the authors of a large number of the works analysed in these chapters draw inspiration from their own multifaceted experiences during the War. Moreover, given that these chapters are concerned with competing national narratives, I will consider only Lebanese scholars or those individuals who either survived the War or lived in its aftermath in Lebanon. While recognising the important work and role of non-Lebanese scholars, the international community does not face the same political pressures and considerations, nor the same national loyalties to certain constituencies or modes of thought, as those who endured the War or were brought up in its aftermath. Although the works span decades, this was done purposefully to show continuation and also slight changes in narratives with added thought on nation-building and reconciliation. The exclusive inclusion of authors by nationality or experience should lend a sensibility to understanding the deep-rooted nature of the division among these narratives rather than a criticism of it. As we will see, the authors, like citizens, are deeply divided over the controversies of War. It is easy to dismiss such divisions as another product of conflict; it is much more difficult to analyse them without denying them any validity. Hence, a "national" inclusivity helps demonstrate how some authors criticize other's experiences while attempting to legitimize their own. In other words, from a single vantage point, a narrative justifies its arguments and denies its counters. By doing so, we can understand how these divisions have remained so persistent until now.

My objective is not to discredit any of these narratives but simply to expose them to each other. This consideration led me to exclude narratives written by high-level government officials and political leaders in the aftermath of the War. Even though all of these narratives are politically charged, policy-makers tend to have apparent and real interests in guiding the moral of the story, which often somewhat differs from the views of those they claim to represent. To elaborate,

politicians and policy-makers attempt to justify the aftermath of conflict, particularly the current sociopolitical makeup of Lebanon, to their benefit. Though scholars also impregnate these narratives with a social and political meaning, their interest in the aftermath of War is not so flagrant. Lastly, unsurprisingly most of the sources selected have been written by men despite the fact that both men and women survived the War. Men were most heavily involved in the fighting and continue to dominate the public, academic, and political spheres in Lebanon. Any random selection of works would lead to a male-dominated sample. This should not mean that women ought to be neglected from this history and the present[16]. In fact, female combatants, writers, and artists are plentiful. They too published memoirs of their experiences, issued analyses of the event, and created imaginative pieces to encapsulate their own interpretations of the War. Most importantly, women, like any member of the Lebanese community, continue to participate and perform in this historical process – namely, the "continuous production of the past"[17]. Yet, the following chapters do focus on selected historical works written by men.

A historical cliché maintains that history is written by the victors. Yet, political leaders after the War continued to reiterate "no victors, no vanquished", a statement that had originally been circulated after the crisis of 1958[18]. This begs the question of how the history of this past

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[16] These are sources that I have examined: Soha Beshara, *Resistance : My Life for Lebanon,* (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2003); Jean Said Makdisi, *Beirut Fragments: A War Memoir,* (New York: Persea Books, 1990); *In This Land Lay Graves of Mine,* Directed by Reine Mitri, (Qatar, UAE: DJINN House Productions & CDP, 2014); Mai Ghoussoub, *Leaving Beirut*, (Beirut: Saqi Books, 2007); Hanan al-Shaykh, *Beirut Blues*, trans. Catherine Cobham, (New York: Anchor Books, 1992); *Civilisées,* directed by Randa Chahal (Paris: Canal Plus, 1999); Regina Sneifer, *Ulqayt al-Silah* (I put down the weapons), (Beirut: Dar al-Farabi, 2006). I found sources written by women more difficult to find. Some secondary sources that are specifically concerned with women and war help identify a much broader sample such as Miriam Cooke, *War's Other Voices: Women Writers on the Lebanese Civil War,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Malek Abi Saab, *Militant Women of a Fragile Nation,* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010).

[17] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 16.

[18] According to Lucia Volk, this is a standard statement in politics whose formula allows for a politics of forgetting. It was first widely circulated after the 1958 War and reapplied in the 1975 Civil War. Lucia Volk, *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 22-23.

written and remembered. The indirect implication of this research targets the memory of the War. Geoff Eley - a prolific historian who contributed work on the modern history of Germany and the problems of nationalism, and later wrote about historical theory – posits "good history meant good politics, just as bad politics produced bad history"[19]. It is imperative to recognise that the writing on history governs the politics of memory. History, as a field and as a way of being, can discipline memories of the past. It could be an underlying and unifying recollection or a divisive force. Trouillot similarly argues that narratives often do not reveal what actually happened, but they do expose what is said to have happened[20]. The narratives do not function in a void independently from society. They play a key role and partake in higher "systems" that endow meaning to parts of the public sphere. Their representation of the past persists even if silenced in the public sphere. Though allegiances have changed, balances of power have altered, and values have been questioned, accounts in the postwar period continue trends that began earlier. The end of the War did not completely rupture the intellectual-identity arena. These narratives left in isolation and read selectively are persuasive and substantive. Thus, their juxtaposition and the questioning that follows *difference* shed light on the present and for the future. The reader might even become confused by this narration of various contradictions. This internal confusion accurately mimics the external differences in the current political and social makeup of the Lebanese nation(s).

This first chapter, similarly to the subsequent sections, begins with a summary of the patterned narrative that I have extracted from various scholarly works. I have found that the most effective way to organise the plot and the logic of the arguments is to narrate them in the first-person. The narrative does not reflect my own opinions, but this structure best conveys to the

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[19] Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 59.
[20] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past, 2.*

reader what the narrative entails. Each chapter will begin with a distinct narrative extrapolated from different scholarly works and the reader will easily be able to contrast and juxtapose the dissimilar tales. Following each narration, I will analyse its components, demonstrating the different framing devices and tropes used to convince the reader of the narrative.

Chapter One

Alternative Narratives

The Civil War did not begin as a sectarian conflict. Elements of this story have been purposely eliminated and forgotten from our past. The prewar years were not a Golden Age as some purport. Numerous economic, social, and political problems plagued the country. Hence, the origin of this monumental event cannot be traced back to a single incident. Structural problems had been inherent since the birth of modern Lebanon. The post-independence years served only to progress the nation into crisis. A hegemonic class and its imperialist allies worked to maintain the status quo political structure that exploited students, workers, and peasants alike. Protests and strikes had been sporadic since independence but increased in the 1960s and became common in everyday life in the 1970s. These were chronic symptoms of a failing economy and a closed political system[1]. Social unrest was well underway until social upheaval became a necessity to achieve better living conditions and equitable political representation. Armed resistance against the establishment was meant to break the political inertia but unfolded in a dramatic and violent way[2].

Social and economic frustrations had been exacerbated by Lebanon's entry into the world market as an intermediary between the Western world and the Arab East. Though Lebanon had been a point of penetration into the Arab region since the Ottoman Empire, this position was magnified with the growth of the Arab oil economies and the globalisation of capitalism in the 1950s[3]. External actors are often blamed for causing the War and yet War in Lebanon could not

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[1] Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," *MERIP Reports,* no. 19 (August 1973): 3-5.
[2] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 174.
[3] Salim Nasr, "Backdrop to Civil War: The Crisis of Lebanese Capitalism," *MERIP Reports* no. 73 (December 1978): 3.

have occurred if its internal structure wasn't favorable for it. Though some indexes have showed substantial growth during the prewar years, those numbers are deceiving. Foreign capital penetration led to hyper-inflation and volatility. The concentration of capital in the hands of the few led to uneven development and regional inequality. A study conducted by the Institut de Recherche et de Formation en Développement (IRFED) mission in 1958 showed a substantial income gap and social inequalities with over 80% of the population living with a moderate, poor, or miserable income[4]. This trend worsened, especially after the crash of the Intra Bank in 1966 and the June War of 1967[5]. After this period, Lebanon began to also lose its role as an intermediary. Stock market transactions were halted, capital investments in corporations declined, and the balance of payments deficit increased. The only continuity Lebanon witnessed in those years was that of stagnating growth and lack of redistribution[6].

The government, which was simply the sum of capitalist entrepreneurs, pursued unfavorable policies towards its workers and citizens[7]. This argument holds even during the brief Chehabist period (1958-1964) when the government increased regulation and attempted to play a bigger role in the public sector[8]. Since politicians and entrepreneurs had a vested economic interest, they encouraged the development of the service sector at the expense of industry and agriculture. In fact, the lopsidedness of this economy is demonstrated by the fact that two-thirds of the labor force, employed in agriculture and industry, had to struggle for a third of the GNP, while the 28% of the labor force in the service sector generated 68% of the GNP[9]. Growing social

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[4] Salim Nasr, "Backdrop to Civil War," 12; Samih Farsoun. "Students Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," 6.
[5] Samih Farsoun, "Students Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," 4.
[6] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 156-159.
[7] Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbek, *Al-Judhur al-Tārīkhīyyah lil-Harb al-Lubnānīyyah,* (Beirut: Dar Nawfal, 1993), 13; Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 171.
[8] Mahdi 'Amil, *Al-Nazarīyyah fi al-Mumārasah al-Siyāsīyyah: Bahth fī Asbāb al-Harb al-Ahlīyah fi Lubn*ān (Beirut: Dar al-Farabī, 1990), 196-208.
[9] Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," 5.

inequality was a given, however, regional inequality and gentrification in urban areas became one of the most visible outcomes of a skewed economic system and corrupt governmental policies. Continued Israeli raids in the South[10], the making of monopolies, and the expansion of the service sector led to large-scale migration from rural areas in the South and the Beqaa region into the suburbs of Beirut[11]. Yet, their fate there was not much better. Unemployment grew, labor laws failed to protect the worker and a lack of infrastructure meant poor living conditions. This was coupled with an expanding school system and a new labor force that could not be absorbed by the market. The pauperisation of the population was not only due to these economic policies but also to the rising cost of living and high inflation, which were caused by foreign capital's marginalisation of the Lebanese sector as well as increasing prices that were tied to the international market[12].

Protests, demonstrations, and strikes were limited to legitimate and sensible demands. Secondary and university students were the most vocal activists leading the majority of demonstrations[13]. Their demands were contained to arabizing the university curriculums to

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[10] The June War of 1967 was consequential in many ways. Arab States faced a disastrous loss and Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights and the Sinai. This led to a massive exodus of Palestinians from the occupied territories to neighboring countries which had begun in 1948. The continuous defeat of Arab states facing Israel led to the radicalisation of Palestinian organisations which now committed to the liberation of Palestine through armed struggle. Namely, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), an umbrella group of several parties, began operating in neighboring areas such as Jordan and Lebanon. These operations called on the wrath of Israel which retaliated mostly through airstrikes. This created not only tension between Israel and the neighboring governments but also between the Palestinian commandos and the states in which they were operating. Lebanon was the first Arab state to clash directly with the Palestinian resistance. This led to the Cairo Accord of 1969 restricting the freedom of action of the Palestinian commandos. The Jordanian government, on the other hand, conducted large-scale operations to decimate Palestinian networks and expulse the PLO in what became known as Black September in 1970. From then on, the PLO moved its headquarters to Lebanon. The South of Lebanon being the closest in vicinity to Israel and having sizable refugee camps, where operations were launched, suffered the most material and human loss. As such, before directly intervening, Israel opted to raid the South with almost daily airstrikes from 1968 until 1974. These raids led to a massive exodus into the southern margins of Beirut. Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).

[11] Salim Nasr, "Backdrop to Civil War," 9-10.

[12] Ibid., 3.

[13] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 169-170.

enhance opportunities for those who hadn't attended private schools in English and French. They

called for the expansion of programs because the two universities with the highest number of

students – Beirut Arab University and the Lebanese University – offered curriculums only in

liberal arts and law. Most typically, they asked for affordable tuition fees. The cost of education

was 14 times higher in 1970 than it had been in 1939 with wages hardly catching up[14]. Security

forces intervened often to stop strikes and clashed violently with students and teachers. In April

1972, one university strike led to the participation of some 20,000 students and their supporters[15].

Similarly, workers protested against exploitative laws that allowed low wages and dismissals

without cause. One of the most infamous strikes was led by the working class against the Ghandour

Company, a biscuit and chocolate factory. In November 1972, workers in Ghandour went on strike

after attempting to unionise and called for a standard living wage, reasonable working hours,

equal pay for men and women workers, job security, and the right to unionise[16]. The strike was

met with violence by security forces and resulted in the injury of several workers and the death of

Yusuf al-'Attar, a member of the Organisation of Communist Action, and Fatima al-Khawaja, a

member of the Lebanese Communist Party. Those leading the strike were not only fired but

prosecuted by the government, which refused to investigate police brutality[17]. Students and left-

of-center parties joined to protest the government's violence in a rally that attracted 12,000

persons according to Farsoun and 20,000 according to Trabousli[18]. A month after Ghandour

reopened its factory doors, another long-time coming strike shook Lebanon on January 22nd, 1973,

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[14] Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," 7.

[15] Ibid., 3.

[16] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon,* 1967.

[17] Joelle Boutros, "Azmat Ma'āmil Ghandūr: 'Indamā kāna al-Qānūn Yaḥmī al-Tard al-Ta'asufī," *al-Mufakkirat al-Qānūnīyyah,* last Modified August 21, 2015, http://www.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=1219

[18] Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," 3; Fawwaz Trabousli, *A History of Modern Lebanon,* 168.

this time led by peasants. The Régie, a private company which held the exclusive right to export and import tobacco, was responsible for the continued exploitation of tobacco planters. After many years waiting for improvement, the tobacco planters occupied the Régie's offices in Nabatieh. The demonstrations were again met with violence with the army shooting at protesters and killing two. A rally in Beirut followed, attracting 20,000 individuals in support of the tobacco planters[19]. These are but two of many examples. Demonstrations, protests, and strikes were quickly becoming monthly events in the 1970s. The final and most infamous protest occurred on the eve of the War in February 1975 and was led by fishermen in Saida against the creation of Protein, a massive fishing company whose board of directors included the previous president Camille Chamoun (1952-1958). It was again met with violence by security forces and the Lebanese army and ended with the death of Saida's Member of Parliament, Maarouf Saad (1910-1975), who led the protest. This sparked a number of other rallies and a crisis in government[20].

These events and this brief summary of the dire economic situation are of course not enough to explain why the War began. Socioeconomic demands disrupted the political establishment because of the latter's configuration. Calls for economic reform were akin to demands of deconfessionalism. Since the government and the Church were the two pillars of this consociational system, political leaders, sectarian representatives, and capitalist entrepreneurs were often one and the same. Any economic reform would necessitate a political reconfiguration[21]. What was new in those years preceding the War was that for the first time students, workers, peasants, and activists were no longer using traditional channels through their sectarian

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[19] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon,* 166.
[20] "Takhalā Jumblatt 'an-Iqtirāhātih wa-Iqtana'at al-Kataeb wa-Sakat al-Solh… fa-Baqiyat al-Hukūmah; Malik al-Salam Yarūwī al-Qussah wa-Yastaqīl; Majlis al-Wūzarā' 'Yuhassin al-Solh bi-Talbīyat Matālib al-Sayādīn, wa-al-Mu'almīn, wa-al-Mūwazzafīn," *Al-Nahar,* (6 April 1975).
[21] Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," 9.

leadership to make demands[22]. In fact, these movements taking shape were creating a leftist and militant movement and denying to sectarianism its flawed representation as a political recourse. Instead, they were growing beyond established feudal relations and becoming an independent political force. Most of the demands outlined earlier were secular and class-based instead of being religiously motivated. They had strong backing by both Christians and Muslims to the effect that the religious affiliations of the protesters were rarely mentioned[23]. Members of leftist groups, communists, and Arab national parties aided the protesters instead of leading this wide national movement. They often participated in rallies once security forces intervened, which was often[24]. The simple demand by the student body to arabize a curriculum was portrayed by the government as a negative consequence of a growing pan-Arab nationalist ideology instead of as a simple desire for equitability. Most protests were portrayed as instigated by or for the Palestinian resistance. Yet, most protests rarely centered on the Palestinian movement. One example was a rally following the Israeli commando operations against Fatah leaders in Beirut on April 10th, 1973[25]. Even then, many slogans were simply an outcry against the government's negligence and inability to protect its citizens and the residents within its border. Even though many have a stake in portraying the Palestinians as the disruptive element, most crises in government followed simple demonstrations, such as the Ghandour strike and the Saida protest[26].

Pan-Arab, revolutionary, and progressive ideologies became attractive to activists because of a growing national consciousness that perceived the real relation between government,

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[22] Mahdi 'Amil, *Al-Nazarīyyah fī al-Mumārasah al-Siyāsīyyah,* 314-324.
[23] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon,* 164-171.
[24] Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," 3.
[25] Founded officially as a political party in 1965 by Yasser Arafat, Fatah was the largest and most popular political party and guerilla organisation that was member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Center for International Affairs, 1979), 18.
[26] Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," 11.

capital, and sect. They rejected the conservative policies of the ruling classes in all Arab regimes[27].

The spark was not a single event but the accumulation of exploitation originating from a system whose reform depended on the very individuals who had a vested interest in not changing it. The convergence between the Lebanese movement and the Palestinian one created an opportune moment to rectify the regime. To conclude, it is not surprising that the social base and the backbone of guerilla forces during the War were pauperised peasants, workers, and students. This analysis also shows how the War was not motivated by sectarianism but by its rejection.

Although the following eight authors are treated in a single section, their perspectives are not identical. The majority were part of socialist and communist organisations in the past. Some quit before the War and some during. A few espoused different ideologies later on and most can no longer be considered part of the Left. Moreover, despite the fact that a great number of leftist groups allied under the banner of the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) during the War, this does not bring forward much theoretical cohesion[28]. Fawwaz Traboulsi (b.1941) and Ahmad Beydoun (b.1943) together founded an Arab nationalist group in 1965 called Socialist Lebanon. They then allied with the Organisation of Lebanese Socialists in 1970 and the groups became jointly known as the Organisation for Communist Action in Lebanon (OCAL)[29]. OCAL focused on adapting Marxist principles to the Lebanese national context and was an eager ally of the Palestinian movement. In 1973, Ahmad Beydoun and Waddah Sharara, another co-founder of

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[27] "Harakah al-Tahrīr al-'Arabīyyāh," in *Nidāl Al-Hizb El-Shuyū'ī Al-Lubnānī min Khilāl Wathā'iqih*, Vol.1 (Beirut: al-'Amal, 1981): 29-46; "Mudhakkirat al-Majlis al-Siyyāsī al-Markazī lil-Harakah al-Watanīyyah al-Lubnānīyyah Hawla Usus Tanzīm Muwājahat Watanīyyah Mushtarakah lil-Mashrū' al-Taqsīmī al-Tā'ifī," in *Wathā'iq al-Harakah al-Watanīyyah al-Lubnānīyyah: 1975-1981*, (Beirut,n.p.: 28 June 1977): 34-44.

[28] For a definition of the Lebanese National Movement, see footnote 4 in the Introduction.

[29] James A. Reilly, "Israel in Lebanon," in *MERIP Reports* no. 108/109 (Sep. - Oct., 1982): 15. One of the first joint communiques between Socialist Lebanon and the Organisation for Lebanese Socialists can be dated to February 1970. "Mudhakkirat al-Ishtirākiyyīn al-Lubnānīyyīn wa-Lubnān al-Ishtirākī ilá al-Aḥzāb wa-al-Fi'āt al-Tawaddumīyyah fī Lubnān wa-ilá Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al-Filastīnīyyah, Hawla al-Wad' al-Rāhin fī Janūbī Lubnān wa-Mustalzamāt al-Nidāl al-Watanī," published in *al-Hurrīyah* no. 517 (1 June 1970): 4, accessed, June 26, 2019, http://www.moqatel.com/openshare/Wthaek/FreeDocs/GeneralDoc7/AGeneralDocs23_2-1.htm_cvt.htm

Socialist Lebanon, left OCAL citing ideological differences over the party's direction. It should also be noted that both Beydoun and Sharara in the postwar years talked unfavorably of their experience with communist parties and claimed that they had been disconnected from the Lebanese reality[30]. In that same year, OCAL together with the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP), and other organisations formed the Lebanese National Movement. Muhsin Ibrahim, who headed OCAL, became the executive secretary of the LNM[31]. Fawwaz Traboulsi continued on with his activism until 1984 when he left Lebanon to continue his studies in the University of Paris VIII[32]. Before OCAL and the LCP, whose establishment dates back to 1924, began to work under the same umbrella organisation, they disagreed on a number of issues. Disagreements had prevented their merger in the 1970s. OCAL had criticised the LCP as being "revisionist" or rather having reformist tendencies[33]. Of course, these differences were reconciled afterwards. Two important members of the LCP will be given particular attention in this essay. The first is Mahdi 'Amil (1936-1987), who was one of the main theorists of the Communist Party and one of the most famous Marxists in the Arab world. He was assassinated in 1987 and did not see the outcome of the War. The second is Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbek (1901-1982) who was one of the founders of the LCP in 1924 along with Fouad al-Shimali and Artin Madoyan[34]. He quit the party long before the conflict began.

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[30] Saad Kiwan, "Ahmad Beydon: An Open Book On The Past, Present, And Future", *Al-Safir,* last modified March 18, 2004, http://www.bintjbeil.com/A/whois/ahmad_baydoun.html
[31] Fawwaz Traboulsi, "Organisation for Communist Action," interview by Michele Salkind, *MERIP Reports* no. 61 (Oct. 1977): 6.
[32] *Fawwaz Traboulsi Curriculum Vitae,* last accessed June 26, 2019, https://wirtges.univie.ac.at/Wiso/Gast/Traboulsi/CV_Traboulsi.pdf
[33] James A. Reilly, "Israel in Lebanon," 15.
[34] "Syrian-Lebanese Communist Party," last Accessed July 9, 2019, https://howlingpixel.com/i-en/Syrian%E2%80%93Lebanese_Communist_Party.

Finally, the last text that will be considered is entitled *Les Classes Sociales au Liban* published jointly by Claude Dubar (1945-2015) and Salim Nasr (1948-2008) in 1976[35]. Although I am excluding from my analysis authors who are neither Lebanese nor experienced the conflict, Salim Nasr is an important Lebanese Marxist sociologist and his collaborative work with Dubar, a French sociologist, is referenced very often in different works[36]. Salim Nasr wasn't an active member of any communist party when he wrote this book as part of his training as a sociologist. Dubar, on the other hand, was a member of the French Communist Party from 1973 until 1983. They worked together during Dubar's two year stay in Beirut from 1971 until 1973[37]. From this brief introduction of the various authors, it should be clear not every one of the scholars will agree with all of broad statements that I will draw. However, the differences amongst them should be regarded as fruitful as their similarities.

These narratives I have chosen to place at the beginning of this essay are now perceived as standing in opposition to more common stories, namely sectarian narratives and external plots. In fact, they are now often labeled as counter-narratives[38]. Counter here stands against the sectarian. They only acquired such a status with the passing of time, the tumultuous foreign interventions, the increasing sectarianisation of the Lebanese citizenry, the breakdown of the LNM with the entry of Israel in 1982, the changing fealties of militia members, and the waning agreement on the origin

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[35] Claude Dubar and Salim Nasr, *Les Classes Sociales au Liban* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationales des Sciences Politiques, 1976).

[36] They are referenced in many of the books that I analysed for this essay: Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007); Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Center for International Affairs, 1979); Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967-1976* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000); Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of the Internationalisation of Communal Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[37] Didier Demaziere, "*In Memoriam:* Claude Dubar (1945-2015)," *Sociologie du Travail* vol. 58, no.1 (Janvier-Mars 2016): 1-7, last accessed March 10, 2019, *https*://journals.openedition.org/sdt/278

[38] Sune Haugbolle, "The Historiography and the Memory of the Lebanese Civil War," *Violence de masse et Resistance,* last modified October 25, 2011 https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/fr/document/historiography-and-memory-lebanese-civil-war

of initial spark[39]. Even Muhsin Ibrahim, secretary general of the LNM, was quick to criticise the latter's practices shortly after the invasion. He accused the LNM of sectarian practices even if they did so to a lesser degree than other parties. He claimed their dependence on Arab states, namely Syria. Finally, he thought that the LNM incorporated traditional political forces which made it less attractive across regional and sectarian boundaries[40]. Despite the dispersal and dissolution of these ideas as a result of the progression of the War and later on its absence, they would be considered in their time as simple narratives. These narratives could explain part of the population's outlook on the conflict and were not necessarily counter-stories attempting to defeat more hegemonic tales.

In keeping with the previous summary, the War is clearly portrayed as a class struggle in opposition to a strict communal conflict. This rejection is at first visible through the naming of the conflict as the "Lebanese War" instead of a "Civil War" in several of the titles. Ahmad Beydoun deviates from this norm because unlike the others he asserts the communal dimension of the conflict. At the same time, he recognises the controversy over the naming of the conflict[41]. The communal center of the conflict that I will address later is replaced here by the concept of class. It so follows that the main protagonists are first and foremost the Lebanese people themselves. The authors identify them irrespective of their communal alliances by distinguishing the actors according to their position in the socioeconomic hierarchy as either the dominant class – including the dependent bourgeoisie, its feudal allies, its sectarian allies, and highly skilled professionals – or the popular masses – namely, the working class, peasants, students, middle-class professionals,

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[39] In June 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon to decimate the Palestine Liberation Organisation and its allies namely the LNM. Joel Beinin, "Criticism and Defeat: An Introduction to George Hawi," *MERIP Reports* no. 118 (Oct. 1983): 16.
[40] Ibid., 17; Muhsin Ibrahim, *al-Harb al-Ahlīyyah al-Lubnānīyyah wa-Azmat al-Wad' al-'Arabī* (Beirut: Beirut al-Masā', 1985).
[41] Ahmad Beydoun, *Identité Confessionnelle et Temps Social chez les Historiens Libanais Contemporains* (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Jāmi'at al-Lubnānīyyah, 1984), 362.

and the revolutionary left[42]. Since socioeconomic troubles are extended to all protagonists of the popular classes, most authors are hesitant to name collectives with the ethnic-religious markers that are abundant in sectarian narratives. For instance, Samih Farsoun's and Salim Nasr's analyses fixate on the economic structure but do not mention the possibility of sectarian enmity[43]. Mahdi 'Amil discusses sectarianism but only as a product and instrument of capitalism[44]. Muhsin Ibrahim focuses on political parties. Instead of referring to the "Christians" as a whole, he narrows down his discussion mostly to the policies of the Kataeb[45]. Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbek narrates the history of Lebanon, and only in the context of foreign meddling in the mid-nineteenth century does a discussion of "Maronites" and "Druzes" emerge[46]. In this context, religious collectives only seem geopolitical constructs. Fawwaz Traboulsi mentions Christians and Muslims but only in a context of giving examples of how revolutionary movements were garnering momentum across all establishments[47]. Ahmad Beydoun remains the exception in this regard. He analyses divisions between historians and as such he identifies their sects to demonstrate how each historian's sect affects their writing. His objective is to show how these schisms in writing mimic the confessional divisions amongst the greater population and how they remain pervasive[48].

The absence of a discussion about confessional identities and the predominance of class analyses renders the two identities at first mutually exclusive. Class consciousness remains more

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[42] Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," 12.
[43] Ibid., 9-14 ; Salim Nasr, "Backdrop to Civil War," 3-13.
[44] Mahdi 'Amil, *al-Nazarīyyah fi al-Mumārasah al-Siyāsīyyah,* 124-148.
[45] Muhsin Ibrahim, *al-Harb al-Ahlīyyah al-Lubnānīyyah,* 5-72.
The Kataeb Party or the Lebanese Phalanges Party was established by Pierre Gemayel in 1936. It is considered in these narratives a right-wing, conservative, and isolationist party. It was mainly associated with the Christian Maronites who were the majority of its supporters but not exclusively. Even before the conflict occurred, this political party had already established a military wing. During the War, it became the most important base of the Lebanese Front opposing the LNM and the Palestinian organisations. Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 21-23.
[46] Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbek, *al-Judhur al-Tārīkhīyyah lil-Harb al-Lubnānīyyah*, 95-181.
[47] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon,* 177-180.
[48] Ahmad Beydoun, *Identité Confessionnelle et Temps Social,* 9-22.

powerful than confessional affiliation according to most of these authors. Claude Dubar and Salim Nasr do not advocate for either specifically. Instead, they argue that pertinent and efficient analyses must take into account both the existence of a socioeconomic structure and a political-confessional one. In one section of their work, they conduct over two dozen interviews with people of different ages, origins, careers, and sectarian affiliations[49]. They demonstrate a clear and rising class consciousness among the interviewees who seem to be aware of both structures. They also establish that opinions about the strength and the role of class or confessional structures differed depending on the interviewees' position in the social structure[50]. Yet, it remains unclear how communal consciousness can intersect or even overlap with class identities. Perhaps, the conjecture is that at the time of the interview, class consciousness did indeed transcend religious affiliation. Nevertheless, the replacement of one identity in favor of another is referred to by Beydoun as a "fetishism of identity"[51]. Beydoun focuses on competing narratives in Lebanese history, namely of the events that transpired in the middle of the nineteenth century. He effectively demonstrates how these narratives are both produced and result in incompatible definitions of Lebanese identity. He remarks that though historians tend to fixate on sectarian identities, some deviate from this norm by denying conflicts their intercommunal dimension and establishing understandings of class as the center. He argues that this dissociation found amongst Marxist and nationalist historians alike tends to make of class another limited identity, and so he writes "the clergy is the clergy, feudalism is feudalism, and peasants are peasants"[52].

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[49] Claude Dubar and Salim Nasr, *Les Classes Sociales au Liban,* 132 – 197.
[50] Claude Dubar, "Structure Confessionnelle et Classes Sociales au Liban," *Revue Française de Sociologie* 15 no. 3 (July – Septembre 1974): 327.
[51] Ahmad Beydoun, *Identité Confessionnelle et Temps Social,* 574.
[52] Ibid.*,* 475.

From this brief starting point, removing the intercommunal variable will make it a deformity of conflict and not its cause. The primary cause of conflict will remain a class struggle on various fronts. As we will see, these narratives argue against the perspective that the conflict was a natural historical trajectory caused by Lebanon's traditional structures which allowed for the predominance of ethnic-religious exchanges instead of economic and social relations[53]. They set aside views that relegate divisions between Christians and Muslims as inherent and the explosion of violence as the eventual result. For instance, Fawwaz Traboulsi, in his analysis of the background to the Lebanese War, "From Social Crisis to Civil War (1968-1975)", elaborates in-depth on the socioeconomic grievances shared by the majority of the population; sectarianism and external causes seem less pertinent[54]. Culturalist and functionalist explanations of conflict, which define the problem in terms of primordial loyalties and/or transitional phases, deny the existence of social classes[55]. Hence, these narratives frame differently the relation between confessionalism and the socioeconomic structure. Through this redefinition of the interchange between the two structures, the authors can deny the exclusivity of the two identities by making them intimately interconnected while maintaining the primacy of a socioeconomic explanation. In the analysis that follows, the authors demonstrate clearly how socioeconomic struggles can become sectarian but how the impetus for war originated from the former.

Instead of perceiving sectarianism as a relic of the past and a remnant of tribal relations[56], they trace the beginning of sectarianism in Lebanon to the foreign interventions that occurred in the middle of the nineteenth century and climaxed with the imposition of the consociational system

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[53] Claude Dubar, "Structure Confessionnelle et Classes Sociales au Liban," 302.
[54] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon,* 156- 185.
[55] Claude Dubar, "Structure Confessionnelle et Classes Sociales au Liban," 308-310.
[56] Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament,* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1987).

during the French Mandate. Some argue that this gave the impression that the political structure was synonymous with the confessional body and that intercommunal relations constituted the base of the social structure[57]. However, some of the authors argue that the entry of sectarianism coincided with the first capital penetration and that sectarianism increased and escalated after the nineteenth century. Hence, these authors tend to link sectarianism with capitalism as an instrument of power. With the entry of capitalism, new social conflicts emerged that were not strictly confessional and therefore threatened the supposedly established social structure[58]. Even though the protagonists in the narratives are defined through their class identity, religious collectives also make an appearance but only once the new social forces and the class struggle begin to falter[59]. In his book, *The Historical Roots of the Lebanese War*, Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbek assesses the systemic roots of the conflict from the arrival of the Ottomans in the sixteenth century to the growing meddling of the French and British powers in the nineteenth century[60]. He focuses primarily on the violence that took place between 1840 and 1860[61]. These events specifically are prominent in Lebanese historiography and remain vivid in the nation's imagination[62]. He interprets the initial

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[57] Claude Dubar, "Structure Confessionnelle et Classes Sociales au Liban," 303-304.

[58] Ibid., 308.

[59] Mahdi 'Amil, *al-Nazarīyyah fi al-Mumārasah al-Siyāsīyyah,* 135-141, 148-153.

[60] Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbek, *al-Judhur al-Tārīkhīyyah lil-Harb al-Lubnānīyyah.*

[61] Between 1840 and 1860, Mount Lebanon became the site of popular uprisings and intercommunal violence between the Druzes and the Maronites. The first uprising led to the partition of Mount Lebanon into two administrative units in 1842, in what is known as the *Q'aim Maqamiyyah*. The first area was to be governed by a Christian deputy and the second by a Druze governor. This first institutionalised religion in the political governance of Lebanon. However, the new political system exacerbated tensions. Intermittent violence continued until a full-blown peasant uprising occurred in Kisrawan against feudal practices and exorbitant taxes in 1858. The violence soon spread to other areas in the Shouf where Christians claimed to be oppressed by their Druze overlords and vice versa. The events ended with extensive foreign intervention and the abolition of the *Q'aim Maqamiyyah* in 1861. These events took place in a wider context of change from political reforms to commercial expansion. They are interpreted in numerous ways. Some focus on the new social forces emerging because of capital penetration and commercial relations with Europe, while others focus on political reforms and its effect on the social structure, some analyse the sectarian dimension of conflict, and others study imperialist interests and its intersection with Ottoman reforms. The sources that exemplify these different interpretations are found in the following footnote.

[62] These are few of the sources that discuss the revolts of 1840-1860 : Antun Dahir 'Aqiqi, *Thawra wa Fitna fi Lubnan: Safha Majhula min Tarikh al-Jabal min 1841 ila 1873*, Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbak (ed.), (Beirut: Matba'at al-Ittihad, 1938); Salim Hasan Hichi, *Sijil Muharrarat al-Qa'imaqamiyyah al-Nasraniyyah fi Jabal Lubnan, 4 Vols.* (Beirut, n.p., 1976); Marwan Buheiry, "The Peasant Revolt of 1858 in Mount Lebanon: Rising Expectations, Economic

conflict as primarily a peasant revolt, launched in Mount Lebanon, against feudal overlords in 1840. He dedicates many lengthy chapters to primary sources and polemics describing the nefarious plot that was being concocted against Ottoman Lebanon by the Ottoman central government and the French and British empires [63]. Yazbek claims that while the Ottoman government in Istanbul safeguarded the Muslims, the British sheltered the Druzes, and the French protected the Maronites. He describes that once the peasant uprisings began, the feudal lords called on the help of the French and British empires. The latter supposedly pressured the Ottoman government to canton Mount Lebanon into two parts, one ruled by a Druze and the other by a Christian[64]. Yazbek finds that the clashes were initially limited but the institutionalisation of a religious order paved the way to intercommunal violence by redrawing the conflict along sectarian lines, distracting its participants from its socioeconomic origins. He adds that this rendered political and economic mobility as dependent on the backing of a sect. According to Yazbek, British, French, and Turkish imperialism set in place an internal structure that allowed intercommunal violence to take a life of its own as it was coopted to serve the interests of domestic and national actors[65]. The culpability of the Ottomans, the British, and the French is for him an

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Malaise, and the Incentive to Arm," in Tarif Khalidi (ed.), *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1984): 291-301; Caesar E. Farah, *The Politics of Interventionism in Ottoman Lebanon, 1830-1861*, (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies and I.B. Tauris, 2000); Leila Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Iliya Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society, Lebanon 1711-1845,* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968); Issam Khalife, "Les Révoltes Sociales au Mont-Liban," in Camille Aboussouan (ed.), *La Révolution Française et l'Orient : 1789-1989* (Paris: Cariscript, 1989), 49-57 ; Nadim Shehadi and Dana H. Mills (eds.), *Lebanon : A History of Conflict and Consensus,* (London: Center for Lebanese Studies and I.B. Tauris, 1988); *Nabdha Mukhtasara fi Hawadith Lubnan wa-al-Sham, 1840-1862,* Louis Shaykhou (ed.) (Beirut: Al-Matbaʻa al-Kathulikiyyah, 1927); Husayn Ghadhban Abu Shaqra and Yusuf Khattar Abu Shaqra, *Al-Harakah fi Lubnan ila ʻHad al-Mutasarrifiyya,* (Beirut: Matbaʻat al-Ittihad, 1952); Masʻūd Ḍāhir, *al-Judhūr al-Tārīkhīyyah lil-Masʼalah al-Tāʼifiyyah al-Lubnānīyyah, 1697-1861* (Beirut: Maʻhad al-Inmāʼ al-ʻArabī, 1981); Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2000).

[63] Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbek, *al-Judhur al-Tārīkhīyyah lil-Harb al-Lubnānīyyah,* 113-123.

[64] Ibid.*,* 109-111.

[65] Ibid., 120.

undeniable fact. However, native agency remains vaguely represented. His conclusion and his motive for writing this work is to refute the representation of these events, especially by "colonisers" who describe the Lebanese people as primitive and backward[66].

Yazbek assigns these arguments as the historical roots of the Lebanese War of 1975. First, he rejects sectarianism as a remnant of tribal relations by describing the confessional political structure as an imposition from abroad. This structure, however, supposedly functions with the cooperation of native leaders who gain a certain autonomy with time. Second, intercommunal relations do not exclusively govern the social structure. The expansion of commercial ties and the entry of capitalism create new social forces that become political by attempting to unravel the structure that oppresses them. Third, a class struggle, in this instance a peasant uprising, is perverted by external powers and the national elite into intercommunal violence. These three arguments are then transposed as an explanation of the Civil War. As we will see shortly, religious identities are portrayed simply as targets of division. The divisive plot is generally enacted by the ruling class and its 'imperialist' allies – only then do collectives acquire a communal dimension beyond the two original groups that are divided by their position in the economic and political hierarchy. This sequence removes sectarianism from the original moment of conflict and allocates it to a future time when the class struggle is threatened to fail. The perversion of the class struggle into a sectarian conflict is a continuous threat because it is an instrument that can be willed by the dependent bourgeoisie. The victory of the ruling class would not only entail the failure of the class conflict but the success of sectarianism. This argument then also negates sectarianism as a result of socioeconomic inequalities between different sects.

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[66] Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbek, *al-Judhur al-Tārīkhīyyah lil-Harb al-Lubnānīyyah,* 141. Karl Marx, as well, described the 1860 events as outcomes of primitive wars in Karl Marx, "Disturbances in Syria," *New York Daily Tribune* (August 11, 1864).

The rejection of sectarianism as an origin of conflict and its redefinition as a possible product of struggle rests on its re-contextualisation as a manifestation of modern political structures that have been in the making since the *Q'aim Maqamiyya* of 1842. Sectarianism as such becomes both a contextual process and a structural one that can generate crises. Yazbek's analysis of sectarianism somewhat portrays the latter as a top-down process initiated as discourse and legitimised by legal channels and subsequently propagated within the sect. Therefore, the agency of local leaders in his narrative is obvious, but what remains obscure is the agency of the rest of the locals. Hence, to this discussion, Mahdi 'Amil's contribution is perhaps the most comprehensive in bridging the gaps between Marxist theory of class conflict and its application to the Lebanese context. His structural definition of sectarianism is not void of a humanist and voluntarist explanation that defines praxis as well. Mainly, he argues that the Lebanese War is a potential rupture from both capitalistic modes of production and sectarianism. 'Amil proposes that sectarianism is simply a modern means for capital penetration[67]. He describes the socioeconomic formations in Lebanon as being governed by a Colonial Mode of Production that maintains the country's dependency on imperialistic powers[68]. At the same time, these formations are governed internally by political and sectarian "sectors", which keep the popular classes dependent on sectarian channels for political representation. He proposes that the general public is thus made to participate in this structure and efficiently inhibited from forming an independent political power[69].

While Yazbek's analysis centered on the role of foreign powers, Beydoun focused on social and cultural practices that accompany sectarianism. Combined, external events are described as affecting the internal boundaries of a community and its relation with others. Beydoun maintains

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[67] Mahdi 'Amil, *al-Nazarīyyah fī al-Mumārasah al-Siyāsīyyah*, 138.
[68] Ibid., 118.
[69] Ibid., 136.

that the structures at hand and exogenous events lend to a continuity in conceptions of identity despite minor changes[70]. Therefore, 'Amil's theory can be seen here as tying together the role of external powers and the national bourgeoisie with that of communal boundaries by making them mutually dependent. He associates the socioeconomic structure with its political dimension by claiming that class dependency occurs through sectarianism to the benefit of the bourgeoisie and its imperialist allies. Sectarianism allows for capitalist modes of production to persist. Its process evolves with that of capitalism and both are intimately tied to the history of colonial social formations[71]. The boundaries of a sect are reinforced from within and from without (as support for imperial powers) for the purpose of mobility. However, this transfigures here into a negation of independence because the popular classes would no longer be able to constitute a political force on their own. Sectarian practices established through sociopolitical structures become essential in maintaining the power of the dependent bourgeoisie and its foreign allies.

Briefly, even though 'Amil ties the confessional structure to its materialistic basis, class struggles emerge not only independently from sectarianism but also as a threat to the sectarian-political leviathan. The vanguards of capitalism are then one and the same as sectarian leaders. The emergence of a class consciousness beyond the confines of sectarian representation is linked to the beginning of a non-confessional political force whose desire is to end the economic exploitation that is tied to the confessional structure. For this reason, for instance, Traboulsi voices the problem as revolving around reform and security. Since economic reform would necessitate political change, the bourgeoisie is described as obstructing any and all reforms. Facing this inertia, "the middle classes, the petty bourgeoisie and the poorer classes prepared the slippage to armed

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[70] Ahmed Beydoun, *Identité Confessionnelle et Temps Social,* 452.
[71] Mahdi 'Amil, *al-Nazarīyyah fī al-Mumārasah al-Siyāsīyyah*, 135-153.

conflict"[72]. The established political structure and its socioeconomic formations render crises in Lebanon endemic. Hence, in these narratives, only a class struggle would end the political and social formations in Lebanon. The Lebanese War is thus conceived as an affront to the entire system[73].

Another difference that is particular to these narratives is the dimension of conflict. The conflict's dimensions are stretched beyond the confines of Lebanon's national territory to include on the one hand all foreign actors and systems bolstering and benefiting from the contemporary system and on the other those who are allied to the masses. Muhsin Ibrahim and Mahdi 'Amil contribute to this theory, which at the time was defended by the Organisation for Communist Action, the Lebanese Communist Party, and the Lebanese National Movement[74]. They posit that the Lebanese Civil War as an extension of Arab national liberation movements of which the Palestinian resistance is the most notorious and concrete example[75]. While imperial forces and reactionary Arab governments are described as bolstering the ruling class, regional movements of liberation, namely the popular classes in Arab countries, are described as being supportive of the Lebanese masses. Hence, in this dimension, the protagonists extend into two broad fronts where the class struggle is set against "imperial powers, Zionist and Arab reactionary forces, and the national bourgeoisie" that have a vested interest in the status quo[76].

Yet, despite the inclusion of non-national actors, this dimension of conflict remains "internal" to the class struggle. They redefine the word "internal" to alter the significance of the

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[72] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon,* 176.
[73] This is true for Muhsin Ibrahim, Mahdi 'Amil, Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbek, and to an extent Fawwaz Traboulsi.
[74] *Nidāl al-Hizb al-Shuyū'ī al-Lubnānī Min Khilāl Wathā'iqih*; *Wathā'iq al-Harakah al-Watanīyah al-Lubnānīyah: 1975-1981*.
[75] Mahdi 'Amil, *al-Nazarīyyah fi al-Mumārasah al-Siyāsīyyah*, 85-94; Muhsin Ibrahim, *al-Harb al-Ahlīyyah al-Lubnānīyyah* 191-192.
[76] Mahdi 'Amil, *al-Nazarīyyah fi al-Mumārasah al-Siyāsīyyah*, 90.

conflict. The stage of conflict remains Lebanon, but the Lebanese War is not regarded by the leftist parties as being completely under the jurisdiction of Lebanon's internal contradictions. For instance, Mahdi 'Amil thinks that this restriction would allow for "conservatives" to portray the conflict as a "sectarian" war between Muslims and Christians, or between West and East, or between "progressive" forces and "barbaric" ones, or even between the Lebanese and the Palestinians[77]. Yet, paradoxically, here he asserts that the conflict is a civil war but one whose internal factors can include 'Arab' variables by their relation to Arab movements of liberation. In other words, the internal structure of the Civil War extends to include the internal structure governing the Arab movements of liberation. The Lebanese stage of conflict is thus part of a broader Arab arena[78]. The forces that are interplaying in this conflict are no longer only Lebanese. Hence, a Civil War here includes all broader movements of liberation in the region and their counterparts, the reactionary forces. Specifically, this change allows for alliances to be made with broader non-Lebanese movements and actors without them being perceived as instigators of conflict. The significance of such an argument is that the Palestinian resistance, a major dividing line in the broader literature about the conflict, seems to be a natural ally of the leftist forces and is then completely removed from causing conflict.

The Palestinian variable, as I will demonstrate later, is an important component of one type of narrative that focuses on external causes. Yet, in this type of narrative, the Palestinian resistance is marginal to the analysis of the beginning of the Civil War. Both Ahmed Beydoun and Yusuf Yazbek Ibrahim discuss the sectarian roots of the Lebanese Civil War. Beydoun assesses the divisions in different conceptions of identity while Yazbek narrates the history of Lebanon since

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[77] Mahdi 'Amil, *al-Nazarīyyah fi al-Mumārasah al-Siyāsīyyah*, 93.
[78] Ibid.

its occupation by the Ottoman Empire. Hence, the Palestinian variable is completely irrelevant since the origin of the conflict is traced back to Lebanon's distant past. The animosity between the Lebanese is considered independent from immediate grievances. Similarly, the relevance of Palestinian residents and guerrillas to Claude Dubar and Salim Nasr's analysis of Lebanon's social classes is completely negligible. Yet, Nasr in his own analysis of the background to the Civil War mentions that the conflict between the Lebanese State and the Palestinian movement was only "able to flourish in these circumstances of protracted social and economic crisis"[79]. Hence, the Palestinian presence is secondary to already-existing socioeconomic and political troubles.

Fawwaz Trabousli and Samih Farsoun include the Palestinian variable in their analyses but only in consideration to Lebanese sources of problems and tensions. For instance, Traboulsi proposes that the Palestinian resistance was a source of inspiration for internal forces that were frustrated by the lack of reform[80]. He describes how movements within both Christian and Muslim establishments, bargaining for socioeconomic reforms and equitable participation, were increasingly identifying with the Palestinians. However, the conservative parties or "parties of the Right" were using the Palestinians as a scapegoat to inhibit any change from happening[81]. He accuses the right of attempting to liquidate the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO)[82]. For Traboulsi, when reform from the top became inaccessible, change from the bottom became a necessity[83]. It is at that moment that alliances with the Palestinians occurred. This removes the Palestinians from being considered causes of the internal political conflict. For Samih Farsoun, the Palestinians' effect on the economy is rarely mentioned. They figure solely as part of statistics on

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[79] Salim Nasr, "Backdrop to Civil War," 12.
[80] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon,* 180.
[81] Ibid., 162, 174.
[82] Ibid., 181-182.
[83] Ibid., 174.

birth rates and salaries[84]. The deduction is that perhaps their effect was negligible. Farsoun does, however, discuss the relevance of the Palestinian presence when talking about Arab nationalism. He argues that the latter ideology was seen as a threat by "the domestic dependent bourgeoisie (and its sectarian clerical allies) but also by their foreign 'partners' in the United States and Europe"[85]. It is within this context that the Palestinians are seen as spearheading a general Arab activism in favour of the Arab masses and against Arab regimes. In fact, Farsoun claims that the Palestinian resistance was the "most important ideological issue separating the masses and students from the regime"[86]. He holds this statement to be true in Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco. He argues as well that Israel's raids created divisions between the government (and the conservative reactionary Lebanese) and progressive forces. Thus, the Palestinian presence is regarded as less of an issue than the existing divisions between the Lebanese regime and the popular masses over political issues. Support for the Palestinian resistance is but one part of a broader pan-Arab and progressive ideology that was opposed by the ruling class and its state[87].

In accordance, Mahdi 'Amil argues that the Palestinian resistance did not affect Lebanon's internal contradictions. Yet, he deems the movement as a critical component of the Civil War. Following the logic of the Lebanese Communist Party (especially after its Third Congress) and the Lebanese National Movement, the alliance with the Palestinian resistance was the natural fusion between a national movement and an Arab revolutionary movement that sparked a new phase in the class struggle[88]. The two movements are not regarded as overlapping but as an extension of

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[84] Samih Farsoun, "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon," 7-8.
[85] Ibid., 11.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] "Harakat al-Tahrīr al-'Arabīyyāh," around 1968, in *Nidāl al-Hizb al-Shuyū'ī al-Lubnānī min Khilāl Wathā'iqih*, 29-46; "Mudhakkirat al-Majlis al-Siyyāsī al-Markazī lil-Harakah al-Watanīyyah al-Lubnānīyyah Hawla Usus Tanzīm Muwājaha Watanīyyah Mushtarakah Lil-Mashrū' al-Taqsīmī al-Tā'ifi," in *Wathā'iq al-Harakah al-Watanīyyah al-Lubnānīyyah*, 25.

one another. Lebanon's territory is simply the literal stage on which this battle against imperialism is set to take place and the Lebanese-Palestinian struggle as the main front for all popular Arab struggles[89]. In conclusion, the Lebanese struggle seems to have debuted independently from the Palestinian movement's impact. Lebanon's internal contradictions are seen as sufficient for the explosion of the War, but the possibility of success and the magnitude of the conflict rested on alliances with broader movements of liberation.

These various framing devices allow us to recuperate the single commonality shared between these authors: namely, that systemic problems have for a long time plagued Lebanon. With such a framing, it appears that the narratives' plots are leading up to an inevitable conflict. Some of these narratives even end at the advent of sectarianism and the making of modern Lebanon without elaborating its effects on the War. They leave it to the reader to surmise the contradictions that such a structure is capable of inciting and maintaining. Moreover, in these narratives, sectarian politics transfigure into a façade of deeply rooted problems. The confessional-political structure is set to maintain specific social and economic formations that are dependent on sectarian representation. This structure is perceived as causing endemic crises as a result of the emergence of social forces demanding economic reforms. Since sectarianism is accused of having inhibited the making of a class consciousness, the prewar years are given as evidence of its emergence. A plethora of demonstrations, protests, and strikes are used to substantiate the claim. However, since the confessional and the political overlap, any socioeconomic demands, outside the boundaries of sectarian representation, were argued to be at the very least troublesome for the establishment. Socioeconomic demands were akin to demands of deconfessionalism. Hence, this analysis erases confessional loyalties as a cause for conflict and places sectarianism as part of a broader structure

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[89] Mahdi 'Amil, *al-Nazarīyyah fī al-Mumārasah al-Siyāsīyyah*, 96.

that leads to exploitation. The growing divisions between the dominant class and the popular masses as a result of such a system pave the way to revolution. Furthermore, the Palestinian variable is seen as independent from Lebanon's internal contradictions but not wholly detached from the internal structure of the Lebanese War. Alliances with popular movements are seen as being consciously made to ensure the success of a revolution while the government simultaneously sought alliances with Arab reactionary forces and Western powers. With these broad components, it is easy to ascertain that these narratives demonstrate the existence of problems induced by Lebanon's structures. As such, it is difficult to pinpoint a single event and justify it as a comprehensive cause of conflict. Instead, the causes are not immediate. Historical forces are described throughout as leading up to war when the Lebanese structure was inhibiting change and instead exacerbating divisions.

In this next chapter, I will introduce drastically different sets of narratives which define the conflict as a communal struggle. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first focuses on external causes of conflict, while the second focuses on internal issues governing the Civil War.

Chapter Two

Sectarian Narratives

Exogenous Origins of Civil War

After centuries of conquests and constraints, Lebanon finally achieved its independence in 1943 and was recognised universally as a self-governing entity. The National Pact, which was negotiated as the condition for Lebanon's independence, initiated decades of communal coexistence and peace[1]. The accord was negotiated by Bechara al-Khoury (1890-1964), as a representative of the Maronite Christian communities and the first president of an independent Lebanon, and Riad al-Solh (1894-1951), as a representative of the Sunni Muslim communities and the first prime minister. It was built on an equitable foundation that granted all sects a fair chance at participating in governance. It did not rest on sectarian differences but instead institutionalised a system that allowed for religious autonomy in civil society and a form of secular but consociational governance in politics[2]. The following years were a testimony to Lebanon's ability to rule itself and prosper in doing so. As an outlier in the region, Lebanon was described as the

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[1] The National Pact was a verbal agreement negotiated mainly by Bechara al-Khoury, as a representative of the Christian Maronites, and Riad al-Solh, as a leader of the Sunni community. This Pact secured Lebanon's independence from the French in 1943. It supposedly settled two controversial issues: the power-arrangement between the different sects and Lebanon's national identity. Based on a 1932 census, parliamentary seats were divided on a six to five ratio in favor of the Christians. The presidency was to be held by a Maronite Christian. The prime minister was given to Sunni Muslims and the speaker of parliament was allocated to a Shia Muslim. The agreement forced the Christians to relinquish their reliance on the French and other western powers while the Muslims gave up their pursuit for a union with Syria. This clause was meant to establish Lebanon's neutrality in foreign policy while maintaining its "Arab face". In times of stability, the National Pact was hailed as successful and in tumultuous times it was seen as a source of tension. During the prewar years, the division of power was contested based on the invalidity of the 1932 census and the demographic changes that had occurred since then. Muslims namely demanded an equal distribution of power in parliament and limitations to the president's executive power. Tom Najem, "The Collapse and Reconstruction of Lebanon," *Durham Middle East Paper* no. 59 (July 1998): 6-8.

[2] Kamal Salibi, A *House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 197. According to Salibi, the point of view suggesting "the Lebanese Republic under the National Pact was actually a secular state" was upheld by the Christian establishment which was accused of benefiting the most from the established structure.

"Switzerland of the East" in the 1960s, and was coveted by most for its freedom of all kinds, its strong financial sector, and its beautiful scenery[3]. In this time of stability, the literary scene boomed with no shortage of inspiration[4]. Independence was also followed by a marked economic growth for a novel and developing country[5]. For this reason, this period became known as the "Golden Age".

Yet, since its inception and certainly prior to it, Lebanon had been coveted by its neighbors. Even parts of the population were reluctant to accept the independence of Lebanon and desired an Arab nation or at least a union with Syria[6]. After the Ottoman Empire failed, its territories were dissected into various nations under mandates governed by the British and the French. Yet, unlike other constituencies, the validity of Lebanon's right to exist was questioned[7]. Lebanon's particular history as an autonomous refuge for minority communities had been contested by a sector of the population who denied its historical existence as anything other than Arab[8]. Lebanese residents had to endlessly justify their right to govern themselves while no such justification was required of Syria, Iraq, or Transjordan[9]. These accusations were mostly directed at the Christian Maronites for having willingly accepted the French Mandate (1923-1946). This alliance was perceived as a denial of Lebanon's Arab credentials. However, perhaps the Christian Maronites were not actively

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[3] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of the Internationalisation of Communal Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 196.

[4] Ibid., 204-207.

[5] Boutros Labaki and Khalil Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres au Liban: 1975-1990* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993), 177-183. According to Labaki and Rjeily, the Gross National Product, across all sectors, grew steadily from 1961 until 1973. They supposedly settle a controversial issue by demonstrating that the quality of life in rural Lebanon in different muhafazat (Lebanese equivalent of French departments) was increasing all around. For instance, in the South, the index for quality of life was 1.53 in 1960 and 2.20 in 1970. This marks a 43.8% increase, higher than any other rural muhafazat.

[6] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities: the Making and Politics of the 1943 National Pact* (Oxford: Center for Lebanese Studies, 1991), 26-28

[7] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions,* 71.

[8] Ibid., 169. According to Salibi, Druzes and Shiites were quite willing to accept "the theory that justified the existence of Lebanon as a historical refuge for minorities of Syria." Yet, this view remained contested by Sunni Muslims.

[9] Ibid*.,* 30.

seeking Western help but were being pushed to request it when their identity and freedoms were aggressively denied to them[10]. These were the origins of divisions between discrepant notions of identity after independence; the Maronites grew to associate themselves with the notion of Lebanism and the Muslims with that of Arabism. These divisions were exacerbated when Arab regimes attempted to influence Lebanon's foreign and even national policies by alluding to their co-religionists in Lebanon. At the same time, the Maronites were seen as being swayed by Western powers[11]. The National Pact meant to establish a consensus over Lebanon's contradictory identity. It forced both parties to relinquish their ties to the outside world in order to establish neutrality in foreign policy, all while maintaining Lebanon's Arab identity.

However, despite this precaution, Lebanon remained permeable to regional developments. The 1958 crisis, for instance, exemplifies this trend whereby an Arab country – and namely its president, Gamal Abdel Nasser (in office: 1956-1970) – affected Lebanon's sovereignty[12]. The rise of Nasserism led to six-month-long struggle that played out between Christians supporting President Camille Chamoun (in office: 1952-1958) and Muslims demanding unity with the United Arab Republic (in office: 1958-1961), a political union between Syria and Egypt, and thus

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[10] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions, 71.*

[11] Ibid., *36-38.*

[12] The 1958 Crisis is interpreted in various ways. In this type of narrative, authors tend to fixate on the rise of pan-Arabism and its destabilising effect on the Lebanese Republic. Others interpret the crisis as a purely internal affair by focusing on the sectarian dimension of the conflict and describe it as a Civil War between Maronite Christians and Muslims. Yet, the intercommunal dimension of this conflict was not clear-cut, for instance, the Maronite Patriarch, Boulos Meochy opposed any alignment against Egypt and Syria. Chamoun's foreign policies had already alienated a large number of the public. He endorsed the Eisenhower Doctrine, remained close of the Baghdad Pact, and maintained relations with Western powers. This already revoked the neutrality clause in foreign relations found in the National Pact and was alienating with the rise of pan-Arabist ideals. Most importantly, the crisis followed the parliamentary elections of 1957 which had sidelined the opposition against Chamoun. The crisis ended with a US military intervention requested by the President and lasted three months until he completed his term. Nigel John Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan and the Problem of Nasser: Anglo-American Relations and Arab Nationalism, 1955-59,* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 150-152.

threatening the Lebanese State[13]. This conflict was not purely intercommunal, though it is often portrayed as such. Instead, it is indicative of the effect that regional powers can have on Lebanon's autonomy and its residents. This event is often perverted into evidence of Lebanon's flawed internal structure and a prelude to the Civil War that began in 1975[14]. Yet, these two are not correlated. Until 1967, violence remained sporadic and benign. Socioeconomic grievances surely existed but this was common to most developing and novel countries. As such, internal grievances were a necessary constituent for conflict but on their own were insufficient to justify its outbreak.

Instead, the timing of the War should be most illustrative of its causes. The power of the state and its institutions had been gradually eroded starting in 1967, and this eventually led to the eruption of violence in 1975. The June War of 1967 was the most instrumental event in reshaping the region. Israel emerged as the most dominant military power in the Middle East. The disproportionate loss of both Egypt and Syria thrust the Palestinian armed resistance onto the scene[15]. The main platforms that would be used to wage this war against Israel would become Jordan and the South of Lebanon. Both witnessed immeasurable human and material loss. The Lebanese State, under pressure from regional powers and to the dismay of a sector of the population, was forced to host these operations at the expense of its territorial integrity[16]. With Gamal Abdel Nasser as mediator, the Lebanese Army signed the fateful Cairo Accord in November 1969 with the Palestinian guerillas, who were represented by Yasser Arafat (1929-2004). The

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[13] Both Salibi and El-Khazen are critical of Gamal Abdel Nasser and perceive the rise of Nasserism as a threat to Lebanon's autonomy. They do, however, criticise Camille Chamoun as having miscalculated the influence of Arabism and wrongly stood up to the Nasserist challenge. Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities,* 45-47; Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War: Lebanon, 1958-1976,* (London: Ithaca Press, 1976), 2.

[14] Khalaf describes protests and grievances occurring prior to 1967 as being non-violent and benign. Mobilisation is instead seen as being radicalised by regional developments specifically the Palestinian variable. Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence,* 212.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 35.

agreement was meant to first and foremost have the guerillas assent to Lebanon's sovereignty. Second, the agreement meant to limit the armament of the Palestinian guerillas in the south as well as control the nature of their operations. These boundaries were established to protect the residents of Lebanon and restrain the wrath of Israel, which had taken the shape of weekly airstrikes. The Cairo Accord consented to the PLO's presence in Lebanon, but placed many limitations on the organisation's activities; however, the Palestinian guerrillas misconstrued the agreement as condoning their unfettered freedom of action. Restrictions on armament and operations were all breached[17]. The Palestinians thought themselves victorious for having achieved the agreement and acted as a "State within a State"[18]. This agreement antagonised the Christian Lebanese and some Muslims who saw it as a peril to Lebanon's sovereignty[19]. Clashes between the Lebanese Army, security forces, and the Palestinian guerillas became inevitable, with Muslim leaders denying the legitimacy of the army's actions against such violations[20].

Successive regional events doomed Lebanon to become the territory on which the last unresolved Arab issue, the Palestinian struggle, was to be resolved to the detriment of the Lebanese State and its future[21]. The Palestinian commando movement had become so intolerable to the Jordanian regime that in 1970 the latter's army launched a large-scale operation to decimate the Palestinian networks. Under the cover of the Cairo Accord, Lebanon became the only Arab country where Palestinian guerillas could operate[22]. The Yom Kippur War in October 1973 was decisive in determining the weakness and disunity of the Arab states. It sealed the end

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[17] Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War,* 44.
[18] Ibid.*,* 43.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 218-224.
[21] Ibid.*,* 8-9.
[22] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967-1976* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 219-221.

of Arab coalitions fighting directly against Israel. Instead, the burden was to be thrown on the Palestinian guerillas, who began to be funded by various Arab regimes[23]. Anwar Sadat (in office: 1970-1981), now president of Egypt, began cavorting with Israel as a result of the war and signed the Israel-Egypt Disengagement Treaty in 1974[24]. This officially marked what had begun with the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser: a complete shift of the regional balance of power.

The Palestinian presence in Lebanon along with its Arab allies and their influence was enough to destabilise any state. Yet, the impact in Lebanon was much broader. The growing militancy of the Palestinians sowed deep divisions within society that soon became perceptible in the polarisation of Lebanon's elites[25]. Although most Lebanese were willing supporters of Palestine's liberation, the means by which that was to occur split the nation[26]. In the 1970s, the Palestinian struggle, as the last unresolved Arab issue, transfigured Arabism into unconditional support for the Palestinian cause[27]. With the overlap between Arabism and Islamism, the Muslim community was an avowed supporter of the Palestinian cause. With the emergence of extra-parliamentary leadership and the radicalisation of public opinion, Muslim elites were reluctant to advocate for any limitations on Palestinian commando movements, while the Christians increasingly began to perceive the Palestinian presence as jeopardising Lebanon's existence[28]. The mere application of the Cairo Accord became a contentious issue. While the Christians, and especially the Kataeb Party, insisted that the restrictions be upheld, the Sunni leaders, Kamal

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[23] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 35.
[24] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 221.
[25] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 222.
[26] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 150; Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence,* 213.
[27] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities,* 52.
[28] Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War,* 43.

Jumblatt (1917-1977)[29] and the LNM coalition, refused to bolster the Accord[30]. Any limit to the unconditional support of the PLO became seen as reactionary[31].

In the meantime, Kamal Jumblatt and the various leftist parties that would constitute the LNM began agitating for political and economic reform. The socioeconomic reforms they were advocating for quickly became a cover for demands that would dismantle the National Pact[32]. In fact, the social and economic situation since independence had been improving. From 1943 until 1975, Lebanon witnessed a rapid and externally oriented growth. However, from the beginning, the Lebanese economy was characterised by wide sectorial, regional, and social imbalances. These discrepancies were being gradually rectified through the redistributive efforts of the state, the initiatives taken by civil society, and the gradual growth of the Lebanese economy[33]. For instance, the confessional composition of professions requiring high levels of education or capital – such as state functionaries, owners of commercial societies, industrialists, bankers, owners of transportation companies, insurers, lawyers, engineers, and doctors – had been becoming more equally distributed between Muslims and Christians for the past three or four centuries[34]. Moreover, illiteracy rates decreased from 46.6% in 1932 to 10.9% in 1974 for Christians and from

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[29] Kamal Jumblatt (1917 – 1977) is quite a controversial figure revered by some and despised by others for his involvement in the Civil War (Walid Khalidi gives a snippet of the different ways that Jumblatt's actions were interpreted in "The Actors," *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East*). A prominent Druze politician in the prewar years; he served as Member of Parliament and several times as a minister in government. He founded the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) in 1949, organised it as an armed force, called for secularising Lebanese politics, and was a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause. Along with several leftist parties, he founded the Lebanese National Movement (LNM), the main front fighting against the existing establishment and Christian militias during the war. He was opposed to the Syrian intervention in 1976 and was later on assassinated in 1977. His son Walid Jumblatt (b.1949) succeeded him as the head of the PSP and is one of the most prominent leaders in Lebanon to date.

[30] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 223.

[31] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 150.

[32] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities, 51-61.*

[33] Boutros Labaki and Khalil Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban,* 186.

[34] « Evolution de la composition confessionnelle de quelques professions (1943-1981), » Travaux du séminaire de sociologie du développement, 1981-1982, Institut des Sciences Sociales, Université Libanaise, in Labaki and Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban,* 185.

67% to 14.2% for Muslims[35]. Finally, one of the most controversial issues in those years concerned the marginalisation of peripheral areas. However, statistics show that the quality of life in the Bekaa, the South, the North, and rural Lebanon grew considerably between 1960 and 1970. The indexes used measure the average between a series of variables taking into consideration sanitation, economic and technical developments, domestic and residential improvements, educational facilities, and cultural, familial, and social advancements. The data shows that rural areas, with a majority of Muslim inhabitants, were those who advanced the most. For instance, the South of Lebanon, with a 70% Muslim population, witnessed a 44% increase in quality of life from 1960 to 1970. Jointly all of rural Lebanon had a 32% growth in quality of life, while Central Lebanon, with a 70% Christian population, only increased by 15.6%[36]. This evolution can be traced to a number of factors including rural migration and remittances sent back to the villages and the active policy of the state in matters of infrastructure[37]. Finally, the middle class was becoming more sizable between 1960 and 1974 along with the atrophy of lower classes and a general increase in household incomes[38]. Regional and social inequalities surely originated before Lebanon's independence as a result of differential developments between communities. However, it is certain that these inequalities had been narrowing down gradually.

Hence, socioeconomic demands were political in substance since they would require essentially political revisions[39]. At the grassroots levels, radical movements agitating for reform could do so only by throwing their support behind the Palestinian resistance, which had broken the state's monopoly on violence, whilst Muslims leaders, supported by a radical left and a militant

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[35] Boutros Labaki and Khalil Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban,* 184.
[36] Raymond Delprat, "L'Évolution De Vie en Milieu Rural au Liban: 1960-1970", Document, Ministère du Plan, 1970, p.9, in Boutros Labaki and Khalil Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban,* 182-183.
[37] Ibid., 184.
[38] Ibid., 179-183.
[39] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities,* 52-53.

PLO, undermined the National Pact. Any modifications to the current political structure, its socioeconomic regulations, or a redefinition of Lebanon's identity would've been detrimental to Lebanon's territorial integrity and the power of its army. Hence, security and reform became two mutually exclusive concepts whereby changes in one camp would have negatively affected the other i.e. a negative-sum game[40]. In the 1970s, the Palestinian issue overrode all debates over reform, state-building, and even foreign policy[41]. In fact, every major crisis that led to government paralysis was political and implicated the Palestinian resistance – namely the PLO – and was not limited to domestic variables [42]. The state found itself either confronting the Palestinian commandos and risking a war between Christians and Muslims or siding with the Palestinians and risking an Israeli intervention.

Finally, the Civil War in Lebanon is often attributed by some Lebanese groups and certainly external powers to the failure of the Lebanese system. Yet, a war so ravaging and that attracted more actors that can be easily named from memory could not have been the sole work of the Lebanese. Powers that intervened to defuse tension accomplished the reverse by prolonging the conflict. On the one hand, the Palestinian armed presence threatened the security and sovereignty of the Lebanese State. Their presence was also aided by various Arab regimes much more influential than the Lebanese government from the very beginning[43]. This introduced an international component to the War in the first instance. The Palestinians used the divisions amongst the population to extract concessions from the state. On the other hand, a few opportunistic leaders used the Palestinian presence as leverage for themselves, endangering the

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[40] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 230.
[41] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities,* 52.
[42] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 385.
[43] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 35.

National Pact and creating an intercommunal conflict by splitting public opinion over the role of the state and the army. One pillar of the National Pact, the Sunni establishment, was unable and unwilling to affect their constituencies with the rise of extra-parliamentary leaderships[44]. Hence, the National Pact faltered and the Maronite community rose up to bolster its army and state against what it perceived as a threat to Lebanon's existence.

The five works that will be assessed in this section reflect on the Lebanese War as a communal conflict. Their emphasis on the communal component does not directly translate it into a primary cause of conflict. The external dimension of conflict plays an important role in polarising Lebanese society and its leaders. Although these are scholarly narratives, this logic of conflict tends to be associated with the Christian community, particularly the Maronites. The three authors from whom I have extracted this interpretation are Kamal Salibi (1929-2011), Farid el-Khazen, and Samir Khalaf (b.1933). Unlike the previous chapter, these authors were not active members of any militias or parties during the Civil War, although Farid el-Khazen did become an important member of parliament in 2005 affiliated with the Free Patriotic Movement, now the largest Christian party[45]. Moreover, all three authors taught at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Kamal Salibi is a well-known and respected Lebanese historian whose works remain widely read. Farid el-Khazen is a prolific writer and professor who was the chairman at the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration. Finally, Samir Khalaf was a professor of sociology.

Kamal Salibi, whose activism throughout the War remained at the academic level, wrote two works that I will consider. *Crossroads to Civil War: Lebanon, 1958-1976* was polemically

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[44] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 366.
[45] Yakoub el-Khazen, "Cheikh Farid Elias el Khazen Gained Fourth Position on Aoun's Wining List," *Khazen,* June 13, 2005, Accessed July, 15, 2019 https://www.khazen.org/index.php/dekhazen/members?id=768

written and published ten months after the War began[46], while *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* was published at the end of the conflict and attempts to demystify the different histories that Lebanese communities have built around their past[47]. He elaborates the various narratives to elucidate the "deep-rift" between Christians and Muslims[48]. In addition, I will analyse Farid el-Khazen's *The Communal Pact of National Identities: The Making and Politics of the 1943 National Pact[49]*. Written a year after the Ta'if Accord[50], el-Khazen interprets the meaning of the National Pact, which is considered the unwritten foundation of the Lebanese Republic. He identifies a process of disintegration beginning with the Mandate period that would eventually rip open the Lebanese territory to four decades worth of cumulative changes and forces from the broader region of the Middle East[51]. His second work *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon: 1967-1976* details the erosion of the state and the eruption of violence directly by assessing again the effect of regional developments and the armed Palestinian presence[52]. Finally, Samir Khalaf's *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of the Internationalisation of Communal Conflict* published in 2002 establishes a conceptual framework, the Outside-Inside dialectic, to illustrate the effects of external problems on internal liabilities as an explanation for uncivil violence[53]. Here, similarly to the first chapter, I will draw broad

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[46] Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War: Lebanon, 1958-1976.*
[47] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered.*
[48] Ibid., 2.
[49] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities: the Making and Politics of the 1943 National Pact.*
[50] The Ta'if Agreement is the accord that was designed to end the Civil War. It was negotiated in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia, signed on October 22nd 1989 and ratified by parliament on November 5th of the same year. It was negotiated by the remaining member of the 1972 parliament but involved several international and regional actors. The agreement opened Lebanon to Syrian 'supervision' – for lack of a better word. It reduced the executive power of the President and fortified the power of the Sunni Prime Minister. Christians and Muslims were given an equal number of seats in parliament whose total was 128 deputies. Though the agreement called for the demilitarisation of all militias, Hezbollah was exempt from this clause as the main front fighting against the occupying force, Israel. Though the Ta'if Agreement included the abolition of sectarianism, there was no allocated timeframe and Lebanon remains to date a sectarian consociational system.
[51] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities*, 3.
[52] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967-1976.*
[53] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of the Internationalisation of Communal Conflict.*

generalisations found in the plots of these narratives with which not all authors agree. Moreover, scholars are not beholden to every aspect of a collective representation. Hence, authors are not strictly confined to certain representations of the past and some, like Salibi, specifically in his later work, analyse these interpretations without identifying with them.

In opposition to the first chapter, these narratives set the stage for a communal conflict. As I will shortly demonstrate, they do so in a contradictory fashion, which allows for negotiation of the relation of Lebanon's communal past to the present. This dissociation is made possible by distinguishing the external from the internal dimension of conflict. The internal dimension concerns Lebanon's liability to revert back to its communal predispositions caused by divisions between Muslims and Christians. These divisions and their sectarian aspect are traced back to before the Lebanese Republic. Yet, the separation between the internal and external renders communal divisions as secondary causes but ones with an important bearing on the Civil War. One of the clearest and simplest framing devices for a communal conflict is naming the actors. Salibi outlines two groups: the "Conservatives", in which are included Christian leaders and citizens, the Lebanese Army, and the conservative part of the Muslim community, and the "Radicals", singled out as Muslim Sunnis, Shias, and Druzes, as well as external actors, specifically the Palestinians[54]. In his later work, Salibi sheds these cloaking labels and simply refers to the two as "Christians" and "Muslims"[55]. He also details the denominations within each group when referring to specific historical constructs. El-Khazen refers to his protagonists as well as "Muslims" and "Christians"[56]. In his analysis of the National Pact, he occasionally focuses his discussion on the "Maronites" and

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[54] Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War,* 29, 41.
[55] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions,* 2.
[56] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 61.

the "Sunnis" as the two pillars of the accord[57]. Moreover, though Khalaf attempts to put all his protagonists into a single national category, the "Lebanese", he generally distinguishes two main internal combatants: the "Christian Phalange and their allies and the Palestinians and the Muslim-Left Coalition"[58]. Rarely, Khalaf makes these binary classifications more complex by introducing the ideologies and the political parties representative of each group[59]. However, even Khalaf digresses. He sometimes details political parties representative of the Christians – for instance, "the Kata'ib and Chamoun's National Liberal Party" – but refers to the opposition as the "Muslims and their left coalitions", and he refers in broad terms to the actions of the latter as denouncing the government and the army[60]. Finally, throughout these narratives, references to political parties remain secondary to distinctions through religious loyalties.

Moreover, these communal identities act as fixed inheritances undetermined by the present context. Following a teleological logic, communal loyalties seem to predetermine allegiances in times of crises or conflict without necessarily being the impetus for such a context. For instance, ideological predispositions determined by religious affiliation are evident when discussing Arabism. Though the authors do not assess the roots of sectarianism and instead qualify it as a form of latent tribalism, the schism between Muslims and Christians from the Mandate period onwards mainly concerns Lebanon's identity[61]. The ideological rift is first set during the Mandate, with the Christians' desire for independence and their construction of a Lebanese particularism on one side and the Muslims' desire for unity with Greater Syria and therefore their attraction to Arabism on the other[62]. However, both el-Khazen and Salibi willfully remind their readers that

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[57] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities,* 5.
[58] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 34.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 226.
[61] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions,* 182.
[62] Ibid., 2.

Christians were the earliest proponents of Arabism and supporters of Arab nationalism during the Ottoman Empire[63]. This detail either gives credence to Christians' Arab credentials or justifies their rejection of it later on. The debate over Lebanon's identity culminated with the making of the National Pact which should have resolved the issue at hand. The agreement required that the Muslims reject demands for and prospects of Arab unity and that the Christians renounce their Western dependence. Though Lebanon's identity would assume an "Arab face", it would also uphold "a neutral position in inter-Arab politics"[64]. Thus, according to el-Khazen, the accord intended to "Lebanize" the Muslims and Arabize the Christians[65].

However, el-Khazen proposes that Arabism was not a fixed ideology, but rather one that would acquire new definitions with the changing regional context[66]. These changes happening from abroad would then unfold in the Lebanese territory. More importantly, with the perceived overlap between Arabism and Islamism, the Muslims are considered predisposed to side with a number of Arab causes[67]. In fact, every major issue in the prewar years becomes seen as partly due to a collision between Arabism and Lebanism, or rather Arabism becomes a stand-in for any differences between Muslim and Christian public opinion. According to Salibi, in the crisis of 1958, Arabism transfigures into Nasserism; he writes: "most Christians in Lebanon were convinced that the Muslim-Druze revolt against President Chamoun in that year was instigated by Nasser [and had been] an attempt to put an end to Lebanese independence, with the ultimate aim of incorporating Lebanon into the United Arab Republic"[68]. In this crisis, Salibi links the pan-Arab ideal to a loss of independence, which justifies the Lebanese Christians' fears. This pattern is

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[63] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 82; Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions,* 49.
[64] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 39.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.,, 49.
[67] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions,* 48.
[68] Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War,* 2.

reproduced in later conflicts, with this framing establishing the stance that Muslims and Christians would adopt. While Muslims would be swayed in favor of Arabism regardless of the elements it would come to incorporate, Christians would act on the defensive by reacting to the supposed threat. This friction only occurs once changes in the region affect Lebanon. Arabism thus acts from within and outside the country. Hence, communal divisions are an underlying and dormant liability in Lebanon, but on their own they are considered insufficient to explain conflict. Yet, since regional powers can affect their coreligionists in Lebanon, sometimes even using them as political leverage, this renders conflicts endemic[69].

In these narratives, Arabism comes to represent a wide array of regional trends happening throughout the years and unfolding in Lebanon through their effects on Lebanese public opinion. El-Khazen, for instance, assesses the currents of Arabism through their effects on the National Pact[70]. The latter is described as embodying "Lebanon's dichotomous identity" by upholding a precarious balance between Lebanon's Arab identity and neutrality in inter-Arab politics[71]. It is important to note that the National Pact tends to be described as a pragmatic deal between national elites in 1943 to ensure Lebanon's independence[72]. Yet, it is also regarded as functional in meeting various domestic challenges and only falters when foreign variables interfere[73]. In the crises of 1958 and the 1970s, el-Khazen specifies that the agreement rested on an elite consensus between Sunnis and Maronites but perhaps failed to accurately represent grassroots communal support[74]. Despite the enumeration of its flaws by both Salibi and el-Khazen, they agree that the National

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[69] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions,* 36-37.
[70] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities,* 38-51.
[71] Ibid., 4.
[72] Ibid., 5.
[73] Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War,* 144.
[74] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities,* 39.

Pact was a valid framework for a working democracy[75]. It should be noted that Salibi grows more critical of the National Pact in his second work, vilifying it for inhibiting national allegiance to the state and alienating the electorate[76], while el-Khazen grows less critical, calling it "a gentlemen's agreement"[77]. Regardless of these changes, el-Khazen argues that until 1967 the National Pact proved flexible enough to meet the challenges of Arabism[78]. After the Six-Day War, Arabism supposedly becomes associated with unconditional support for the Palestinian resistance and its armed struggle[79]. Kamal Salibi also describes the Palestinian struggle as the only unresolved issue in the Arab world and notes that Muslim Lebanese were inspired by its cause due to its distinctive Arab character[80]. He even describes the Civil War as "the last battleground for Arabism"; Arab regimes and power-houses – whether conservative or radical – were using Lebanon as a political arena to settle their differences[81]. The association between Arabism and the Palestinian struggle specifically proves to be threatening to the state. This external Arab cause is considered to have called upon political and ideological loyalties from the Lebanese that transcended the state[82].

By considering the arrival of this external trope as a primary cause of disturbances, precedents of intercommunal violence become unrelated to the Civil War and are interpreted independently. Few notorious incidents, such as the 1958 crisis, are qualified with a similar dynamic of conflict, i.e. being provoked by regional developments[83]. The pattern remains similar when domestic crises are qualified initially as the result of benign political and economic

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[75] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions,* 192.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 39.
[78] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities,* 49-51.
[79] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 78.
[80] Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War,* 161-162.
[81] Ibid., 159.
[82] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 6.
[83] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities,* 66.

grievances but progress into sectarian struggles once external actors intervene and shift definitions of loyalty[84]. This dissociation between internal contributing forces and external causes enables proponents of this narrative to deny the Civil War as an occurrence in a natural succession of events in Lebanon; this view stands in complete opposition to that expressed in the previous chapter. The inner workings of the state are seen as valid and only weakened by external causes. In these crises, specifically the 1958 crisis and the 1975 Civil War, the Lebanese Republic is described as hovering between two choices: an absolute embrace of Arab populism or the maintenance of the state's sovereignty[85]. The divisions between Lebanon's leaders are fixed between the Muslims' supporting the former option and the Christians' defending the latter. Thus, after 1967, the primary cause of divisions and tensions becomes the increasing armed presence of the Palestinians, which espouses the dichotomous relationship between Arabism and security.

Following this logic and as a framing device, proponents of this narrative tend to romanticise the past prior to that time. Though all three authors argue against such an embellishment of the past, they recognise its widespread belief. For instance, Samir Khalaf discusses different trends in literature and demonstrates the various romantic descriptions of Lebanon's scenery and lifestyle. He distinguishes a change in literature happening in the 1950s and 1960s, which he describes as "denaturing" and as an encroachment from "borrowed ideologies" – "Baathist, Socialist, Arabist, and Islamist"[86]. He thus argues that these literary incursions mirror what was in fact happening in society. The borrowings were rejected by the Christians who instead reverted back to a past idealism and called for the need to preserve

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[84] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* xiv.
[85] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities,* 49.
[86] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 206.

Lebanon's authenticity[87]. In a similar fashion, the Palestinian variable inserts itself into the plotline of these narratives as a turning point or momentous event that will reshape the established order in Lebanon. The Palestinian armed presence determines the causal sequence leading up to the violence of the Civil War. Moreover, even though all authors deny the representation of an ideal past, they do not divulge its flaws beyond that of contentious identities. For instance, socioeconomic grievances are either never mentioned or deemed irrelevant to the conflict[88]. Demonstrations and protests are reduced to the Palestinian struggle. Mobilisation and radicalisation are traced to the poor, the "radicalised" students, and the "spirited" middle-class, specifically in areas with a marked Palestinian presence such as the South and the southern margins of Beirut[89]. Khalaf also correlates radicalisation with the stronger presence of leftist parties and the espousal of Arab ideologies. Radicalisation becomes intertwined and inseparable from "borrowed ideas" and the Palestinian cause[90]. For instance, the politicisation of the Shias in the South and their subsequent migration into the southern fringes of Beirut is directly linked not only to the Israeli raids but to the the strong presence of the Palestinians[91]. Moreover, the language used by both Khalaf and el-Khazen trivialises internal problems and establishes external sources as magnifying and changing the nature of civil strife. The latter is deemed non-militant or contained and caused by relative political and socioeconomic disparities[92].

Thus, the Palestinian armed presence is argued as having, on the one hand, opened up Lebanon to inter-Arab and Arab-Israeli politics and, on the other hand, as having taken advantage

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[87] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 206.
[88] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 250-261.
[89] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 221.
[90] Ibid., 212.
[91] Ibid.,, 214.
[92] Ibid., x.

of the cleavages between the Lebanese at the social and political level[93]. In the first instance, Lebanon became the only possible stage on which to settle the last unresolved Arab issue, and this gradually rendered conflict unavoidable. In the second instance, what should have been limited to debates in parliament escalated to nationwide war when Arabism became incompatible with Lebanon's sovereignty. The latter is said to have divided both the national leadership and society into supporters of the state and supporters of the Struggle. The Christians supposedly judged the armed Palestinian presence as threat to the state, while the Muslim-Left supported the Palestinian struggle and are seen as bolstering the creation of "a state within a state"[94]. The interaction between these internal and external dimensions rendered the state from there on the ultimate victim being targeted by internal parties and their allies, the Palestinians. Salibi argues that Palestinian activities in Lebanon became the main topic of discussion and infighting in the Lebanese Parliament from 1969, gaining intensity after 1970 until the outbreak of War in 1975[95]. Khalaf describes the Palestinians as taking advantage of their "sympathetic host", launching a "campaign of terror", and disobeying the law and intimidating the population[96]. Hence, the Palestinians are held responsible for the radicalisation of one part of the population while they spread fear in the other. Notably, their armed presence is said to have entered Lebanon into the Arab-Israeli conflict "through the backdoor"[97].

The Palestinian presence is notable for its effect on exacerbating internal divisions in Lebanon. In these narratives not all internal parties are considered equally responsible in leading the way to conflict. The Muslim communities and the leftist parties are accused of using the

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[93] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 123; Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War,* 34.
[94] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*, 2.
[95] Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War,* 34-43.
[96] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 218, 219, 222.
[97] "Overnight Lebanon entered the 1967 war, but through the backdoor" is a saying by Ghassan Tueni quoted by Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon: 1967-1976,* 141.

Palestinian presence as "a Trojan horse" for other demands[98]. In fact, all authors argue that the Palestinian armed presence was used by the Sunni political establishment and the Jumblatt-led Left to extract concessions from the state[99]. The Left wanted to introduce radical change in the system and destabilise the National Pact, while the Sunni establishment sought to tilt the balance of power at the executive level. In the meantime, the Palestinians used the cleavages between Christians and Muslims to extract military concessions from the government[100]. The Palestinians, the Muslim establishment, and leftist parties are said to have precipitated a political paralysis in government. El-Khazen argues that the president and the Lebanese Army were made powerless without the support of the prime minister and the Sunni establishment[101]. He is referring specifically to clashes that took place between the PLO and the army in which the latter supposedly could not act to its full capacity. He then claims that "Muslim figures, particularly Sunni leaders, condemned the Lebanese government"[102]. Sunni leaders are seen as being increasingly held hostage by the public opinion of their constituency. At the same time, calls for deconfessionalism by leftist parties are considered to be the result of radicalisation and also a clever political ploy to destabilise the working of the state[103]. These two issues, the Palestinian armed presence and demands for reform, are qualified as the main sources of disagreements amongst the Lebanese. Salibi argues that Muslim demands often frightened Christians as they were either answering external calls for pan-Arab unity or demanding unconditional support for a pan-Arab cause without realising that it required the sacrifice of Lebanon's territorial security and state integrity[104].

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[98] Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War,* 36.
[99] Ibid., 35; Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 248; Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil in violence in Lebanon.*
[100] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 82.
[101] Ibid., 207.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., 312.
[104] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions,* 197-198.

These narratives, by endlessly portraying the Muslim-Left as pushing for reform and supporting the PLO, and the Christians as advocating for state sovereignty and integrity, influence the reader to favor the latter. For instance, the Palestinian presence supposedly led to the militancy of all major Lebanese actors. Yet, depending on the concerned internal actor, militancy is described differently. The militancy of Maronite Christians is justified as a reaction to and consequence of the PLO's numerous breaches of its military agreements. Their fears are described as "legitimate" with the erosion of state power and the collapse of the National Pact[105]. Hence, Christian militancy is seen as emerging in defense of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity[106]. On the other hand, the PLO supposedly secured the armament of other sectors in Lebanon by extending "their cover of the Cairo Accord to other radical groups"[107]. These narratives accuse the Palestinian commando operations of purposefully intending to scare the Christian Lebanese and also the "conservative Muslims"[108]. Hence, the increasing armament of the Christians can be seen as a direct result of the political paralysis caused by the Palestinian armed presence and its supporters, the Muslim leaders and the leftist parties.

To summarise, the authors do not correlate the precedents of intercommunal violence predating the Mandate years to the present conflict. Samir Khalaf considers this intermittent violence as typical of small and fragmented nations[109]. Kamal Salibi describes the events of 1860 drastically differently to the accounts considered in the previous chapter. He argues that clashes between Druzes and Maronites had culminated in a Druze massacre of a local Christian village in Wadi al-Taym[110]. The entry of European powers saved the day. These events, however, remain

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[105] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 223.
[106] Ibid., *219.*
[107] Ibid., *222.*
[108] Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War,* 34-35.
[109] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 1.
[110] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions,* 16.

wholly unrelated to post-Mandate Lebanon. Only Farid el-Khazen allocates an important part of his short study to the Mandate years, but he does so only to analyse the making of the National Pact[111]. Hence, this framing device narrows down the timeframe leading up to the Civil War, demonstrating that the causes of conflict could only have been immediate. Up until a certain point, Lebanon, despite its avowed flaws – which are never truly elaborated – and certain setbacks, was faring well. Moreover, the protagonists in these narratives seem to have pre-determined identities, values, and principles, which are fixed by their religion, or as Khalaf calls them "primordial loyalties"[112]. Muslim and Christian labels designate the protagonists, while political parties and ideologies come second. In fact, the ideologies of the parties are rarely mentioned, and those advocating for reform are referred to as the Muslim-Left, radical or leftist parties. These labels predestine the roles of the protagonists since their actions become predictable both in society and in parliament. While Muslims are either being manipulated by the Palestinians or acting on the offensive by joining them, the Christians are portrayed as reacting to the actions of the latter. It is also important to note that the logic of the Christians is extended to a part of the Muslims, deemed more conservative, but never the reverse[113]. Hence, the Christians become passive actors in the initial causes of conflict, which are generally external to Lebanon, but their defensive reactions to Muslim actions contribute to the polarisation of the population.

Furthermore, it is notable that the Lebanese government, as an actor, tends to be erased in these narratives[114]. The culpability that the government is allocated in the previous chapter is denied in these narratives. Instead it is portrayed as a victim of internal polarisation and external

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[111] Farid el-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities,* 3-37.
[112] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* x.
[113] Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War,* 41.
[114] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 207.

threats. In fact, el-Khazen's entire thesis rests on demonstrating how the state's power was initially eroded, leading to a political paralysis and power vacuum, and eventually provoking the collapse of all state institutions and the eruption of violence[115]. Hence, even though the primary contributive element is external to Lebanon, internal actors remain essential in these narratives, namely by eroding state power and militarising against each other. As such, even though sectarianism is deemed an internal liability, it eventually becomes a secondary but essential cause provoked by the external agitations of the armed Palestinians. Sectarianism's roots are not well interpreted, unlike the heavy theoretical work done regarding the matter in the previous chapter. It remains seen as a form of latent and wanton tribalism emerging from primordial loyalties and conflicting identities[116]. Only in sectarian narratives does one encounter such harsh definitions of confessional differences. Finally, the result of such narratives is obviously that they reinforce sectarian interpretations by trying to persuade the reader of the validity of one side above the other.

The subsequent chapter deals with what could be considered the scholarly opposition to these narratives. Many of the arguments advanced in this section are rejected in the next. While the two interpretations acknowledge each other's existence, their points of emphasis remain contradictory and binary.

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[115] Farid el-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon,* 6.
[116] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many mansions, 166; 182.*

Endogenous Origins of Civil War

Facing all of the narratives that only admit to external causes of conflict, completely or partially, this story has been swallowed whole and forgotten. Though the dynamics of oppression, marginalisation, and misrepresentation, continue to this day, citizens forget that these issues were raised and fought for before the Civil War began and before the War gained its international aspect[117]. This story is not a denial of the effect that external powers had over the intensity, the duration, and the number of participants in the conflict[118]. However, the Lebanese problem had been brewing for a long time and the precarious sectarian balance would have exploded with or without the Palestinians[119]. Despite the changes in the regional context, the underlying complex political and socioeconomic situation remained the same in Lebanon by creating and exacerbating tensions between the Lebanese[120]. The Lebanese state is misrepresented as the sorry victim of conflict and this representation is easily manufactured by those whom the state favored. Yet, since independence, grievances and discontents had been accumulating. The available civil channels were perverse. This narrative attempts to answer: What made the Lebanese willing to kill each other? [121] An emphasis on external causes obstructs the solution to this dilemma.

The story that would climax into Civil War begins when the French and British colonial powers partitioned the Middle East according to their whims after the First World War. As is the case with any form of colonialism, they did so without consulting the local population[122]. Thus,

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[117] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Center for International Affairs, 1979), 145.

[118] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict: Looking Inward* (London, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 59.

[119] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 145.

[120] Fuad Khuri, "The Social Dynamics of the 1975-1977 War in Lebanon," *Armed Forces and Society* vol.7 no.3 (Spring 1981): 383.

[121] Fuad Faris, "The Civil War in Lebanon," *Race and Class* 18 no.2 (August 1976): 174.

[122] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 32.

two fictional entities, Syria and Lebanon, were made and placed under the French Mandate. Until

Lebanon's independence, cries for an Arab Union or at least a Syrian Union resonated in Lebanon

and throughout the region[123]. However, the French sowed divisions not only across borders but

within the nations themselves. In fact, Greater Lebanon was created to hold a majority of

Maronites because the French hoped that this religious group would remain in a permanent state

of dependence in a region where the majority of inhabitants were Sunni and Shiite Arabs[124]. Hence,

while some welcomed the French Mandate as a promised independence, others saw it as an

imperial encroachment. Moreover, the French refashioned the "millet" system[125] that prevailed

during the Ottoman Empire to create a system of confessional representation[126]. With this began

the entrenchment of Maronite control in "constitutional as well as institutional structures"[127]. The

constitution of 1926 divided the seats of the administrative council proportionally to the sects, but

the presidency was ultimately reserved for a Christian[128]. The French were thus organising

Lebanon on a sectarian basis to favor Christian interests.

Most sects did not really participate or even have an interest in Lebanon. Most Sunnis

remained adamant in their boycott of the Mandate, considering themselves part of a larger umma

(literally means community or people in Arabic). It was not until 1936 that some Sunni leaders

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[123] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 32; Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," in *Lebanon in Crisis: Participants and Issues,* P. Edward Haley and Lewis Snider (eds.), (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1979), 7.
[124] Walid Khaladi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 34.
[125] The "millet" system in the Ottoman Empire allowed for confessional communities namely those considered non-Muslim minorities to rule themselves according to the personal laws of their religion. It refers to separate legal courts in which they could apply these laws. These "millets" acquired with time a strong autonomy and power enabling them to set laws and even collect taxes. The "millet" as a concept was perceived differently in the nineteenth century with the rise of nationalism even in the Ottoman Empire. Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2000).
[126] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 76.
[127] Ibid., 22.
[128] Ibid.

began taking an interest in the structures instituted by the French[129]. The National Pact negotiated by Bechara el-Khoury, representing the Maronite Christians, and Riad el-Solh, representing the Sunni community, continued the tradition of multi-confessional representation but through elite accommodation[130]. The Pact forced the Maronites to renounce their reliance on Western powers while the Muslims abandoned union with Syria. The communal division of power, which later on became a most controversial and divisive topic, was inaugurated by the National Pact. An official census organised by the French in 1932, which might not have reflected the actual makeup of the population, deemed the Christians a majority[131]. The seats of parliament were divided accordingly to a six to five ratio in favor of the Christians. In the executive branch, the Maronites were given the presidency, the Sunnis were allocated the prime ministership, and the Shias were granted the speaker of parliament. This division ensured that power resided in the hands of the Christians. Moreover, the National Pact was convened as a mechanism of checks and balances meant to integrate the various communities in the long run[132]. However, even though this mechanism was based on allowing different sects to participate according to their number, it remained immovable in dealing with normal demographic changes, domestic demands, and regional developments[133]. In fact, calls for new censuses were barred by the Christians and the last official census remained that of 1932[134]. The power-sharing formula was unchanged, even in the face of violence, for thirty-two years.

Moreover, this consociational system inadvertently organised the different sects into a hierarchal social structure. The base structure incorporated fragmented and diverse sects with

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129 Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 23.
130 Ibid., 76.
131 Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 36.
132 Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 6;
133 Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 4.
134 Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 13.

elites at the top to represent them. However, such a structure encouraged interactions between the communities to remain predominantly commercial and rarely social [135]. While political interactions had to occur through the sect, namely through sectarian political representatives, communal interests would increasingly become polarised. With the years, the difference between Lebanon's actual demographics and the distribution of socioeconomic and political resources as allocated in 1943 translated into deep intercommunal inequalities[136]. This system most directly encouraged sectarian differences and hindered the making of a national identity. Yet, the perception of political favoritism was not the only conflict-inducing problem. Politically, the Shia, having had the largest increase in population, became the most underrepresented. While the Sunnis' position as second in command was weakened by the power of the prime minister continuously being undermined by the presidency[137]. Moreover, some communities were allocated more social and economic privileges [138]. Educational differences that originated in the pre-Mandate years continued during independence and served to maintain this stratification[139]. While Christians were more likely to attend private schools, Muslims relied on public schooling[140]. Christians were thus more likely to hold higher-paying positions. In fact, they dominated in engineering, medicine, law, banking, insurance, industry, and as commercial owners. In some of these fields, the margin between Christians and Muslims narrowed but only very slightly between

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[135] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 6.

[136] Ibid., 47.

[137] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 13.

[138] Ibid., 6.

[139] Boutros Labaki and Khalil Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban,* 58.

[140] «Evolution du Nombre des Ecoles Privées de l'Enseignement Universitaire entre 1972-1973 et 1981-1982,» Centre de Recherche et de Développement Pédagogiques, Ministère de l'Education, *Guide des Ecoles de l'Enseignement General, 1972, 1973, 1977, 1978 et 1981-1982*, in Boutros Labaki and Khalil Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban, 1975-1990,* 136.

1943 and 1981[141]. In 1960, research conducted by the IRFED on the social distribution of income demonstrated that 50% of the population was either poor or miserable[142]. This same research reveals gross income inequality, with only 4% of the population reaping the benefit of 32% of the Gross National Product (GNP) and a little less than 82% of the population benefitting from 40% of the GNP. Moreover, two poverty belts, the first surrounding the country (the South, Akkar, and the Bekaa) and the second on the southern margins of Beirut, lacked infrastructure, schooling, and medical facilities, among other needs[143]. These areas were mainly inhabited by Muslims, mostly Shia, and surrounded the prosperous areas, like Mount Lebanon, inhabited by the Christians[144]. The Shiites were at the lowest sociopolitical strata, while the Maronites enjoyed better positions in both the political and socioeconomic structures[145]. Hence, social classes tended to overlap with religion which furthered specifically the perception of favoritism and generally the inadequacy of the government and its institutions. Muslims thought themselves akin to second-class citizens[146].

Hence, with this brief description of Lebanon's various anomalies – namely its mosaic social structure with its unequal stratification and a weak government held by a small oligarchy that promoted sectarian differences – it is unsurprising that in the 1960s political and socioeconomic demands began to be heard. The 1958 crisis, which is often tied to regional developments – namely the Syrian-Egyptian union – was mostly caused by internal problems such

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[141] «Evolution de la Composition Confessionnelle de Quelques Professions (1943-1981),» Travaux du Séminaire de Sociologie du Développement, 1981-1982, Institut des Sciences Sociales, Université Libanaise, in Boutros Labaki and Khalil Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban, 1975-1990,* 185.
[142] «Distribution Sociale des Revenus en 1960,» Ministère du Plan, Mission IRFED-Liban 1960-1961, Beyrouth, p.93. in Boutros Labaki and Khalil Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban, 1975-1990,* 180.
[143] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 10.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid., 11.
[146] Ibid., 8.

as the 1957 elections which had sidelined the opposition to the then president, Camille Chamoun. This crisis also demonstrated the stratification and polarisation of Lebanese communities by proving that local leaders and families often attracted more allegiance than the state itself[147]. The political system's weaknesses were also highlighted by other crises; in 1969 Lebanon remained without a government for seven months. Lebanon's successive governmental crises and its rampant socioeconomic grievances led to the emergence of two polar blocs: one demanded reform and the other favored the status quo[148]. However, as a result of Lebanon's sociopolitical structure, sects held different interests and the two blocs were divided along communal lines. Thus, though intercommunal tension had been a trend since Lebanon's inception, the divisions over reform and the power-arrangement polarised Lebanon along communal lines with Muslims and Christians taking opposite sides[149]. The Christian establishment and its militias aimed to preserve their supposed privileges, while the Muslim establishment along with the Lebanese National Movement called for a redistribution of resources and the secularisation of the political system[150].

The internal structures of Lebanon, starting with the Mandate, paved the way for an armed confrontation between the Lebanese. External variables, such as the Palestinian armed presence, the Israeli raids, and the Arab-Israeli conflict, contributed to the already-existing struggle and perhaps exaggerated its outcome[151]. It remains that the Lebanese Civil War was a product of the political disenfranchisement of a large segment of the population, mostly Muslim, which found itself reaping little economic and social benefit[152]. The flawed system of representation established by the French could not rectify the social cleavages between the Muslims and Christians, with the

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[147] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 12.
[148] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 3-4.
[149] Ibid., 2.
[150] Ibid., 4.
[151] Fuad Faris, "The Civil War in Lebanon," 175.
[152] Ibid., 176.

latter being closer to the seat of power and defending the status quo. The weak central government and the fragmented social hierarchy gave primacy to religious-ethnic loyalties above national allegiance. The dynamics of the conflict were evidenced through each of Lebanon's crises. For instance, the Sidon protest, on the eve of the conflict, showed the Lebanese Army intervening on behalf of the status-quo coalition, undermining the opposition using legal channels, and ultimately leading to paralysis in parliament and in the public sphere. Eventually, both the pro status-quo group and the reformists, which had begun to militarise early on and prepare for armed conflict, exploded over a minor confrontation[153].

Similar to the narrative presented in the first chapter, these lost voracity with the waning of the War. Their theories about internal causes of conflict gradually lost authority in the face of more hegemonic studies that focused on the regional and international dimensions of conflict. With the increasing number of participants, what sustained the War became a source of analysis for what began the conflict. Moreover, with the pressing need to end the violence, untangling the external dimension became more urgent and perhaps easier than learning how to disengage communal hatreds. The authors in this section trace the origin of the War to Lebanon's internal contradictions. I will analyse the works of three authors in this chapter. Halim Barakat (1936-2017) was a professor of sociology who taught at the American University of Beirut before the conflict erupted. For the duration of the War, he remained in the United States, briefly teaching at the University of Texas and then moving to Georgetown University in 1976 where he taught at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies for over 20 years[154]. He was a prolific writer whose publications

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[153] Boutros Labaki, "Structuration Communautaire, Rapports de Force entre Minorités et Guerres au Liban," *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains* 151 (July 1988), 69.

[154] Judith Tucker and Edmund Ghareeb, "A Tribute to Dr. Halim Barakat," *The Jerusalem Fund for Education and Community Development* (March 18, 2017), accessed July 22, 2019 https://www.thejerusalemfund.org/16811/tribute-dr-halim-barakat

ranged from scholarly works to novels. In this section, I will focus on his article titled "The Social Context", published in 1979, in which he enumerates the various causal forces connected to the Civil War[155]. The causes he pinpoints are all extrapolated from Lebanon's social and political structures. In that same year, Walid Khalidi (b. 1925) published *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East* in which he posits that the conflict was mainly internal but aggravated by external causes[156]. Khalidi is a well-known and prolific Palestinian historian. In fact, one of his most impressive accomplishments was the co-founding of the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut in 1963, which to-date is the oldest independent research institute dedicated to studies on Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict[157]. Khalidi resided in Lebanon from 1956 until the Civil War erupted, teaching at the American University of Beirut. After 1976, he left for Cambridge but continued to visit Lebanon until at the least the time of the book's publication in 1979[158]. Finally, Latif Abul-Husn was a career officer in the Foreign Ministry of Lebanon starting in 1959. He moved on to become an ambassador for Lebanon in Australia and New Zealand from 1985 until 1997[159]. He has received a Ph.D. in political sociology from the Australian National University and has published a few articles on peace-building and conflict management. His only book, *The Lebanese Conflict: Looking Inward*, was issued in 1998 and argues the same as Khalidi and Barakat by proposing that the origin of the Civil War lies within and between Lebanese groups[160]. He examines structural problems and how they led to communal group tensions[161].

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[155] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context".
[156] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East.*
[157] "History: the Institute for Palestine Studies," *Institute for Palestine Studies*, accessed July 22, 2019, https://www.palestine-studies.org/content/history
[158] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 14.
[159] "Late Ambassador Latif Abul-Husn: CV," Circle of Lebanese Ambassadors, accessed July 22, 2019, http://circleofambassadors.org/members/128
[160] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict: Looking Inward.*
[161] Ibid.*,* 1.

Similar to the previous section, none of these authors were active participants in the Civil War and were mere witnesses to the events leading up to it and the wreckage in its midst.

These narratives share similarities with both the first chapter and the previous section. On the one hand, they trace the origin of the conflict to Lebanon's internal contradictions. On the other hand, the analysis takes into account communal grievances and acute polarisation between sects leading to conflict. In fact, both the internal and the communal dimensions are regarded as causal forces directly responsible for beginning the conflict. The communal center of this analysis is directly perceptible, similarly to the previous section, through the naming of the protagonists. As mentioned earlier, the authors argue that two confessional blocs emerged starting in the 1960s because of opposing interests over the political structure and the division of power between Muslims and Christians[162]. Though these groups are distinguished by their stance over various issues as either the "status-quo coalition" or "reformists", the authors refer to these protagonists initially and throughout their texts as "Christians" and "Muslims"[163]. Moreover, these authors focus their analyses on Maronites as the primary protagonists in the Christian camp. Khalidi postulates that since the Maronites were the largest of the Christian denominations and were holding the reins of power since the French Mandate, the sectarian dimension of conflict should be regarded as "Maronites" versus "non-Maronite Lebanese"[164]. Similarly, Latif Abul-Husn discusses the rise of the Christian Maronites in three stages, beginning during the Ottoman Empire and culminating from 1920 until 1975 when their rule was supposedly entrenched constitutionally and institutionally[165]. Abul-Husn also suggests, that out of all Christian sects, only the Maronites

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[162] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict*, 2.
[163] Ibid; Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 4; Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 14.
[164] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 14.
[165] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 21-22.

played a central role, while all Muslims – Druzes, Sunnis, and Shiites – were involved in the Lebanese conflict[166]. Equally Barakat, when dividing the two camps at the start, refers to the "camp of rightist Lebanese" or "the isolationist rightist movement" as being mostly Maronite Christians[167]. Despite this elaborate distinction, the authors continuously revert back to the broad label of Christian. Moreover, in these narratives another actor, the Lebanese Army, acquires an important dimension as an extension of Maronite control. In fact, both Barakat and Khalidi accuse the army of choosing to go against the Palestinian guerillas instead of the foreign invader, Israel[168]. In these narratives, the Lebanese Army is described as being under the control of the Christian elites instead of a national army. This claim is substantiated by Khalidi who points that even though Muslims were a majority in the army's the rank and file, Christians controlled the operational and battalion commander levels and were in charge as they held the positions of commander of the armed forces and chief of military intelligence[169].

Moreover, readers can easily detect partisanship in these narratives by looking at the adjectives used to qualify the Christians versus the ones used to denote the Muslims. While the Christians are endlessly described as attempting to "control the Muslims", the latter only appear as actors through their demands for reform or through the enumeration of their grievances[170]. This phrasing gives credence to Muslim actions before they even occur. Portrayals of distressing inequalities are followed by accounts of those responsible for inhibiting change. Thus, the actions of the reformists are being gradually justified against the status-quo proponents. The latter's actions, from barring censuses to militarisation, become causes for the increasing radicalisation of

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[166] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 31.
[167] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 4-5.
[168] Ibid*.,* 18; Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,*
[169] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 67-68.
[170] Ibid*.,* 42.

the revisionists. The sequence of events is clearly indicating which of the two camps is more culpable: grievances are followed by demands for reform which are barred and rejected by the status-quo coalition leading to further polarisation and militarisation of the two camps. Khalidi, for instance, describes the Muslim public as an "status-starved, disillusioned, morally enraged, often remorselessly idealistic Muslim intelligentsia" [171]. Meanwhile, Barakat designates the isolationist camp, of mostly Maronite membership, as being "manipulated, or encouraged by several Arab reactionary governments, Israel, Iran, and the West" [172]. The terminology and choice of adjectives voluntarily seems to favor the actions of one camp over the other. Another important distinction between the protagonists is that the Muslim establishment is separated from the Muslim public[173]. This separation is not extended to the Christians given that the Christian establishment is described as a monolithic whole in which both the public and the Christian leadership are seen as pursuing the same interests. In fact, the Sunni Muslim leadership is portrayed similarly to the Christian establishment as being an inept and power-hungry oligarchy leading the alienation of their constituency[174].

Despite the similarities the narratives share with previous ones, they are distinct on various levels. As I demonstrated earlier, leftist narratives tend to focus their analysis on structural problems that have remained constant since the Ottoman Empire. Though leftist theories also fixate on social, political, and economic grievances, they detach the communal dimension from the causes of conflict. Thus, they frame the Civil War as thoroughly a class conflict. Moreover, in the previous section, an external cause is held accountable for exacerbating internal divisions and

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[171] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 73.
[172] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 4.
[173] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 73.
[174] Ibid., 73, 93; Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 7.

turning benign manifestations of violence into a full-on war. Yet, both Barakat and Abul-Husn delineate these various theories – class conflict, religious strife, the collision of domestic, regional, and international variables, Palestinian-Lebanese war – at the beginning of their analyses and conclude that they are inadequate[175]. Rather, these narratives contend that Lebanon's social and political structures have for a long time exacerbated communal divisions. The origin of the Civil War is examined through Lebanon's own indigenous contradictions. Similarly to the first chapter, this portrays the War as an inevitable occurrence the causes of which were not simply immediate to the prewar years. In fact, regional actors and developments are only considered relevant once the conflict begins[176]. Therefore, it should be noted that these authors allocate little to no attention to external causes because they are seen as contributing, not causal, forces to an already existing conflict[177].

Yet, even though these narratives contend that developmental differences had begun in the Ottoman Empire, they draw their analyses from the contemporary past starting with the French Mandate in 1920. For instance, Khalidi begins his analysis by dividing the historical background to the Civil War into two categories: the first deals with the French Occupation from 1920 until 1943 and the second considers the independence period[178]. All authors draw on the same thesis, namely that the Lebanese State was a construct that went against the principle of self-determination for a majority of the population and, second, that the Mandate served to entrench Maronite control[179]. Thus, the Mandate years acquire an importance in having legitimised the confessional system as a continuation from the Ottoman "millet" starting with the constitution of 1926 which

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[175] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 4; Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 1.
[176] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 31.
[177] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 3.
[178] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 14.
[179] Ibid., 32.

allowed for the political predominance of the Maronites[180]. Most importantly, even though the Muslim and Christian cleavage is said to predate the French Mandate, the latter's establishment is certainly held responsible for its worsening by imposing social and political structures that were continued by the National Pact[181]. However, the authors do not discuss in-depth the historical developments leading up to the French Mandate, nor do they elaborate on the origin of the cleavage between Muslims and Christians. Abul-Husn provides a brief history of these communities during the Ottoman Empire but their relation to the present conflict is not well elaborated. He simply attempts to demonstrate a continuation in the social organisation of the various communities and the development of their political importance relative to one another and distinct from one another[182]. Briefly, this frames the timing of the conflict as both prolonged and immediate. Structural problems are taken for granted as being inherited from the distant past rendering tensions in the contemporary setting as expected and inevitable. Second, the lack of a thorough historical investigation also premises that religious cleavages between Muslims and Christians are not essential to our understanding of the conflict. In fact, Latif Abul-Husn premises that the disputes between the reformists and the status-quo coalition in the 1960s were not purely sectarian or ideological but rested on "diverging interests in changing the existing power-sharing formula"[183]. Hence, sectarianism on its own is insufficient to explain communal enmity. This centers social and political structural problems and their expected consequences in the post-independence period as the primary tools to understanding the conflict. This is also made apparent through the way statistics are used in these narratives. In the previous section, statistics about social

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[180] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 21; Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 35; Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 57.
[181] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 35.
[182] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 29-43.
[183] Ibid., 3.

inequality, employment, and education were used to demonstrate the closing gap between the ethnic-religious communities from the Ottoman period and throughout independence[184]. However, in these narratives, instead of focusing on the closing gap, the persistent inequalities between the communities are highlighted and emphasised[185]. This use demonstrates that the current conflict is rather fueled by the persistence of tangible grievances caused by communal disparities in socioeconomic and political resources[186]. Socioeconomic grievances are thus relevant to these narratives as symptoms of a broader structure which rendered their reform unachievable and was rather culpable in allocating these resources disparately. Their maintenance throughout the years is simply an indication of the rigidity of the Lebanese system and led ultimately to the inevitable polarisation and radicalisation of the marginalised.

Therefore, the fragmented and hierarchical social structure, the weak and corrupt government, and the laissez-faire economy, which led to rigidity in the political system and inequalities between classes and communities, are all considered as the primary causes leading to communal polarisation[187]. The data is then used to evidence these claims, rendering the communal dimension only important through its relationship to the internal structures of Lebanon. Following this logic, these authors tend to fixate on the National Pact as having legitimised these inadequate structures inherited from the French Mandate and the Ottoman Empire and which encouraged social cleavages. In the previous section, the arrival of the armed Palestinians is described as a turning point leading to the radicalisation of both Muslims and Christians. In these narratives, no such momentous event occurs. Rather radicalisation and polarisation are gradual and cumulative

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[184] Boutros Labaki and Khalil Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban,* 171-189.
[185] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 10.
[186] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 15.
[187] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 5.

processes[188]. The struggle is both caused by the social structure and plays out against political institutions and vice versa. The authors interpret the National Pact as a representation of these broader internal trends as opposed to regional developments. Barakat and Khalidi, for instance, assess the Pact through its flaws. Barakat states his clear opinion by claiming that the Lebanese Republic should have moved towards secularism instead of legitimating the sectarian structure inherited from the French and the Ottomans[189]. Accordingly, Khalidi contests the division of power according to a six to five ratio and admonishes the 1932 census for not reflecting the religious makeup of the population. More importantly, Khalidi argues that the Muslims acquiesced to this division of power to allay Christians' fear of becoming minorities in the wider Arab Muslim region[190]. Khalidi also speculates that the Muslims agreed to the National Pact to force the Maronites out of their dependence on the French[191]. Hence, the narration of the National Pact's flaws retrospectively establishes the grievances that will follow and lead to conflict. Moreover, while Khalidi mainly considers the National Pact at the political level as having instituted "the rules of the confessional game" through elite accommodation, Barakat and Abul-Husn extend the meaning and purpose of the National Pact as a limited mechanism of checks and balances created to integrate the various religious communities in a single system[192]. Abul-Husn argues that the social structure of Lebanon removed the primary loyalty of the Lebanese citizenry from the central government and instead positioned it towards the sect and their representative political parties[193]. Yet, the political importance that these social organisations had acquired since the Ottoman Empire should have been controlled through regulatory mechanisms like the National Pact[194]. However,

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[188] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 6.
[189] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 9.
[190] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 36.
[191] Ibid., 70.
[192] Ibid., 37; Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 6; Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 31.
[193] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 16-17.
[194] Ibid., 30.

communal loyalties proved too strong and the National Pact failed in establishing a system in which communities could develop politically and socially[195]. Namely, Abul-Husn argues that the Muslims considered the state to be a "neutral mediator" but since the Christians associated themselves with the state, in times of crisis, the state became the subject of conflict[196]. Similarly, Barakat argues that the system allocated an unequal distribution of social and economic resources, which maintained a fragmented nation governed by a select and corrupt elite and severed the possibility of the state assimilating all communities[197]. Yet, in both these arguments, the role of the National Pact as a regulatory mechanism remains unclear. If the Pact gave primacy to one sect above the other, then its consequence would have led to the predominance of that very sect. Hence, how the Pact would function as a checks and balances mechanism is vaguely represented. Moreover, though at times, the culpability of all leaders is highlighted within the institution of a supposedly flawed structure, the fault of the Christians remains the most criticised.

The National Pact seems to turn into a synecdoche of the numerous internal contradictions plaguing Lebanon. It becomes the clearest indication for intercommunal inequality by representing the cleavage between "demographically determined entitlement and the actual socioeconomic and political distribution of resources"[198]. It becomes representative of all state institutions over which different communities are struggling in pursuit of their interests. It signifies the broader political system which is unable to reconcile the problems of a pluralistic society or deal with socioeconomic demands[199]. Even political reforms are described in relation to the National Pact as a "frontal assault" against it where the latter becomes a source for "intersectarian hatred"[200].

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[195] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 31.
[196] Ibid., 80.
[197] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 6.
[198] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 47.
[199] Fuad Khuri, "The Social Dynamics of the 1975-1977 War in Lebanon," 384.
[200] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 42, 44.

Through its premise of elite accommodation, the National Pact becomes representative of the increasing alienation of the Muslim public from its establishment[201]. Yet, ultimately, the failure of this agreement becomes its own rigidity in having established structures that would both require change and inhibit it. The increasing Muslim-Christian cleavage and the fall of the Sunni establishment are consequences of these broader trends, as is the eventual eruption of violence.

Moreover, although internal contradictions are regarded as the only causal forces of conflict, the external dimension, though brief in these analyses, warrants some attention. All authors name the Palestinian armed presence, the Israeli raids in the South, the inter-Arab discord, and the Arab-Israeli conflict as external factors intensifying the internal conflict[202]. However, Lebanon's contradictions precede any and all external contributing factors. Namely, though the Palestinians are allocated such an important role in the previous section, Abul-Husn maintains that the Palestinians only played a central role once the conflict began[203]. Before the Civil War erupted, Abul-Husn posits that the status-quo proponents were using the Palestinian presence as a scapegoat to avoid handling the Lebanese Muslims' demands and to uphold the current sociopolitical order[204]. In fact, the Christians are described as being fearful of the Palestinians for tipping the balance in favor of the Muslims[205]. Equally, the Muslims are described as using the Palestinian presence in their favor to realize their demands. Barakat writes that the Palestinian armed presence "served as a catalyst" for "nationalist and progressive groups to unite and press for fulfillment of overdue demands"[206]. Similarly Khalidi suggests that the Palestinian presence contributed to the

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[201] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 93.
[202] Ibid., 93-94; Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 59-64; Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 17-19.
[203] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 31.
[204] Ibid., 60-61.
[205] Ibid., 43-44.
[206] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 17.

radicalisation of the Muslim intelligentsia[207]. Even Palestinian operations, which in the previous section, were considered a nuisance and a source of destabilisation for the regime, are described in these narratives drastically differently. Barakat suggests that the Palestinians attempted several times to coordinate their actions with the rightists and even organised several meetings with the main Christian leaders, specifically with Pierre Gemayel (1905-1984), head of the Kataeb party and militia, and Camille Chamoun (1900-1987), ex-president and head of the National Liberal Party[208]. Khalidi reinforces this argument by positing that the Palestinian armed presence was not only being used by the Muslim establishment to frighten the Maronite oligarchs but was also being used by Christian elites during the presidency of Charles Helou (1964-1970) for "some ulterior purpose of Chehab", who served as president from 1958 until 1964[209]. Moreover, Khalidi thinks that the Lebanese Army took advantage of the hiatuses in government to conduct several illicit operations against the Palestinians[210]. In fact, the Cairo Accord is considered to have had an important effect on the increasing armament of the Maronite militias, which Khalidi argues as having "in turn confirmed the worst suspicions of the Lebanese Muslims and radicals, as well as those of the PLO"[211].

Through these considerations, the authors confirm that the precarious sectarian balance preceded the Palestinian armed presence[212]. The discussion of the Palestinian armed presence focuses on how this presence was being used by Lebanese groups for different objectives. Since tensions were increasingly strained in the 1960s with the faster mobilisation and radicalisation of the two camps, the external dimension served only to exacerbate already existing tensions. The

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[207] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 40.
[208] Halim Barakat, "The Social Context," 18.
[209] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon,* 41.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid., 145.

explosion of violence is considered as being independent from the external contributing forces. The authors do not deny that external factors had an effect in shaping the circumstances that would lead to conflict, yet they maintain the internal grievances and polarisation that preceded them as causal forces. Moreover, in these narratives, the authors focus on the political, economic, and social structures that are intertwined and interrelated and brought together under the broad banner of the internal context. They argue that the political conflict is the most visible form of the internal contradictions that are traced back to social roots and the consequences that a failed political and economic system had in exacerbating religious-communal cleavages. The erasure of the external context lends to the idea that the explosion of violence would have occurred regardless of the external circumstances. Moreover, without an external dimension that deflects blame from Lebanese actors, these narratives appear much more accusatory of those who inhibited change. Hence, the War remains a structural and communal consequence the actual roots of which might not even have been targeted correctly by the conflict and its resolution[213].

Finally, I hope to have demonstrated the differences in the plots of these three patterned-narratives. Each story is endowed with a meaning that establishes not only causality but culpability. The first type of sectarian narrative, associated with the Maronites, follows the trajectory of a tragic tale with a short timespan; it mainly takes into account the years between 1967 and 1975. The changes occurring in the 1970s paint the quick fall of a romanticised Lebanon caused by the entry of the Palestinians who are said to have affected all matters from public opinion to government functions. This ascending plotline ruptured by a foreign trope is contradicted by the second type of sectarian narrative, the descending plotline of which began with the French Mandate over Lebanon. The discrepancies between communities unalleviated by the sociopolitical

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[213] Latif Abul-Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict,* 131.

construct determine the War as an inevitable outcome of these injustices. Yet, the Civil War, though expected, is portrayed bitterly as potentially avoidable if structural issues and their consequent communal hatreds had been targeted beforehand. The leftist and alternative plot follows a more progressive tone describing the conflict as a long-overdue consequence of both internal and regional contradictions. The grievances of the population are traced back to the Ottoman period but become relevant in the 1960s and 1970s once movements emerge in defense of their rights. Hence, the War becomes a rejection of both the capitalism and sectarianism deemed responsible for the exploitation of a wide segment of the population. However, in the latter plot, the possibility of a communal conflict becomes apparent even at the beginning of the War and is then criticised by these authors both retrospectively and pre-emptively. They argue against sectarianism as cause to maintain the primacy of the class struggle. Finally, these plots, although found in scholarly works, are also deeply embedded social and collective constructs. Hence, it is difficult to surmise whether these historians are simplifying their narratives and denying others to fit their interpretation or whether these narratives are too powerful and their agendas often unfamiliar[214].

In the next chapter, I will introduce a narrative that is found in recent scholarly works, cultural productions, and civil society. It is mostly commonly used as a figure of speech. However, I will not be including a summary of the narrative as I have done before and will simply begin with its analysis. After this brief discussion, I will conclude my research.

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[214] William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative", 1352.

Conclusion

A War of Others

In 1985, Ghassan Tueni wrote a book with a famous saying he had coined: "A War for Others"[1]. He had used this term in his own newspaper *Al-Nahar* and voiced it to those willing or unwilling to listen. This peculiar narrative, which had its roots in the later years of the War, proclaimed a new explanation for the senseless and ongoing violence. Its premises resembled those of a conspiracy and yet with the waning agreement on the original causes of conflict, the novel account seemed quite plausible. Soon, this term spread across social groups who no longer understood their place in the continued struggle and the saying changed from the original "war for others" to the "war of others on our land"[2]. And with the end of the War, the 'war of others' proved a useful means to externalise individual and collective guilt and absolve the Lebanese citizenry who now had to cohabitate. This axiom is often heard in civil society and even political leaders who had headed militias have taken up the saying[3]. The 'war of others' now knows no defined limit instead it stands as the absence of understanding over what transpired during the War and why. It is also a marked silence about the Lebanese people's actions in conflict and the extent of their responsibility. It cannot be allocated to a single social group's collective memory because it lacks a fixed or known set of representations and instead governs the public sphere, unlike the previous three narratives which are more prominent in the private sphere. The narrative originated from an understandable sentiment that the violence of the War was irrational and inexplicable. How could the Lebanese people do this to each other? And the only allaying answer was that they

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[1] Ghassan Tueni, *Une Guerre pour les autres* (Paris : J.C. Lattes, 1985).
[2] George Issa, "Ghassan Tueni…Bīkhawwif" *Al-Nahar,* (March 8, 2018), https://www.annahar.com/article/815764
[3] Walid Jumblatt is even heard saying it on February of this year, 2019. "Jumblatt: Mostaʻidūn li-Tay Nihāʼiyyān Safʻat Harb al-ʻAkharīn ʻalā Aradinā," *El-Nashra,* (February 19, 2019), accessed August 13, 2019, https://www.elnashra.com/news/show/1285306/

did not. It was done to them. If it were not so, there would be a very slim chance at peacemaking. The Lebanese War was then necessarily orchestrated from abroad.

Even though Tueni's original statement "war for others" did include a role for the Lebanese, it also assessed the cause and the meaning of the War as transcending the national into the foreign. It is easy to surmise how such a narrative changed into a "war of others", a marked absence of any national actors. In fact, Tueni's narrative begins with a reversal of origins. The beginning he chose could not inculpate Lebanese actors for that would defeat his thesis. Instead, he places the first tragedy in April 1973 when Israeli commandos infiltrated Beirut and Sidon and assassinated three Palestinian Fatah leaders[4]. This event he calls the Lebanese Sarajevo; the perpetrators are Israeli and Palestinian while the victims are Lebanese[5]. Tueni argues that all subsequent crises did not foment between the Lebanese and neither were they fixed by the conflicting parties. He means that every conflict generated a third intervention. For instance, Tueni evidences that the assassinations of 1973 should have generated a Palestinian-Israeli war but instead provoked a Lebanese-Palestinian conflict in which Palestinian militias kidnapped Lebanese soldiers, the army embargoed Palestinian camps, Palestinians set up barricades in the cities, and air strikes on the camps followed. The ultimate consequence was an Arab intervention and a crisis in parliament. Thus, he remarks that this crisis, like the ones that followed, could not be resolved bilaterally[6].

Tueni's clear argument is that the events of April 1973 and the succeeding crises were preparing Lebanon to become the battlefield of the fourth and most important Arab-Israel War. Here the war of others becomes a war between Arabs and Israel. Tueni adds another layer,

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[4] For a brief definition of the Fatah party, see footnote 25 of the second chapter.
[5] Ghassan Tueni, *Une Guerre pour les Autres,* 158-186.
[6] Idib., 187.

suggesting that the war of others was also a conflict between Arabs that was being resolved on Lebanon's territory[7]. With this coup de grace, the Lebanese were completely removed from the picture and any resolution of conflict at the time could be accomplished without them. Tueni's arguments have created their spin-offs both in civil society and even in scholarly work. Samir Khalaf, for instance, sees this narrative – Lebanon as a proxy battlefield for other people's wars – as a "persuasive thesis"[8]. In fact, discussions of proxy wars rarely figure in books written at the beginning of the conflict and explain little about the causes of war. It is of no surprise that such a narrative caught on after the invasion of Israel in 1982 and all of the wanton violence and confusion of the 1980s.

Scholars could now point to past events such as the violence of 1860 in Mount Lebanon and the crisis of 1958 and suggest that these events ended only through foreign and regional plotting. The 1958 crisis became evidence of a proxy war between superpowers in the Cold War[9]. The state through these various events became a victim that needed to surrender its autonomy and security for other regional and international actors[10]. The government is given the quality of a non-actor unable to enforce reconciliation[11]. These same dynamics were transposed to the war of 1975 or vice versa. Even the United States' policies in the prewar years were demarcated as purposely searching for an arena to defuse Arab-Israeli tensions and hence encouraging a proxy war in Lebanon[12]. Scholars could also assess the Arab League Summit at Rabat in 1974 and point to it as the instance where Syria and Arab states settled Lebanon as their battlefield and the Palestinians

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[7] Ghassan Tueni, *Une Guerre pour les Autres,* 194.
[8] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of the Internationalisation of Communal Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 9.
[9] Ibid*.,* 6.
[10] Ibid*.,* 7.
[11] Ghassan Tueni, *Une Guerre pour les Autres,* 190.
[12] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 8.

as their allies[13]. Lebanon in a word fell victim to regional and global rivalries. Grievances voiced and shared lose value and are afforded no place in this narrative and sectarian enmity becomes the product of regional manipulation. Only in the latter sense are the Lebanese guilty for having played into the hands of other peoples' wars. Strife could be explained through the Lebanese people's primordial loyalties, which describe citizens as trapped in the past and sectarianism as an unchanged relic. The violence of the latter is ignited through the internationalisation of conflict[14]. Resolution then would only occur once peace between the Arab regimes happens. The consequences of such a narrative are easily perceptible. The government as a non-actor could be left intact after the War. Internal grievances that had to do with socioeconomic policies or the structure of the state can be resolved with time but are not necessary for peace. All the Lebanese are allocated the status of victimhood regardless of their role as perpetrators of violence and hence amnesty for all is a valid form of justice. A thorough and serious analysis of the War becomes of less value than the prospect of peace without considering that the two are mutually dependent and that there could be no national unity without justice[15]. This narrative specifically confused the causes that sustained war with the causes that began it. It drew force and credibility from its moment in time, deceiving the past and its future memory. There would be little to remember from a conflict that did not concern the misguided Lebanese and this narrative succeeds in absolving the Lebanese of responsibility for their own history.

The deniability of the Lebanese people's responsibility in this conflict as suggested in the "war of others" grew popular as a means to move forward to reconciliation and has been taken up too often as a discourse and in art. For example, in some movies about the war, the average

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[13] Ghassan Tueni, *Une Guerre pour les Autres,* 196-198. Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 226.
[14] Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon,* 15.
[15] Lucia Volk, *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 21.

Lebanese tends to be portrayed as detached from the violence, the origin of which comes from a select few and for causes unknown. These works tend to then fixate on a single individual to incite sympathy and understanding as they get caught up in a war that does not concern them[16]. In this sense, what began during the War culminated in its aftermath not only through the institutionalisation of historical amnesia and the amnesty laws for all but also through scholarly and artistic works[17]. The government is often accused of willingly obscuring and hindering the memory of the conflict; however, these narratives whose origin is found during the War and which externalise all guilt are quite terrifying. Though it could be well-intended, the "war of others" is also an exercise of power and a subtle one. When every social grouping and individual is seen as both victim and perpetrator, it becomes impossible to allocate responsibility, which is a given in the context of war. Of course, not all discourses in civil society encourage such a narrative, in fact, some loudly and unequivocally argue against it. One interesting perspective comes from Amal Makarem, a journalist and historian who helped found Memory for the Future with Samir Kassir. Makarem separates the victims of war from military and political personnel and argues that the war was mainly the work of a small minority of warlords who sought to undermine peoples' right and their national allegiance. In such a twist, Makarem has left the status of victimhood intact all the while removing the legitimacy of political causes of the conflict and allocating the responsibility to the political elites[18]. Makarem thus unearthed the legitimacy of the national leadership while questioning the peace process which followed[19]. This is only one perspective, but one which shows that allocating responsibility does not have to deny the multiplicity of personal

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[16] Lina Khatib, *Lebanese Cinema: Imagining Civil War and Beyond* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008): 153-185.
[17] Elsa Abou Assi, "Collective Memory and Management of the Past: The Entrepreneurs of Civil War Memory," *International Social Science Journal* 61, no. 202 (December 2010): 400.
[18] Ibid., 401.
[19] Ibid., 402.

and subjective experiences by establishing a single univocal narrative like sectarian and partisan accounts attempt to do[20]. Quite the opposite, placing blame could also allow the multitude of victims to reclaim their voices against the culprits[21]. Isn't strange after all that in all of the previous narratives, there is a marked absence of the role of individuals in instigating the conflict? Kamal Jumblatt is perhaps the most often mentioned leader and yet even he is only discussed sporadically and eclectically. The novel extra-parliamentary forces, discussed throughout, are noted as important but without much detail and their effects on the causal forces are vaguely recollected. Perhaps the role of individuals is truly thought to be marginal in comparison to the real "big history" and large-scale causes of conflict. Did not causal factors have to transcend a single individual and a rhetoric to have sparked such violence? Could the war have begun as a leaderless movement? Or maybe the mention of leadership could inadvertently call into question this leader's responsibility. Since many of these leaders have gained a deity-like status since the war, it is easier to circumvent the possibility of 'subjectivity', of being too reverent or too critical, by avoiding their mention at all. In any case, the general amnesty of 1991 that erased all crimes and expunged all criminals should not be reflected in scholarly works. The question of leadership, its possibility or its absence, their responsibility and its extent, has to be targeted.

A final word on this type of narrative is to think that its strength as a means of reconciliation lies in its silence. It lends to the false belief that the Lebanese could heal from the War without verdicts, judgements, and above all memory. A narrative that dissociates the present from the past also denies the past from the future. By rupturing time, the aftermath of the war would no longer

[20] Elisa Adami, "The Truth of Fiction: Some Stories of The Lebanese Civil Wars," in *Civil War and Narrative: Testimony, Historiography, Memory*, Fabrice Mourlon and Bruno Tribout (eds.) (Cham. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 123.
[21] Sonja Hegasy, "Letter to Oneself: Acknowledging Guilt in Post-War Lebanon," in *Civil War and Narrative: Testimony, Historiography, Memory*, 47.

concern the past. While the previous partisan narratives led to the belief that the divisions caused by the War justified the indispensability of the national elites, this narrative instead allows for the forgetting of the past. All used together distance the present from the past while maintaining the past as a justification for the present. While sectarian narratives particularly omit and erase parts of the past, the "war of others" trivialises the enmity between the Lebanese and the internal discrepancies of Lebanon's structure. If history can be used to justify the social order, then above all our scholars need to beware and to shape their narratives outside the frameworks of power[22]. Though the consequent of power is power, the mechanisms through which power exerts itself are not all equal.

Another observation has to do with sectarianism. Throughout these narratives sectarianism is given a lot of importance by being described as a consequence and/or cause of socioeconomic grievances, radicalisation, and militarisation. It is explained as the reason for power-sharing and at the same time a threat to state institutions, especially when the regional balance changes. Some described it as a relic of the past, unchanging and fixed; others saw it as contingent on modernity, malleable and mutable. Though most claim that sectarianism on its own is insufficient to explain conflict, some authors fall prey to using terminologies and religious demarcations as fixed identities divided in two categories, Muslims and Christians. Sectarianism, as concept and phenomenon, slips into becoming a catch-all explanation without much elaboration on its causal mechanisms or its origins.

Regardless of the interpretation we associate with, the Lebanese War constitutes a severe problem for scholars. The undeniable competence of the authors is offset by how their conclusions

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[22] Michel Foucault and Colin Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 131.

are perceived and read; after all, these stories about beginnings are intricately tied to the conclusions they are drawing[23]. I attempted to show the role of narratives in the writing of the Lebanese War. I began reading about this silent history out of curiosity to understand my country's past, but instead I grew all the more confused. By choosing several books narrating the same event, I ended up finding various stories that seemed completely unrelated. I had been warned that there were no "objective" studies about the War, but I was also told that I would find a plethora of writing on the subject. Both statements turned out to be partially true. First, the disjointed narratives were a powerful insight into the reality of the War and its consequences. Second, Lebanese scholars had not been as prolific about this event and their works were surprisingly difficult to find in Lebanon and even when found were inaccessible to the public. Throughout this essay, I have had and still have many questions: if the Lebanese Civil War before it even ended was being remembered as an unthinkable event, or, as Trouillot would have said, a "non-event", how can a non-event be studied later on?[24] Why are studies and portrayals about the war often accused of exacerbating sectarian enmity? Are these objections based on fears of confronting the content of these texts or is it anger at the untruth of the information, or perhaps the silence is not warranted by the individual but collective authorities? How do scholars allocate responsibility fairly when they only consider part of the political causes of war as valid? What is the role of scholars in the writing of this conflict especially in its aftermath? How do we remain loyal to the audience for whom we are writing when the public is completely disjointed? How do we find balance between the social processes of war and the narratives that have been written about them and continue to be spoken and believed? How can we write the history of the War without trying

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[23] William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," in *Journal of American History* 78, no.4 (1992): 1370.

[24] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), 73.

to reach a single univocal narrative? How can we be faithful to the past while positioning ourselves towards the present in which our audience lives? Why have some narratives waned when they were so prominent at the beginning of the War? Why do we rely on the government to restore the memory of the war when political leaders are accused of maintaining divisions by alternating between forgetting and instrumentalising the past? Of course, most of these questions remain unanswered, but by reading theoretical works not linked to the Lebanese War such as William Cronon's essay on the Dust Bowl and Michel-Rolph Trouillot's seminal work on the Haitian Revolution, I was able to connect certain pieces of this puzzle.

First, Lebanon was and is being wrecked by too many good stories. Divisions are not attributed to bad storytelling. It is by virtue of the quality of these works and their arguments that divisions are maintained. It is not surprising that people in private spheres – namely the boundaries of their communities – find little to argue about with regards to the causes of conflict and that individuals are easily indoctrinated; each narrative read on its own is very convincing. It is also unsurprising that there is too much to argue about when discussions happen in the public sphere since contradictions are not easily dismissed. After all, these narratives are not fictive. Instead it seems that scholars tend to be governed by the same rules as society and as such this exercise revealed the obvious: that scholars are as divided about the subject as the rest of us. Scholars are not simply obscuring reality but acting through it and manifesting the contradictions that are bred by the War. Though scholars do not have an obligation to uphold certain representations of a collective memory, the centers of the aforementioned narratives are quite popular in society. By choosing to emphasise external causes, internal grievances, or sectarian enmity, scholars are establishing a hierarchy of values and placing only one at the center of the narrative. As such, these narratives are no longer innocent. They legitimate views and inculpate the other part of the

population. Though contradictions are fruitful in that they help us approximate the past, there should be a recognition of deep-rooted divisions, especially in scholarly work, because single univocal narratives can be deceiving.

Second, this exercise affirms the importance of narrative form as a medium to understand the underlying power structure. The discrepancies and differences in narratives tend to mirror the discrepancies and differences in society. Trouillot asserts that power is constitutive of the story and sees an intricate relation between power and history[25]. He goes further in suggesting that "effective silencing does not require a conspiracy, not even a political consensus. Its roots are structural.[26]" Hence the content of these essays is perhaps less important than how they work and how they are read. If the accusation stands that the government does little to commemorate the war and perhaps even hinders the process of research, power and the erasure of history remain more complicated. The nature of conflict breeds and requires a context of difference and contradiction. It establishes a structure that is embedded through the dynamics of power created during the war. From that moment on, differences do not dissipate but simply change form. The silencing occurs when the limited context does not allow actors, subjects, and agents to perceive the other. This lends to narratives that are mutually exclusive from others, convincing on their own, but also ones that sustain hatreds by depending on one another in an endless cycle of rejection. Divisive narratives legitimate the logic of the conflict and to open dialogue would mean to unearth that very legitimacy. Or else, narratives would remain under the dominion of power fortifying its existence. When we recognise that this silencing is part of the process of conflict, it becomes imperative for scholars to reclaim this continuous event as a social process. Silences in

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[25] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past,* 28.
[26] Ibid.*,* 105.

the end are engaging[27]. When scholars do not position themselves with regard to the present and its contemporary audience, we allow politicians to do the writing for us[28].

Third, scholars are not writing in a vacuum. It is an obvious statement to say that they are writing to be read. It is for this reason that the audience should be taken into account. Like I mentioned before, when I first started to be interested in reading about the war, I looked for recommendations for Lebanese scholars and I found none. Instead, I headed to the university library and began taking out books randomly. It was a curious affair to be met with such a total absence of suggestions from individuals who were themselves well-read scholars. However, after some readings, I quickly understood why. In fact, instead of limiting my curiosity to reading, I ended up writing a whole essay because extracting comprehensive information about the War required lengthy research. I have met few Lebanese individuals who venture into reading books about the Civil War; some feel like their lived experiences were enough and others object to many of the written narratives and have no interest in pursuing such a challenge. However, as scholars, we should be able to do what our audience refuses to undertake: wrestle with the multiplicity of ideas and conflicts about the war. Though the many contradictions in narratives are helpful in understanding the past and the processual nature of power, objections to narratives when they are read are equally important and should not be denied as power would have wanted it. In fact, the audience is essential to study the Civil War. There are so many witnesses and actors that can lead us to write about the war properly. Taking into account our audience would make our studies about this conflict more inclusive, broader, and more diverse without making our narratives seem any less coherent.

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[27] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past,* 48.
[28] Ibid.*,* 151.

It was shocking to hear in a panel discussion titled "An Unfinished War" held in April 2019 that some, mainly the youth, believe that the War is not over[29]. Some posited that the dynamics of conflict preceding the war remain and could lead to another explosion of violence. Others believe that the War is ongoing but through different means, most obviously demographic planning. Yet, instead of seeing present struggles as caused by the past, they transpose past struggles into the present. A couple of months after attending this discussion, I am witnessing a complete change in the topography of this dialogue following the revolution that has swept the country on October 17, 2019. This reinforces the argument that narrative and structure can be used to legitimise and cement one another, rendering it imperative to reclaim the former and deny it as a means of warfare and power. It seems undeniable that there is a need to write better histories, a desire that has now been openly expressed since, after all, the past is past but history is in the making.

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[29] Carmen Hassoun Abou Jaoude, Sahar Mandour, and Kamal Hamdan, "An Unfinished War" (Lebanese Civil War Panel Discussion, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon, April 17, 2019).

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