“Dream of a Republic”

Lebanese Political Parties as “Real Parties”

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Lasst uns der Welt antworten, wenn sie uns furchtsam machen will: Eure Herren gehen – unser Herr aber kommt

(Gustav Heinemann, Stuttgart 1950)

For my parents and my sister

In memory of Christoph Schumann
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ABSTRACT

The thesis deals with Lebanese political parties and their encounters with modernity.

The three parties dealt with in this study hold the idea that they are “real” parties that bring about the “real” nation. The objective of the present thesis is to examine what “real” refers to. This study suggests that all three parties are heavily influenced by asymmetrical references to a global normativity. These references are informed by the parties’ experience in Lebanon where they find themselves positioned within global theoretical abstractions and where both, the normativity as well as their abstractions, are felt even in party members’ daily lives.

International socio-scientific literature has identified two trends that, as the literature suggests, had evolved since the late twentieth century: First, the nation-state had become less important, and, second, utopian thinking had vanished. The study adds up various panoramas of situations when it became urgent to define one’s identity and claims that important constituents of modernity, such as the individual, the nation, progress, and representing the demos, serve for the parties in question as resources of utopian elements. This becomes evident from official texts and personal self-narrations. Most importantly, Lebanese parties are still taking the nation state as their central reference point and aim at bringing the nation state about because to them it is the legitimate form of organization of society.

In consequence, this thesis questions if the alleged weakening of modernity and its intellectual program can be claimed a universal age. It proposes a stronger emphasis on the enforcing, the “pedagogical” (Bhabha) side of representation by researching political parties to make utopian elements visible.
SYNOPSIS

Emnet for denne afhandling er de libanesiske politiske partier som et betydningsfuldt møde med modernitet.

De tre partier, som er genstand for denne undersøgelse, har den holdning, at de er “reelle” partier, der er i gang med at arbejde for skabelsen af en “reel” nation. Formålet med denne afhandling er at undersøge, hvad begrebet “reel” refererer til. Nærværende undersøgelse peger på, at alle tre partier er kraftigt påvirket af asymmetriske syn på en global normativitet. Disse syn er en følge af partiernes erfaringer i Libanon – her oplever de sig selv positioneret indenfor rammerne af globale, teoretiske abstraktioner i en verden, hvor såvel normativiteten som deres abstraktioner opleves konkret, også i partifællernes dagligdag.

Den internationale socio-videnskabelige litteratur har identificeret to trends, der ifølge kilderne er vokset frem i det tyvende århundrede: For det første er nationalstaten blevet mindre vigtig, og for det andet er den utopiske tænkning trådt i baggrunden, hhv. forsvundet. Undersøgelsen ser på forskellige scenarier, hvor det blev afgørende at være i stand til at definere sin egen identitet og definere de krav, der var nødvendigt at stille til de vigtige konstituenter af et moderne samfund, såsom individet, nationen, fremskridtet og til hvordan demonstrationer skulle gennemføres og hvad der skulle tjene som svar på spørgsmål omkring indholdet af utopiske elementer. Dette fremgår af officielle tekster og personlige selv-fremstillinger. Først og fremmest gælder det, at libanesiske partier stadigvæk betragter nationalstaten som deres centrale udgangspunkt og sigter mod at skabe en nationalstat, da denne for dem er den legitime måde at organisere et samfund på.

Som følge heraf sætter denne afhandling spørgsmålstegn ved, om den påståede hhv. antagede svækelse af moderniteten og dens intellektuelle program kan siges at være en universel tidsalder. Her foreslås det, at der lægges mere vægt på fremstillingens “pædagogiske” (Bhabha) side gennem en undersøgelse af de politiske partier med henblik på at synliggøre utopiske elementer.
FOREWORD

I am deeply indebted to many people who helped me in ending a sheer endless task, most notably to Sune Haugbølle, from whose comments, criticisms and remarks I learnt a lot. Moreover, he took over the ungrateful burden of replacing someone else, becoming my second supervisor after Christoph Schumann unfortunately passed away much too early in 2013. This work contains many ideas he passed to his students in his inspiring colloquia. I am also indebted to Mary Starkey and Samantha Liddell for editing this text and to the staff of two universities, of Erlangen and Roskilde, and the German Oriental Institute at Beirut for their kind support, especially to Thomas Demmelhuber, Peter Lintl, Hürkan Aslı Aksoy, Francesco Cavatorta, Michelle Pace, Lindsay Whitfield, Manfred Sing, Thomas Scheffler, Umar Kamil, Jörn Thielmann, Ulrike Frank, Nadine Schnelzer and all those friends, students, and colleagues that engaged with me in endless discussions on the various subjects touched by this work. Additionally, I owe my first academic teacher on the Middle East, Peter Pawelka, deep gratitude for awakening in me the interest for this fascinating region. I am also indebted to my uncle Dieter Weyer for his generous support, to the German Oriental Institute at Beirut and the Vinzl-Foundation at Erlangen for financing a part of my fieldwork in Lebanon¹.

¹ Not to forget: a good deal of my work was basically paid by myself until I was offered a job at Erlangen University. Therefore, I have to thank especially the Red Cross at Erlangen for whom I worked to finance my life while I was writing this study.
CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

1. INTRODUCTION: THE “DREAM OF A REPUBLIC” – PARTIES AND MODERNITY AS UTOPIANISM

When doing interviews in Lebanon there was one thing I had to learn to cope with: no one is sectarian. Others may be, but never oneself. That truly is a strange phenomenon in a country filled to the brim with confessionalism (or sectarianism; the expressions are used synonymously here), since everyone eventually reverts to a confessionalist filter in one form or another, which shape their perspectives. In a stunning contrast to “sectarianism,” as the obviously illegitimate if not pathologized version of self-identification, was another term: “real.” There was one remarkable thing that all my Lebanese interviewees wanted to hammer home: they are “themselves,” they do “real” politics, in “real” parties, to bring about the “real” nation, not just as a party, but also as part of a personal agenda. “Real” strongly indicates a norm, a reference to a framework conceived as valid and important. I will claim the concept of the demos, i.e. democracy as a concept based upon the invocation of an acting people, and the global age of modernity, are relevant here. Consequently, the question of which sectarian group someone belonged to in fact proved to be among the more delicate in the interviews, precisely because the interviewees tended to see such groups as illegitimate, nearly pathological identities, undermining an allegedly purely national affiliation and individuality, precisely because they held concepts of modernity and democracy.

This topic was not there from the very beginning. When I first started to draft this study it was set to deal with consociationalism and political party socialization. It was much plagued by messy concepts, vagueness, and born out of a rich trove of literature that had taught me a lot about Lebanese political parties. I had learned that they are sectarian, personalized, instruments in a leader’s hands – in short: totally useless. A freshly written bunch of essays had just corrected this image a bit in my mind; but still I had a rather colorful and exotic top-down phenomenon in my mind when I started fieldwork in Lebanon, dealing with the three major Christian parties in Lebanon, al-Kata‘ib al-Lubnaniyyah (Lebanese Phalanges, often also designated by their French name, Les Phalanges Libanaises), al-Quwwat al-Lubnaniyyah (Lebanese Forces [LF]), and the Tayyar al-Wataniyy al-Hurr (Free Patriotic Movement [FPM]).

I discovered more and more how much, notwithstanding all deficiencies, these parties had a place in the lives of those who participated in them. The more I researched them,

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2 With regard to Arab names, I chose the versions employed most in Western news coverage and at times by their bearers alike: thus, al-Ġumayyil becomes Gemayel, Ġa‘ja‘ Geagea, Hubayqa Hobeika, etc.
the more I stumbled upon the clearest way to narrate the political. Either it takes the form of a programmatic self-conception or it is put into the framework of something that is connected to biography, the respective cycle of life. Neither sounds as instrumental as I expected. All those partisans I encountered, all sympathizers and former members, had tried to play down the obvious visibility of their leaders and to bring in themselves and a normativity hovering around all these “real”, these modern politics. These encounters drove me to try and portray these organizations as resulting from meaningful encounters with modernity and influenced by the democratic concept based upon a *demos* (democracy) and the nation-state which they all want to bring about as the legitimate form of how society should be realized. This imperative underpins a large area of Lebanese politics.

![Bashir Gemayel on posters as the "Dream of the Republic" (Picture by the author, taken in Beirut in 2010)](image)

In 2010 both the Phalanges and the Forces put up multitudes of posters in Eastern Beirut, featuring Bashir Gemayel and captioned with the slogan “hulm jumhuriyyah” (dream of a republic).³ *Hulm* (dream) is probably the most widely used term associated with the slain president in the personality cult that developed around him. It stands for finally bringing about the one “real” state, and overcoming the deficiencies of the present one. “Hulm jumhuriyyah” is prevalent. It is not only the caption of a poster, it is also the title of an MTV documentary on him, contrasting somewhat demagogically selected quotations of the “Martyr President” on

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³ See Picture 1. Tellingly, after Michel ‘Aoun’s inauguration into the presidency, the FPM published a poster of ‘Aoun in a solemn position, captioned with the slogan “imad al-jumhuriyyah”, “the general [or, as a pun, the mainstay] of the republic.”
his “dream state” with pictures of menacing present-day Islamist fighters to document his discourse’s unaltered actuality.\(^4\) After the bomb-blast that killed the newly elected president, *Le Réveil*, his brother Amin’s newspaper, proclaimed the death of Lebanon’s dream, while others considered the Lebanese as “orphans, amputated of their chief, their dreams, their hope” from then on (Selim 1984, p. 24). His father’s biography claims that the “leader” “did not work for the fatherland with appropriate wishes but with ardent dreams.” (Ghanem n.d., p. 10) His party prided itself on being willing to contribute with all its strength “to the creation of the fatherland which we dream of, to save the Nation of Tomorrow from all harmful habits and customs.” (Sharaf 1979, pp. 79f.) There is a hagiographic book on the FPM leader and current president, Michel `Aoun, with the daring title *Dream or Illusion?* (Na’mun 1992)\(^5\) The FPM, therefore, did not hesitate to call for the “realization of the `Aounist dream” when “the General” came back home from his French exile (Mausuw’ah Aoun, II, p. 23).

These rather emotional notions, juxtaposing a bright future with a deplorable present, are also used outside Lebanon: Ahmad Radhi, a former Iraqi football star, temporarily in his country’s post-2003 parliament, used the slogan “committed to reforms – the dream stays alive.”\(^6\) Egypt’s former president Muhammad Mursi spoke – to name just one of the more recent examples – in his speech after the acceptance of a new Egyptian constitution about “the hope for building the new Egypt, of what we were permanently dreaming of.” (al-‘Aswat al-Misriyyah, 2013-06-27) Some months earlier he had expressed his desire “to realize the national interest according to this people’s will, of what we dreamed of altogether through years of marginalization, oppression, tyranny, corruption, electoral fraud, and employing all kinds of banditry against the people by the fallen regime.”\(^7\) The editors of the newspaper *al-Quds al-‘Arabi*, rooted in secular Arab nationalism, on the other hand, blamed Mursi for his reliance on his own rank and file and therefore for being responsible for the betrayal of all their own greater aspirations:

“Our dreams dwindled from the Line Tangier-Jakarta [of a possible “Islamic renaissance,” C.T.] and from the Ocean to the Gulf [as a line of an alleged “Arab awakening,” C. T.] to this compressed fatherland as [one of] millets\(^8\) and sects. I feel ashamed in my country for

\(^4\) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVEn5sNd-VU, rev. 2013-12-17.

\(^5\) This title inspired Antoine Najm, former intellectual luminary of the rival LF, to write a book of his own, with the title *Mā a Hulm Dhīd al-Wahm* (With a dream against the illusion): Antoine Najm 2009.

\(^6\) An image of it can be found at http://tinyurl.com/nocrxx4, rev. 2014-10-30.

\(^7\) See his speech on December 12, 2012 on Egyptian State TV, manuscript available on *al-‘Ahram Online*, http://tinyurl.com/pqlxz9n, rev. 2014-09-30.

\(^8\) *Millet* (Arabic, *millah*): the pre-modern culturally autonomous sectarian entity.
my wallet, full to bursting with money, whereas my beloved … bend down from hunger and
fight for the gift-basket on Ramadan [that is distributed among the poor at evening ‘iftar
celebrations, C. T.], which is becoming a national project.”

These desires, the notions of “dreams” and “hopes,” are part of an experience rather typical
for a region that is characterized by underdevelopment, even physical experiences with
powerlessness, and all the dysfunctionalities that hinder its respective states from living up to
the normative expectations probably held by most of their subjects.

All that is deeply utopian: originating in the deficiencies of the society as it actually exists, it
contrasts reality with an ideal order. Utopianism is not offering solace, it is at least
motivating. It is a bringing about, even if we were willing to set apart a bureaucratic
“blueprint,” and a rather imaginative variant (Saage 1990 and 2005; Jacoby 2005). I will
claim that the reference to modernity in my sample primarily constitutes an expectation as to
how to behave properly, related to an imperative of actually fulfilling this norm. Modernity is
their utopia. The “dream of a republic” tries to bring about this global standard. Full-fledged
utopian (“blueprint”) models for a society rely on the chance of taking over coercive
resources, if necessary by eradicating the line between “state” and “civil society” altogether.
Yet, even where the chance of enforcing one’s own will has slipped or “forging” is no longer
considered desirable, the normativity of modernity still holds at least considerable numbers of
utopian elements that cannot allow for not having a reference to a polity altogether (see:
Saage 2005, pp. 292f.)

To design a study on parties not according to institutionalist concepts but as an attempt at
portraying them as an encounter with the global age of modernity might be conceived as
either self-evident or – to the contrary – inappropriate. It might sound self-explanatory, since
modernity has been claimed to be indissolubly related to political parties when both concepts
had for the first time become the subject of scientific research (Apter 1965, pp. 179-222). Yet
several authors chose with regard to Lebanese parties to deal rather critically with the first
modernism euphoria (most prominently: Suleiman 1967a; al-Khazin 2002), although, starting
in the 1990s, paralleling political liberalization in some Arab countries, Middle Eastern
parties have been generally rediscovered as promising objects of scientific research.¹⁰

¹⁰ For a brief initial overview over the research on Arab parties refer to Ibrahim 2006, pp. 13–44 and Catusse and
Karam 2010, pp. 11–60.
Moreover, also beyond the narrow confines of Lebanon, it is often said that parties are going to die, as is the nation-state, especially in a country almost inevitably tied to “sectarianism,” imagined as counteracting the notions of “party” and “nation.” Thus, the hypothesis of a failing modernity might sound more convincing against the background of the Middle East as a region currently torn apart by a conflict frequently couched in the language of “sectarianization.” (Hashemi and Postel 2017) This takes up older debates as to whether the region’s societies are modern at all (Halpern 1963; Huntington 1968); whether legitimatory narratives mattered for those ruling them - in particular, comparative research on authoritarianism often denies or plays that down (exemplarily Clapham 1985, pp. 44-60; Luciani 1987, p. 77; M. Beck 1993, pp. 234f.); whether the nation-state could be Middle Eastern; and whether parties or their respective ideologies originating from the West would fit into a region to which they were frequently said to be alien (Badie 1991, pp 327-343; Pawelka 2004, pp. 36f.). Others even saw Middle Eastern parties as somehow related to “traditional” and “apathetic” identities with an allegedly different epistemology, and therefore not what their Western counterparts are: carriers of modernity (’Abu Rida 2012, pp. 18ff., 38ff.). The underlying assumption alone is highly questionable: obviously, many parties were exposed to European influence, although most would claim to refer to a universal model. But is there any place where parties are not influenced by others? These distorted notions lead to a mystification and reduction of Middle Eastern politics, even a self-deprecation – a phenomenon Manfred Sing had dubbed “provincialization” (Sing 2013).

Besides these more traditional debates, there is another current feeding into imaginings of a modernity fading away. Especially in a “postmodern” context, both political parties and the nation-state are often viewed as epitomes of modernity, set to wither away with its end. I will, probably in a rather Don Quixotic way, do otherwise. I will try to indicate that we should be more careful about couching the crisis of states in the Middle East, or the weak role often played by parties there, in the grandiose language of bidding both a theoretical farewell. In fact, even Eastern European parties might be more personalized, more fluid, rather more top-heavy than their Western European counterparts (Kopecký 1995; Szczerbiak 2001). I will argue that the Lebanese parties I researched might be more personalized, more fluid, and less like their classic liberal version in the West, which we shall understand as “the established nations [that] are those states that have confidence in their own continuity” (Billig 1995, p. 8). Regardless of this, I shall claim that these parties are true expressions of modernity, a global

11 Most significantly, the former Phalangist ideologue Antoine Najm considers this form of sociability unsuitable to the region in general and Islam in particular: see interview with him, 2012-07-20.
standard providing for a utopian concept, allowing either for full-fledged utopianisms or for utopian elements. Modernity holds an important place in their respective historiographies, their intellectual debates, and within their members’ lives.

Probably, in a wider context, Lebanon could even function as a stumbling block for “us” as the international community of academics: traditional modernization theories are highly discredited. Yet, despite all shifts to the subaltern, fragmented, fluid, and decentered, “we” tend to oversee how questions of how society has to be established still are primarily and necessarily answered in an analytical language informed by a globalized normativity of how to do politics. Its core elements are the individual, the nation, progress, and representing the demos, all serving as resources of utopian elements. The claims that the age of utopianism is coming finally to an end make their proponents at times dangerously blind to the obvious presence of utopianism in our times. I suggest that we should therefore pay much more attention to political parties, since they deal more closely than anyone else with polities related to the idea of bringing the “right” order about. I seek to demonstrate that this concern is far less banal than it might sound, if we understand the state as the primary polity in question in an interpretative manner, i.e. without taking its existence and form for granted. Seen in that light, it might be possible to understand why the utopianism of modernity is still widespread in the Middle East as a region where all that is dear to that normativity seems to be at stake: the individual that has to rely heavily on “relational identities” (Joseph 2011) within a weak state and amidst a faltering surrounding.

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH
I will elaborate my hypothesis that these parties provide meaningful encounters with the concept of modernity, promoting its normativity, by dealing with the examples of Christian parties in Lebanon. There are various reasons why I chose them: first, whereas Lebanon has never truly been a Christian country, it would probably have never come into existence without Christian pressure. And, in stark contrast to the myriad of studies on Hezbollah, the rich array of actors other than Islamists tends to be neglected. Second, no community in Lebanon currently has stiffer party competition than the country’s various Christian sects. Further, while Christians are undoubtedly a minority in the Middle East, they are by no means detached from it, and are therefore well aware of their regional position as a minority. If it is true that “society is conflict over life opportunities,” as Ralf Dahrendorf (1972, p. 7) has argued, then the structure of society most affects those who do not stand a chance of
determining the course of things. Regarding how they deal with that position was very much at the root of this study, and led it to an unexpected end. Thus, this seemingly “exotic” phenomenon should have repercussions on “our” social scientific debates on modernity and its forms of doing politics.

I will start out this chapter on the concepts to be used in this study with a definition of what a political party could be and how it has to be related to the state. Then, I will deal with the state of research on Lebanese parties, addressing several problems arising with them. Moving to the conceptual framework, the subsequent parts of this chapter will relate the Middle Eastern experience discussed here back to an international theoretical debate by placing it in those meta-concepts we need. There, I will first propose a structurally inspired concept of modernity and democracy visible in “our” ideas of how to act politically. That may help us to understand why in most countries of the Middle East democratic models are dominant, although, lacking liberalization, they are not always recognized as actually being democratic. Further, I will relate that meta-concept to its foremost form: how to achieve sociability, the nation, and its nation-state, arguing that among other formative visions, living as citizens in a nation-state could still provide for a powerful utopianism if “we” in the academic community did not occasionally slip into a one-sided perspective of the decentered practice. I propose researching political parties as one attempt to render the utopian visible.

The subsequent chapters of this study will be divided into various panoramas that must be added to give arguments supporting the hypothesis that these parties might indeed be truly modern phenomena with a strong emphasis on utopian elements. Therefore, I will start out with a panorama locating these parties in a wider framework of social change, bringing about a widened political participation. First, a long-time perspective will help us understand how a Christian political consciousness developed. Generally, however, the emergence of each party obviously matters most: Nothing tells us more about points of reference and self-perceptions than the perceived necessity of having just another, new party, for whatever reasons. Consequently, I start out by embedding these parties into their broader horizons by focusing on the moments at which they sprang into life. One panorama thus focuses on the emergence of the Phalanges, another on the 1975–90 civil war that gave birth to both the Lebanese Forces and the Free Patriotic Movement. Within these panoramas some referential points will be elaborated: “building the nation”; federalism; the role of a confessional identity, referring to the civil war; Israel; and how to position oneself toward Hezbollah. All these points came up in the partisans’ own written or oral discourses; they obviously formed important
differences between them, structuring a good deal of their behavior. How that actually translates into reality since 2005 is retraced in just another panorama, sketching out what these parties imagined as the right polity after the Syrian troops left their country. The last chapter deals with elements of a democratic modernity in their partisans’ self-conception, and how they try to strike a balance between their normativity and those personalities so visibly dominant their parties. Finally, I will try to indicate how these parties virtually inhabit their adherents’ lives to a degree no longer known in most Western parties, because of a deep need to cling on to the concept of forming a nation. Only taken together do these panoramas make sense: they cover the three tiers of social action (structures, discourse, and lifeworld; see next section), and try to establish a historical encounter as a theoretically interpreted “Thick Description” (Geertz 1973).

3. **Methodology**

My research developed using Qualitative Social Research as a starting point. Such a study can therefore only deal with visible expressions. Political identities, which I use in my work, are basically what they are: visible identities. They are self-perceptions, and therefore do not necessarily depict the “real world,” even to the extent that they could be total fabrications. Nevertheless, all these visible expressions are to be seen as part of “discourses”; not because the discourse was a fashionable word – which it is – but rather because no party leader is a lonely, daring hero writing his will onto history, but part of a broader social reality whom they all reflect and constitute by presenting themselves in a practice of articulation. It is through these discourses that we see social structures: the actors themselves emphasize modernity, “real” parties, “real” states, youth, etc. Even if claiming to stand for these topoi were a fabrication, the need to feign doing so answers a need derived from structures.

Thus, we have to stretch our study over three levels of research. The first tier encompasses social structures – that is, the economy, political and institutional conditions. This is obtained via secondary literature and from some information provided by the aforementioned parties in the more structured parts of our interviews.

On the second tier we may find discourses, stemming from the third tier, the lifeworld, but shaped by structures. Besides the interviews, these discourses are also gained partly from

12 This study uses a three-tier model developed in largely compatible forms by Leiprecht 1997; Heitmeyer 1997; Heitmeyer and Imbusch, 2005.
secondary literature, but mostly from a selection of written material, be it from the party itself or about it. A special emphasis has been laid upon those works that were recommended by the interviewees themselves, as well as the official party literature. I also included some graphic material, Facebook postings, and various YouTube clips. To make sure they were not only intended for an extra-Lebanese audience, I also consulted, without telling my interlocutors, material published for their own rank and file: especially the various *mausuwʿat* (party) “encyclopedias” – whose language and overall makeup is clearly for an internal audience. The biographies of the leaders (especially *ash-Shartuni 2008*) and more or less elaborated programmatic self-presentations (*ʿAoun and Domont 2007*; *Sehnaoui 2011*) also address an audience outside the party, but only partially outside Lebanon.

The third tier consists of subjective explanations/justifications of individual behavior. We will find reverberations of small-scale *Lebenswelt* here. This will be obtained from parts of my interviews, conducted by employing Qualitative Interview techniques. I registered twenty-eight interviews with members or sympathizers of the aforementioned organizations, or political activists who were known in the political field but not affiliated to parties. This proved to be an important part of this study, since it helped us to identify why people leave parties and remain apart from them, and to evaluate how far away “apart” actually means. To allow for a wider localization, I also interviewed several self-described leftists, large parts of which I omitted from this study. They more or less functioned as a control group, allowing me to locate the other groups within a broader political field. The third tier became the most visible in those questions breaking down the respective political discourses into the life cycles of the respondents. The interviewees were invited to name reasons to get into politics, and to name influences that they decided were relevant for their political socialization leading up to it. Because no one was willing to meet me twice for an interview, I decided to attach to that original set a further one of closed-up questions. These questions were usually closely related to the individual respondent, e.g. a campaign manager would be asked questions about conducting an election-campaign in Lebanon. Whereas these answers partially indicated the structural conditions of the first tier, they were mostly part of the official discourse. The interview as a whole dealt with the interviewee as an “expert” on Lebanese politics (*Bogner and Menz 2005*).

The results of these interviews were transcribed, with the exception of some questions from the latter-mentioned part of it. The analysis encompassed detailed coding and the establishment of categories, according to methodological techniques established by Grounded
Theory. The categories established were firstly *motifs*. A motif is a recurring element that has symbolic significance in a whole chain of interpretations slung together as a narrative. I called the more firmly established categories *topoi*. A topos is a standardized, recurring element with a symbolic significance. Finally, the *narrative* is a sense making, occurring not only explicitly in the symbolisms that seem to transport the content, but also in the subtext. It becomes visible by evaluating the whole body of material as part of a discourse in a final step.

Qualitative Social Research has quality criteria (Strübing 2004, pp. 75-89). One of them is to adapt questions and the categories obtained from the material procedurally to the ongoing process of work (among many others: Strauss 2003), which I had to do over the course of my research. I used the open, unstructured core questions on the interviewee’s personal way into politics, the family’s political stance, the role of religion in their life and political outlook, the nature of the state, the identity of the party, and the person of the leader, in varying order and often in rather different places, when the course of the interview allowed for it. Only in a few cases, I could not ask all of them. The issues of the Palestinians, the regional surrounding (including the “problem” of Israel), and the war turned out to be important categories during the research, so I added them as semi-structured questions, again in varying order. The original questions had been developed in 2007 in a procedural way by a student research group.

To “trigger” a narrative, I had to ask questions in a rather broad manner. That was often rather surprising for my interviewees. In some cases it also left the impression that I knew little or nothing about the country. This consolidated my position as an outsider who needed some “lecturing” on the country and what it meant to be politically active there. It was the only way I could also verify whether their versions of subjects those established in their own respective party literature. Only in the more structured questions could I be the researcher they certainly all expected.

However, all respondents were very willing to narrate. If someone signaled early that he did not really want to dig into his own experiences, I simply tried to encourage him to open up by showering him with the more structured questions that required his or her expertise, and with questions designed to locate the individual’s place within the party’s narrative, e.g. how he reproduced it. I said hardly anything, letting them do the talking and presenting me with their versions of what their parties were about. Most of them did reveal, sooner or later, at least some biographical sketches. Hardly any party member refused to answer more personal
Joseph Abou Khalil, vice-president of the Kata’ib Party, was the sole exception in which things did not work out at all. He asked me to enter into a more meaningful conversation with him, but where I expected him to produce some text, he wanted me to enter into a deeper debate with him. That was doomed to failure right from the start, since he finished every sentence offhand, bored by the questions. But this was the only instance in which things did not work out at all. I helped myself in that case by adding material from interviews he had actually already done with others. Further, I included at least some written materials by the more prominent of my interviewees (Joseph Abou Khalil, Karim Pakradouni, Antoine Najm). Whereas the works of the first two are widely available, the latter presented me with a good proportion of his writings when I visited him in his home at Fanar.

This way of doing social science can never produce representative material; it does not even try to do so. Rather, validity is sought for by digging deeply into the material (Strübing 2004, pp. 78f.). However, the composition of the sample should stand for relevant prototypes. I accessed these organizations via official channels, but also made also use of private contacts. Regarding the organizations’ reluctance to name anyone other than “official” functionaries as respondents, I faced the problem of having a rather academic sample. That might not be such a serious problem, since Lebanese parties are indeed very top-heavy and tend to get blurry towards the outside. I tried to make up this deficit partially up by talking informally to ordinary members or sympathizers during my fieldwork, undertaken in Lebanon in 2010 and 2012 for about a year. I was not allowed to record these conversations in all cases, but I always made notes afterwards. Despite all possible shortcomings, in fact, the sample still provides recognizable socio-political identities. Further, I added self-locations provided by biographical fragments of former members: I used three biographies written by former fighters, or in close collaboration with them (Hatem n. d.; Sneifer 2006; Duplan and Raulin 2015), sketches from TV documentaries,13 and the wide array of “testimonies” on former ‘Aounists who left the party (’Abi Samra and Shararah 2009).

In all cases I ensured my interlocutors’ anonymity. I also decided to keep the exact location of each of them rather vague to protect their identities. Exceptions were first those cases when I

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interviewed functionaries in a purely structured manner to obtain important information about specified problems (campaigning, party education, etc.). Further, some respondents (Joseph Abou Khalil, Karim Pakradouni, Antoine Najm) are simply too much public figures in Lebanon to be able to retain their anonymity. In these cases I will indicate their names openly, as well as those who have provided biographical sketches themselves under their real names.

4. DEFINING THE POLITICAL PARTY

No organizational group is more focused on the state than the political party, as Klaus von Beyme has observed (von Beyme 2000, p. 17). Consequently, a party is nothing but an entity consisting of more than one person, which organizes its relationships in a structural manner to get access to offices of the state, and thereby to power, be it alone or shared, whereby the quest for state power sets it apart from other social organizations (ʾIshtiyy 1997a, pp. 40-43; Ware 1996, pp. 1-6, 127) – even if the organization in question conceives the state as an interim structure, to be dissolved at some point (Ware 1996, p. 2). While this applies to parties of all kinds, some of them might be called “thickly organized” parties that have “develop[ed] large mass-membership bases with allied or ancillary institutions engaged in distinct but related spheres of social life” (Gunther and Diamond 2003, p. 169). Due to their social base, it is mostly these that have to elaborate concepts in a conscious attempt to translate the normativity of modernity into the state.

“Parties” in Lebanon frequently seem to be – even according to the actor’s actual self-description – not just “parties.” The party as such is therefore only one part of a whole scheme that is much broader than a narrower definition of the phenomenon could grasp. Parties in Lebanon have a strong tendency to fulfill other functions too, for example as social clubs, paramilitary units, militias, surrogates of the state, etc. That seems to fit smoothly into a broader approach to the concept of partyism, as proposed by Thomas Nipperdey or Antoine Messara, by claiming that any group with a political conception and a distinct identity (Nipperdey 1973, p. 33), or everything implying “taking sides” (Messara 2010) actually constitutes a party. Nevertheless, these denominational patterns would blur the lines between various types of organized groups, thereby labeling every kind of political organization as a party. Therefore, another concept is needed, signifying both a party and a “current” as distinct but interrelated notions. Basically, I decided to use the word “current” (tayyarah), since it is very often used by those “parties” involved themselves, to describe a whole political orientation based on a milieu and forming different types of organizations, of which the
“party” is only one. The “current,” therefore, is the sum total of institutionally organized structures (armed wings, sports clubs, social clubs, etc.) that act as the political function of a milieu that I want to define as a group, which develops a similar identity, and therefore a common corpus of moral rules (Vester et al. 2002). It is constituted by the coincidence of several structural dimensions, such as religion, regional tradition, economic situation, or cultural orientations, all of which can be present in any given part of a population (Lepsius 1973, p. 68). Thus, the milieu signifies an approach that is, at least nowadays, rather untypical of Western parties: the carving out of a support base outside the core structure of the party to allow for a strong and determined opposition beyond the immediate structures of the state.

Internally, parties might contain a considerable number of subunits. Despite widespread Anglophone practice, they are not referred to as “factions” here. Rather, I would call them “group,” “wing,” or “tendency,” with the latter notion designating “a patterned set of attitude” (Sartori 1979, p. 75), implying a shared conviction, and the former also meaning a solidarity group that might hold common convictions but seems to be foremost governed by personal relationships, or simply a “clique” that is also personally constituted, yet rather by common interest than by mutual identification.

But besides those notions introduced above, there is a grouping of political concepts: the political camp. In Germany, for example, liberals and conservatives differed from each other, but not as much as both of them opposed the socialists. Similarly, in Lebanon, there are differences between Hariri’s Sunni Muslim Mustaqbal, the LF, and the Phalanges, but the three of them do manage to find enough common ground to form an alliance. What might have been at first tactically motivated has developed, via a common view on Syria and a commonly perceived danger, into a camp.

Finally, a party might be formed in order to gain institutionalized access to the state; but we still need to single out more specific functions that a party could fulfill. Ulrich von Alemann (2000, pp. 208-213), in a comprehensive scheme, suggests seven of these functions:

1.) Participation
2.) Transmission (linking the system to its subjects/citizens)
3.) Selection (of functional elites)
4.) Integration
5.) Socialization
6.) Self-regulation (serving as a career vehicle)
5. PROBLEMS IN RESEARCHING LEBANESE PARTIES
I will deal in this part of my study with some problems arising from the specific conditions of partyism in Lebanon that have been introduced in literature as rendering them dysfunctional with regard to the definition and functions sketched above. These remarks have to precede the discussion of meta-concepts, since these problems actually led a considerable part of the relevant literature to judge Lebanese partyism as not always living up to a global standard, always sneaking in as an object of comparison. This state of research will allow for a deeper understanding of why the normativities of democracy and modernity matter that much in Lebanon.

A. THE PROBLEM OF PARTY LEGISLATION
The initial criticism of Lebanese partyism has always been the vagueness of Lebanese party legislation. No Lebanese law on the issue has yet been promulgated, and the constitution is not very clear on the matter: it only stipulates free speech, free assembly, and the right to organize as long as the results do not contravene actual law (ʾIṣhtiy 1997a, p. 445; Idem. 2006, pp. 51ff.; al-Khazin 2002, pp. 68f.). This vagueness stemmed from a liberal approach inspired by late Ottoman constitutionalism. The Ottoman law of 1909 still fills the Lebanese juridical vacuum on parties. It knew “political societies” (jamaʿat), ironically prohibiting them to be founded along “ethnic and racial” (“qaumiyyah wa jinsiyyah”) lines (ʾIṣhtiy 1997a, p. 445f.; Idem. 2006, p. 53). It reflected an actively pursued adoption of an internationally relevant ideal of how society and its political organizations should be organized: it simply copied the French Waldeck Rousseau law of 1901, which was thoroughly anti-clerical and centralist (Messara 2010, p. 31). The law does not differentiate between a club, a political party, and any other kind of organization. Thus, provisions regarding the minimal standards of internal, vertical control are cut short; even the timeline to deliver the new organization’s articles of incorporation is not specified, despite being de jure an indispensable prerequisite for recognition (Messara 2010, p. 31). Interestingly, this vagueness allows for both: pluralism and outright coercive restriction of parties, depending on the actual political situation in Lebanon. Thus, in 1970 the then-acting Minister of the Interior, Kamal Jumblatt, lifted the ban on no fewer than eighteen parties at once (ʾIṣhtiy 1997a, pp. 445f.). Contrastingly, during the Syrian domination of 1990–2005, registration was often delayed or
openly hindered (ʾIshtiyy 2006, p. 54; Messara 2010, pp. 31ff.; Sarkis-Hanna and Ekmeji-Boladian 2009, p. 70; Kingston 2013, p. 61). The Interior Minister Michel Murr in particular clearly demonstrated the shortcomings of a liberally intended law lacking detailed specifications, by interpreting them to benefit his Syrian allies: he dissolved as many as 138 associations (including political parties) and refused to acknowledge the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) in 1992, citing security provisions (Kingston 2013, p. 61).

B. THE PROBLEM OF THE PARTY AS INTEREST APPROXIMATION

For sure, it is not overstated to claim the current mainstream of understanding political parties as being liberal. That does not necessarily constitute a problem; however, it sets a framework of reference. That reference is of considerable relevance for the Middle East, whose experience with the liberal era was probably best characterized by Peter Sluglett’s catchy formulation of “high ideas, illiberal practices,” (Sluglett 2008) giving birth to a whole host of political organizations that were not about liberal parliamentarism, but about seizing the state.

Thus, Shawkat ʾIshtiyy (1997a, p. 299) argued that al-Kataʾib would not constitute a “real party” in a “technical sense,” but rather a “popular movement” (harakah shaʾabiyyah), since it was never fully integrated into the Lebanese political system, harboring at least for a considerable time non-parliamentarian concepts of doing politics. But as Mario Rainer Lepsius noted, it was not until after World War II that German parties brought about their milieus’ smooth integration into the country’s overarching political system; nevertheless, they reflected the country’s pre-political social constellations (Lepsius 1973, p. 68). Therefore, being integrated into a system cannot be a useful prerequisite for being classified as a “party.”

Richard Hofstadter, in turn, noted that “party apologists” based their defense of the party on the idea of a regulated conflict of political differences arriving “at a rough approximation of the public interest.” (Hofstadter 1970, p. 18) Jean-Marie Donegani and Marc Sadoun have questioned many of the underlying assumptions concerning a seemingly smooth integration of conflicting societal groups by competition. Despite their at times hopelessly distorted consideration of the relation between the individual, society, and mediating instances, both authors scrutinize the underlying ideas of the magic that allegedly happens by aggregating interests (Donegani and Sadoun 1994). This inquiry is all the more relevant where parties
consider any factual pluralism as a regrettable burden. Rightfully, some authors ask, whether a single-party-state, where by definition only one party exists, would therefore not feature any parties at all, since no open political competition could be observed? (Sartori 1979, p. 24) Competition for power in a liberal, pluralist manner therefore simply cannot be a necessary condition for qualifying as a party. Competing for power has rather to be understood in a broader manner as a struggle that could also assume other forms than open competition. Even makeshift “pluralism” inside an authoritarian society means competition, albeit far from the liberal ideal: in fact, hardly any dictatorship exists without the shattered remnants of other “currents.” To take a party intentionally monopolizing power as an example, the Party of Socialist Unity (German abbreviation: SED), the ruling party of the former GDR, did describe itself being a “party of a new type” (“Partei neuen Typs”). Thereby, the party was at least conceptually set apart from the state or the trade unions. The SED was considered to organize a party to act as the “proletarian vanguard” to fight off other remaining political orientations from taking over the instruments of power. Should the need to keep these “reactionaries” at bay cease to exist, i.e. if classes were abolished, the whole reason to maintain a party would simply disappear. Thus, realizing to stand opposed to other conceptions of setting order stands at the root of partyism.

Within the same context of realizing an organized other, the use of violence could merely be part of striving for power or actually exercising it as part of institutionalizing coercion: a party is not restricted to violence, an armed group is. For a revolutionary party, violence could be an essential part of gaining power. However, in general, a party does not primarily prepare itself to use brute force, but rather to gain interpretative hegemony over what the state could be.

C. THE PROBLEM OF PARLIAMENTARISM

However, Donegani and Sadoun’s criticism of smooth social integration by partyism is just as worthy of consideration when parliamentary-based politics are malfunctioning. Although the parliament actually exercised a certain degree of control (Baaklini et al. 1999, pp. 101ff.), Lebanon’s political system has always implemented verzuiling (pillarization) up to a point that rendered formal institutions less important than the “ability of the sectarian elites to understand and trust each other.” (Baaklini et al. 1999, p. 86) Michael Suleiman (1967a, pp. 50ff.) once judged the Lebanese parliament as “completely crippled” in times of crisis.

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Similarly, David and Audrey Smock (1975, p. 116) noted back in 1975 that the Lebanese parliament was not a very “robust” institution – in quite a telling contrast to the presidency as well as the cabinet.

Obviously, responsiveness (see: Etzioni 1968, pp. 503ff.) to popular demands, controlling leaders, and thereby being a tool to help steer the country’s system as typical functions formulated as tasks of parliaments in consolidated liberal democracies (for example: Blondel and Cotta 1996, pp. 1-21; Patzelt 2003, Gallagher et al. 2006, pp. 60-67; von Beyme 2014, pp. 199-246) is often inadequate. Theoretically, parties could serve as valuable lines of communication between parliament and government by fusing the traditional juxtaposition of executive and legislative power (von Beyme 2014, p. 27). However, in Lebanon this process is only partially functional, since the formal and informal bodies that bring particular groups together eclipse every other institution and outshine the parliament. The problem starts with consociationalism in general being itself deeply elitist: rather than bringing the coalition parties to the table, their leaders sit there, performing important tasks as intermediaries, not only between the different partners in government, but also between them and their respective societal bases (Lijphart 1970; Nordlinger 1972, pp. 49f.) and – let us not forget – their respective foreign allies (Assi 2016). The decision as to how to position a parliamentary bloc is almost exclusively taken within the party, at least within the thickly organized ones here in question, and not within the bloc itself. Yet, the inner party top-heaviness and the inevitable necessity to have everyone at the extra-parliamentary round table of consociationalism, reduces party government to a phenomenon well short of many of the functions usually ascribed to it: political decisions are not primarily taken inside the ruling party, nor are the highest officials necessarily to be chosen its ranks. Yet at least a good many members of government were chosen in the elections of 2005 and 2009 along party lines (see the criteria established by Katz 1986, pp. 42ff.).

Nevertheless, things were not always that bad, since, as others have observed, the parliament did serve a couple of functions: it connected constituencies to the state by means of parliamentarians serving as interlocutors between them and the state’s administration, by serving as a training ground for those aspiring for higher positions in the state, and, finally, by fulfilling a legislative function that was at least not for nothing: only 52.9% of the regular and 38.1% of the urgent bills proposed to the assembly were approved by it (Baaklini et al. 1999, pp. 92ff.). Whereas in most European parliaments the strong role of parties undermines the dichotomy of “parliament vs. government” by largely conditioning most parliamentarians’
role (Gallagher et al. 2006, p. 58), the Lebanese parliament, by contrast, interestingly performed quite well, at least for a considerable time, due to its parties’ relatively non-decisive role in forming a government, as these numbers indicate. That ended with the escalation of Lebanese local and regional conflicts after 2005. A new “consociational” principle has since then been introduced into the country, aptly described by Are Knudsen and Michael Kerr as the “blocking third” principle: “[a] new power-sharing formula in which consensus guaranteed by the constitution, is replaced by minority veto. Although cast as a legitimate power-sharing mechanism, it is better understood as power politics, using the threat of force ... to pressure the majority into complying with the minority’s demands.” (Knudsen and Kerr 2012, p. 6) As a consequence, in 2013, a year of heavy confrontation between the alliances of the “two Marches” (i.e. the March 8 and March 14 blocs), the chamber’s work-rate was so low as to be documented on a mere twenty-four pages (al-ʾAkhbar, 2014-01-09).

D. THE PROBLEM OF ELECTIONS

Yet, not only had the parliament been crippled for a prolonged part of Lebanon’s history, but elections had likewise been a delicate question in Lebanon. That is all the more relevant since various international authors on partyism (among others: Downs 1957, p. 137; Schlesinger 1991, pp. 5-10; Aldrich 1995, pp. 12ff.; Schattschneider 2009, pp. 61ff.) stipulated taking part in “duly organized elections” as a conditio sine qua non to qualify as a party. The idea of actually being endowed with a legitimate mandate to act is with few exceptions ubiquitous for all parties. Even that substantial number of parties that do not expect electoral success to be a necessary precondition for entering government but prefer an insurrection – or at least did so at some time in their history – do not make that much of an exception. Thus, the Phalanges were highly critical about elections in their first years, but have tried to demonstrate their popular support by taking part in them since 1944. However, “duly organized” constitutes a problem. At times that starts with actually having elections at all. To avoid confrontation up to the point of bloodshed, the national elections of 2013 have been postponed until, prospectively, 2018.

On a regional level, parties might even neglect whole regions altogether, at least officially. Neither the Lebanese Forces nor the al-Kataʾib are totally inactive in the district of Zaghurta, dominated by the Frangié family’s Maradah, with which they have been in conflict since the civil war. Instead, they simply prefer to keep a low profile there and to refrain from
challenging the Maradah officially in elections. In particular, rural areas of Lebanon used to be, and some still are, areas of polykephaly. Characterized by an extremely weak state, various local power centers might emerge and result in a complex network of mediated relationships (Bierschenk 1997, pp. 87f.). In that case, their relations with each other are upheld by tacit patterns of “bringing people together.” Here, notables might negotiate a single unified list from all leading families (Salem 1965; I. F. Harik 1968, p. 71; J. G. Jabbra and N. W. Jabbra 1978; Kanadani-Zahar 2004). Such informal consociationalism can, in villages where no mediating local center has been established, lead to “elections” decided “bi-t-tazkiyyah” (by recommendation): the local family heads sign a written consensus over the candidates to be chosen, to be passed to the district governor without any further ballot-casting taking place (Salem 1965, pp. 382-385; Kanafani-Zahar 2004, p. 176). It is therefore unsurprising that organized modern parties did in the beginning not really bother about municipal elections; if they did become engaged, they often tried to fit into the sensitive fabric of local families (’Ishtiy 2001, pp. 60-65, 70-73).

Historically, Lebanese parliamentary elections are meagre indicators of parties striking roots into the country’s society. Generally speaking, Lebanese vote in voting stations separated along confessional lines, but everyone votes for the seats of the whole constituency. This might, taken to extremes, lead to the end of the secret ballot: In 2009 a single Armenian voted in Tyre. His vote for the March 8 was therefore by no means anonymous. The same was true when only five of the country’s few remaining Jews voted in Beirut: they all, unsurprisingly, chose March 14 (See, for the results of the elections in 2009: Statistics Lebanon 2009). Voters and candidates alike need to register under their sectarian identity. Thus, if a district is confessionally mixed, any voter could vote for another sect’s representatives. This has resulted in a tendency to present an all-encompassing list to represent all possible denominations to dominate the whole electorate of a district in order to function as its sole mediator towards the country’s center. What was intended as one of the foremost principles of reducing confessionalist electoral programs by forcing them into compromises (Hudson 1968, pp. 213ff.; Nordlinger 1972, pp. 23f.; I. F. Harik 1980, pp. 152f.; Horowitz 1985, pp. 633f.; Scheffler 1996, pp. 31-34; Scheffler 1999, p. 7; Hamdan 2012, p. 52; Hanf 2015, p. 82) could

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15 Interview with a Phalangist election manager, May 2012, Beirut.
16 Interestingly, the only elections without an obligatory sectarian proportional formula are the local ones, although local traditions might decide otherwise. The former Minister of the Interior Kamal Jumblatt in 1963 tried in vain to introduce such a formula at the local level: see ’Ishtiy 2001, p. 62.
17 Whereas, interestingly, student elections are highly competitive and heavily polarized.
18 Their voting box is, according to French administrative traditions, labeled “Isra’ilyy”: therefore, merely to enter it probably means involuntary social exposure.
also work out as a means to effectively exclude any kind of serious political opposition by simply eliminating competitors or alternatives by zuʿamaʾ (sing. zaʿim: local notables), and especially since 2005 also by parties. As a broad scheme, until 1972 alliances between notables, formed pragmatically rather than based upon some programmatic content, dominated the scene in Lebanon. How arbitrary in ideological relation those alliances could have been is probably nowhere more obvious than in the case of the hitherto only priest who made it into Lebanon’s parliament: Simʿan Duwayhi. Having failed 1957 and 1960 in the Zaghurta district, he decided to make peace with his bitterest enemy, Suleiman Frangié – who later was to become Lebanese President. In 1957, in a bloody family vendetta, a mob under Suleiman Frangié’s personal leadership had raided a church at Miziarah during a funeral, killing several Duwayhis. Even for Lebanese family feuds that proved to be too much: violating a sacred ceremony inside a church transgressed the usual notions of honor. Notwithstanding this grisly deed, Simʿan Duwayhi allied himself with his archenemy in 1964, hoping to get the second Zaghurta seat at Beirut. In turn, Frangié made the most out of it: by securing his hitherto arch-rival’s support, he not only facilitated control over the whole of his electoral district, he also gained the support of the National Liberal Party, whose small local organization the Duwayhis controlled in Zaghurta (Zuwiyya 1967, p. 117; Suleiman 1967a, p. 117). For the whole of Lebanon until 1972, between 10.9% (1943) and 25.0% (1953) of all parliamentary seats were directly passed to a male heir in the holder’s family (S. Khalaf 2003, p. 124). However, this is an overview of elections influenced by clientelism (see below) as an important facet of Lebanese politics. It does not tell us anything about the mobilizational qualities of these patrons under changing circumstances. This is nowhere clearer than in the Lebanese Forces’ actual stronghold of Bsharri, where no political organization polled well before the civil war. Actually, in 1968, for example, the united list of the three major Christian parties (National Liberal Party [NLP], al-Kataʾib, National Bloc [NB]) did worse than anyone else in the district. Family-related lists won all the seats (Zuwiyya 1967, pp. 28f.). Yet, as soon as the first violent clashes broke out, qualities of a different kind were sought. And, despite the acute lack of any measurable electoral success up to that point, al-Kataʾib’s militia spread well into the Christian regions, and especially into Bsharri district, the very constituency hitherto seemingly untouched by political parties. Currently, it seems almost natural to think of the inhabitants of Bsharri as adherents of Samir Geagea, the LF leader and a former Phalangist.

However, voting behavior also suffers from the prevalence of coercion and fraud. Especially during the Syrian era and under Béchara al-Khoury (Entelis 1974, p. 131; Hanf 2015, p. 114),
but also, to a lesser extent, on other occasions (see among others: N. A. Ziadeh 1960, p. 372; Gubser 1973, p. 187; Johnson 2001, pp. 50-60; Hanf 2015, passim); \(^{19}\) the army, police, the “General Security,” and the Military Intelligence pressured certain political orientations. Occasionally candidates are attacked by rivals.\(^{20}\) Tellingly, in April 2018, Silvana al-Laqqis, the sole independent member of the electoral supervision committee, stepped down, citing having been restricted from practicing her role (Naharnet 2018, 04-21).

Nevertheless, this repression never reached the scale of the region’s various dictatorships. Fraud has to be rather sought in a more privatized manner.

Notwithstanding a pervasive gerrymandering, one important conduit into fraud within the Lebanese electoral law was probably the Ottoman legacy (Kayali 1995, p. 270) of having no officially provided ballots. Until 2018, voters have had to write down the candidates’ names themselves (see for details on the Lebanese electoral laws: I. F. Harik 1980, pp. 147f.; Majid 1992; Khatir 1996; Baaklini et al. 1999, pp. 80-87; Information International/ad-Dawliyyah li-l-Ma’lumat 2009, pp. 13f.). Parties and single candidates hand out prefabricated ballots at the voting stations, with their own preferences already filled in. The time a voter takes in a voting booth could serve to indicate whether he used the ready-made one or wrote down the names himself, according to his personal preferences. In former times especially, illiterates were thereby made to vote according to their patrons’ choices (N. A. Ziadeh 1960, p. 372). Party representatives are also present inside the voting station, observing the counting process, which in urban areas is frequently shown, ballot by ballot, on a wall. By adding slight but treacherous variations to their prefabricated ballots (adding dots, edges cut off, allowing for small fissures or damages on the paper, altering the candidates’ order of appearance, adding or leaving titles, etc.\(^{21}\)), it can be at least partially possible to tell a single voter’s decision, as far as the sheer number of voters allows for doing so (Cammett 2011, p. 76; Corstange 2012, p. 489)\(^{22}\) Nowadays the mobile photo might also document individual voting behavior.\(^{23}\) Nevertheless, this kind of voter surveillance could hardly allow for monitoring all voters, even with modern techniques, but it could be possible to do so for those who owe a favor to a donor. At the very least, the whole procedure, as antiquated as it is, puts remarkable pressure on voters. Still, one should be reluctant to establish an idea about voting in Lebanon in

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\(^{19}\) In 2018, the “General Security”, widely considered pro-Syrian, detained a Shiite-cleric running against Hezbollah under questionable pretexts; Naharnet, 2018-03-23.

\(^{20}\) Exemplarily, in 2018 an anti-Hezbollah candidate was beaten up in Southern Lebanon, Naharnet, 2018-04-22.

\(^{21}\) I was shown one example of such a ballot by an activist; others could be seen in the internet.

\(^{22}\) See also: http://qifanabki.com/2012/06/12/lebanon-vote-buying-ballot-reform/, rev. 2015-06-03.

general from these practices. Tracking the electorate is also an indicator of a deeply divided society, and Lebanese parties keep at least a rough record of those in the locals sympathetic to them, as party managers of the Phalanges, the LF, and the FPM admitted. Given the high degree of social visibility in Lebanon, that is no real wonder. To tell a voter’s sympathies, to give him a label, to pressure him into voting for the “right choice,” has also been a European practice under polarized conditions.

In summary, voting as well as non-voting – the participation rate oscillates between around two-thirds of the registered electorate among more influential sects and less than 10% among voters from smaller, uninfluential ones – is a complicated matter in Lebanon. Overall, the fragmentation of the country as well as its electoral system does not allow for comprehensive election analysis, as in other countries. Within that restricted scheme, “real” parties and family-based parties differ in the theoretical nation-wide approach of the former and in the latter’s local bases, whereas those with a nation-wide approach transcend a single area as far as their electoral base allows.

E. The Problem of Clientelism and Economic Peripherality

Besides open coercion, economic pressure on voters is another issue that literature on Lebanon has often dealt with (see for example Hess and Bodman 1954, esp. p. 16; Yamak 1966; Hudson 1968, pp. 211-261; Dekmejian 1975, pp. 11-101). For example, a widely read handbook on political systems in the Middle East claims that political parties in Lebanon are mere “tools of recruitment” in the hands of traditional leaders, that “allegiance to families with historical leadership status” is required in politics (Hitti 1991, p. 219). Rola el-Husseini acknowledged that parties have combined the practices of the old zuʿamaʿ with more modern forms of political representation, forming “propaganda machines” for their leaders (el-Husseini 2012, pp. 38f., quotation on p. 38). These assumptions are obviously driven by the barely hidden use of clientelist practices within the country.

Generally spoken, clientelism is rampant in Lebanon. It could be defined as being a direct, informal relationship, at least officially voluntary, existing between two socially unequal partners, consisting of a reciprocal exchange services and goods, whereby the client needs a broker or a mediator, since there is no meaningful formal right that could guarantee him access to them (Rieger 2003, pp. 80ff.; more generally: Lemieux 1977; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984).
However, it is not always obvious which practices often referred to as distorting elections actually constitute clientelism. Public money is widely used for hidden campaign spending. Before every election, the state’s bureaucracy springs into life, tarring roads, painting schools, and fixing water pipelines; ministers tour their constituencies on more official occasions than before. But building roads and fixing pipelines surely is a phenomenon not totally unknown to other countries, including throughout Europe. Such activities are based on an expectation of some results from government activity rather than on clientelism, as they are not aimed at specific individuals. Giving someone a job in exchange for a vote is, however, exactly the kind of personal, reciprocal, and uneven tit-for-tat that comprises clientelism. Thus, voters for whom a candidate had done a favor but who had not yet shown up at the polls might be visited on election day to remind them of their duty of reciprocity (Cammett 2011, p. 76).

Vote buying, as an obvious criminal practice, is difficult to prove; yet it exists. A few examples might suffice: During the municipal election of 2016, an elderly Muslim woman confirmed in a Lebanese newspaper to have sold her vote since she lived alone, had no money, and was promised help in return (L’Orient Le Jour, 2016-05-09). In December 2008, candidates were reported to have given between $2,000 and $3,000 as gifts to potential voters in Beirut and Zahlé (Transparency International 2009, p. 31). It is difficult, if not impossible, to gauge just how far-reaching vote buying really is. There has been a recent attempt at quantifying it. Around 26% of the respondents openly admitted to have received a “service” before election day. The hidden, unacknowledged admittance of “services” may have stood at no less than 55%; this figure was indirectly reconstructed mathematically (Corstange 2012). Therefore, the results do suggest an exactitude and reliability that the underlying “list experiment” cannot offer. In particular, it does not measure “vote buying” as a process in which someone offers his vote for sale, but rather in terms of receiving a “service”; in other words, an output-oriented electorate as well as an output-oriented electoral bid.

This might not be too surprising: Excluding refugees, in 2004, 53.3% of all Lebanese were without any insurance. The rate of those not insured oscillated between 41% in Beirut and not more than 68.5% in Nabatiyyah. Stepping in for the state, private donors, companies,
cooperative societies, and religiously inspired institutions – and by now political parties too – even reserve beds in hospitals for their clients, and use their access to the state’s bureaucracy to ensure financial coverage of at least a part of their treatment in times of need. At times, party representatives even go from house to house to ask whether anything is needed. In doing so, they show preference to those displaying party symbols (Cammett 2011, pp. 75ff.). This does not necessarily mean that patients asking, for example, Hezbollah or the Hariri Foundation for help will be directly refused, but those closer to the party will receive preferential treatment (Cammett 2011, p. 90). Sectarian affiliations, any kind of intimate relations, might help providing these services.

Yet, literature hardly asks how exactly the respective recipient evaluates that service.26 When I spoke to an adherent of Hezbollah, a simple guardsman from Beirut’s southern suburbs who had just invited me for a coffee, he emphasized: “of course I support them – they defend us against the Jews [i.e. the Israelis], they care for us, they pay the hospital bills.”27 A FPM functionary expressed fear of the “Party of God,” but lauded it for its “social engagement” and for “defending the country.”28 A Shiite from the South, who introduced me to the Wardieh gas stations concept (their surplus goes to the Fadl-Allah Foundation, which is independent of Hezbollah’s own network, but located within the same societal milieu, see Marusek 2018, p. 8), emphasized exactly this welfare relationship.29 In stark contrast, not a single interviewee close to March 14 ever saw the very same Hezbollah practices as anything other than an undermining of the state. Thus, stealing electricity in a quarter where Hezbollah dominates almost always goes unpunished: the encaissier who would usually demand payment every month at the door would in some cases not even show up in these heavily armed quarters. Their inhabitants, as the guardsman mentioned above made very clear, do not see it as a crime, but as a kind of a compensation for the state’s dysfunctionalities, in his case mostly for his small income. Likewise, the Phalanges take pride in the Bashir Gemayel Foundation offering grants for students, and the Lebanese Forces consider it an indicator of their social credibility that their members contribute to a program that offers visits to a doctor employed by the party or close to it, for reduced tariffs.30 Thus, stepping in might be even

up to 72.2% of those divorced, mostly women, are no longer insured. Almost the same numbers are true for the illiterate: see ibid., p. 69.

26 As for Hezbollah, most seem to see it positively: Yadav 2013, p. 89.
27 Informal conversation with a Shiite from the Dahiyah in Beirut, October 2012.
28 Interview 1.
29 Informal conversation, September 2012.
30 Allegedly 10,000 LL, or around $6, for a medical consultation: Interview 4.
seen as proof of concern for their own clientele. Ironically enough, these “proofs” might stem from expectations of services from the state instead of replacing it for good.

Similarly, presents for Christmas or ’Eid al-Fitr, as well as the new statue of a saint for a church at ‘Aley, even if it cost no less than $47 million (Transparency International 2009, p. 31), are not so much corruption as fitting into patterns of social behavior (“tradition”). Therefore, the FPM at Achrafieh did not consider it an act of vote buying to develop sports facilities in the quarter, or to collect money for some Christmas charity. Normally parliamentarians and candidates all around the world are proud of “doing something” for “their” quarters. It renders hierarchies visible (one gives, one takes), and these hierarchies indicate dependency, but hierarchies alone do not necessarily constitute corruption. The practice of organizing buses for those voters not actually living where they ought to vote, and providing them with some food on the journey, has to be seen as something similar. The two Shiite parties, ’Amal und Hezbollah, in particular, engage in these activities. Their potential voters are, due to the widespread migration from the south and east of Lebanon, most affected by Lebanon’s electoral provision of voting where one’s family originally stemmed from. With the exception of paying rather expensive flight tickets (Arsan 2018, pp. 108ff.), I do not subsume all that under corruption. In 2009, this organization reported the highest sum spent for food in the Marj ’Uyun–Hasbayyah district. It amounted to 22.3 million LL for 6,850 meals, spent by all candidates together. That equaled roughly around €11,800 or $14,700, i.e. between 2,300 and 7,200 LL per meal (average: 3,200 LL; see: million (Transparency International 2009, p. 44) – a sum not really allowing for culinary opulence. I doubt Lebanese voters are that cheap. These bus trips with food and beverages rather resemble an effort to make those already to some extent in the respective party’s orbit well disposed towards it. It influences, but that is basically what election campaigns are about. Getting free beer or grilled sausages at a party rally in the West are not so far from this.

Finally, all these outputs, whether open corruption or fitting into established patterns of behavior for the good of the social environment, might not be appropriate for every situation. Michael Young described the practice of producing parliamentarians as middlemen ironically in a case from the district of West Beqaa as “leaving little time to do anything else but to call people up for services on behalf of an electorate that in its majority had not voted for him. … At the end of the day he has to run harder after his political clients than they after him.” (Young 2010, p. 81) Obviously, providing services alone might be too fragile a model to

31 Interview with a FPM manager, November 2012.
sustain in changing conditions: in the case in question here, the MP is no longer in office. When his patrons, the Syrians, pulled out in 2005, he proved too restricted in his appeal to allow for more than pure patronage. Underneath this service orientation, deeper identities might simmer, as various crises have repeatedly shown.

F. THE PROBLEM OF ELITISM AND FAMILISM

Nevertheless, the economic structure of the country does not only influence these parties in their relations with those outside them, but also internally. According to the World Bank, in 2004 (the only year for which data is available), 28.6% of Lebanon’s population lived below the national poverty line. This part of the population does not normally have access to the innermost circles of a party. Lebanon’s general economic function is as a hub for services. The service-centered economy leads to a sharp dichotomy of the workforce, resulting in economic marginalization, as the overall defining characteristic of what was once called the “Third World” (Clapham 1985, pp. 3ff.). These restrictions affect the whole of Lebanon’s society on a daily basis, influencing its political patterns.

Consequently, most parties, even the ostensibly “proletarian” Communists, are in reality rather academic, bourgeois organizations. For those who cannot rely on a party, or have to contribute to their organization’s campaigning expenses, politics in Lebanon is an expensive undertaking, the extent of which was exemplified in 2000 in the case of the political scientist Paul Salem, who considered joining a promising list of candidates in Beirut for a seat in parliament. In fact, the list demanded a financial contribution from him, amounting to no less than $500,000 – too much even for a promising professor at the prestigious American University in Beirut (Perthes 2005, p. 289). Four years earlier, Rafiq al-Hariri had spent no less than $30 million for his Beirut constituency alone, while the Nasserite Najjah Wakim was able to spend a mere $185,000 in the same district (Scheffler 1996, p. 33). Additionally, even to register as a candidate for elections, a fee of currently two million LL and a guarantee of three million LL (together ca. €2,500) has to be paid, and the latter is only reimbursed if the candidate polls more than 10% of his constituency’s total vote. Some Lebanese electoral

34 http://www.elections-lebanon.org/elections/docs_2_1_1_e.aspx?lg=en, rev. 2012-02-03: § 57, 58 und 72. In the 1960s the official fee stood at ca. $1,000 (3,000 LL) per candidate. It was repaid only to those who received more than 25% of a constituency’s total vote: see Hess and Bodman 1954, p. 19; N. A. Ziadeh 1960, p. 368; Suleiman 1967a, p. 125.
lists were therefore organized more like shareholder societies than parties (Suleiman 1967a, pp. 228f.). Even a party appealing to wider parts of the population, such as the Phalanges, was and still is affected by more subtle forms of a scarcity of capital, in particular the acquisition of legitimate cultural capital (see: Bourdieu 1984). The state’s university is the only public higher educational institution in the country, and the only one without fees (apart from a registration fee of $200 a year), but highly competitive. At the American University of Beirut (AUB), the Lebanese American University (LAU), or the Université Saint-Joseph (USJ), the three most famous and prestigious of the country’s educational institutions, a single credit point costs between $568 and $841 for undergraduate students. The LAU’s school of medicine calculates around $30,000 per year – for fees alone; the living costs have to be added. Therefore, certain kinds of legitimate cultural capital are scarce, turning those who possess them into an elite dominating their sociologically rather bourgeois parties, even if they vow specifically to change this system. Quite tellingly, the FPM recently required a college degree from all their potential candidates willing to run for parliament.

These conditions do perpetuate social distinction as a necessary prerequisite. But that should not make us blind toward changes that could be part of a social profile allowing for legitimacy. One of the shortcomings of the rich body of socio-economic literature on Lebanon is that it gives the impression that political loyalty is generated in a rather mechanistic way, or by pure seduction (for example: Denoeux and Springborg 1998; Leenders 1999; Rieger 2003). This approach is shared with almost all of the rational choice-based literature on consociationalism (Lijphart 1970; Nordlinger 1972; D. R. Smock and A. C. Smock 1975; Mayssoun 2010), and even more with the daily press’s coverage of the country. The image of the country’s corrupt elites “dividing the country into elite-recognized sectarian fiefdoms, exposing state finances … to the predatory neopatrimonial appetites of sectarian elites, protecting corrupt clients and institutions” (Salloukh 2017, pp. 224f.) is a commonly evoked trope in literature on Lebanon. Thus, Claude Dubar and Salim Nasr proposed that the emphasis on the sharp cultural contrast to the (Arab) region constituted a technocratic ideology proposed by the higher strata of Lebanese society as part of global capitalism. The confessional explosion of 1975 should therefore be understood as having been perpetrated by poorer Lebanese misled into sectarianism by those holding power (Dubar and Salim 1976, 1976).

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es. pp. 304-07, 309-320). Another contribution to the history of Middle Eastern parties simply describes al-Kataʿib al-Lubnaniyyah as “a tool for political control for the Gemayel family.” (Abukhalil 1997, p. 152) I doubt whether the Gemayels were as utilitarian as this verdict suggests. The author, a committed Lebanese leftist, simply used the notion of “control” to decry the Gemayels’ stand as one of exactly those “wrong” standpoints that Marxist teleology always assumes not to be in the best interest of “the masses.” Even Samir Khalaf, as a frequently quoted example, assumed that the phenomenon of clientelism remains basically the same, only changing superficially (S. Khalaf 1987, pp. 73-101), an observation that led him to label the staunchly ideologically motivated Baʿathi Ṭarāʾif al-Majīd ar-Rifaʿī, the Nasserite Najjah Wakim, and the Gemayels as some “pseudo-ideological variety,” (Ibid., p. 86) suggesting that they “have all invoked ideological and pseudo-ideological slogans to capture a transient political mood or capitalize on concern over some overriding public issues.” (Ibid.) This kind of literature always assumes that “the people” are being misled against their alleged original interests and ignores the fact that not all billionaires have been able to attract an emotionally manipulated followership (Baumann, 2012a and b). It is vital to ask what exactly constitutes their mobilizing narrative. To answer this question, one has to move beyond taking one’s own standpoint within a highly fragmented society as a yardstick – even if this means ignoring the scathing irony that the probably oldest widely read analytical volume on political parties in Lebanon tends to employ (Suleiman 1967a).

In contrast, Michael Johnson, who had previously employed a purely socio-economic approach, in a rare instance of academic self-analysis, admitted having underestimated how much Lebanese felt emotionally at home in what he had seen as a purely redistributive relationship between a zaʿim and his followers (Johnson 2001, esp. pp. 1-5). This hits a nerve. A commendable work on Lebanon’s political organization is Jago Salmon’s thesis, which showed how militia members were not mobilized by financial incentives alone, but also spontaneously as a result of group solidarity and political affiliation (Salmon 2006). Heading in a similar direction, Mermier and Mervin argued, in a truly groundbreaking volume, that Lebanese political leaders not only redistribute material rewards, but also emotional, symbolic assets of fundamental importance to their partisans (Mermier and Mervin 2012, pp. 10ff.). Similarly, Catherine Le Thomas pointed out that “clientelist networks” could by no means sufficiently describe the whole relationship between some “patrons” and their

38 Although I am unsure about the psychologizing contained therein: reading “unconscious” things into interlocutors’ narratives has doubtful effects. Employing elements of psychology in “anthropological” studies might be very much en vogue, but tends to introduce one’s own ideas into sources without adequate training and research, such as clinical in-depth interviews or autobiographies.
“clients”; rather, “more general or “symbolic allegiances” should be borne in mind (Le
Thomas 2010, p. 224). Thus, even in peripheral regions, Lebanese want to affirm their
national identity, at times by trial and error, yet not necessarily considering a family
relationship as providing for an appropriate political language (Obeid 2010 and 2011).
Another recent trend in literature on the political left in Lebanon is an impressive analysis of
how seriously intellectual debates within political currents have to be taken (exemplarily:
Sing 2011; Idem. 2015; Haugbolle 2017). Thus, emotional symbolic assets and intellectual
debates taken seriously should probably compel us to revive Isabelle Rivoal’s remarkable
question: Could politics in Lebanon be more than just a combination of control and
representation; could a za’im, a personalistic political leader, indeed be more than the
intermediary between the center and ‘asabiyyah (communal loyalty)? (Rivoal 2012) Her
answer corresponds to my findings that a za’im functions primarily as a reference for his
adherents.

Probably one should go even further by recalling that notables also dominated Western
political systems (see also: Beer 1956, esp. pp. 9-16; Hofstadter 1970, pp. 212-270; Kluxen
1983, esp. pp. 89-96, 118-148) until more peripheral groups made their way into the political
arena via a new type of organization: the cadre party. These thickly organized parties,
although not themselves free from social distinctions, were based on the necessity of
peripheral groups to make up for their lack of established economic or moral assets by
developing the “career politician” as a role model, as soon as broader parts of the population
entered the political arena. A rather bourgeois partisanship did not need that: thus, the German
Christian Democrats could at times not even pay their party professionals, due to the poor
payment behavior of the rank and file, who spent their money on their own campaigns rather
than on the party’s staff (Walter et al. 2014, p. 55). These new schemes affected the hitherto
18-42; Walter 2009 and Idem. 2010, pp. 123ff.). Yet, even after World War II, when parties
were dominating national and regional elections, this dominance could have been much less
impressive at the local level. Jaromír Balcar remarks on the Christian Social Union (CSU) in a
local study on a Bavarian village near Landsberg/Lech that, despite favourable socio-
structural conditions, the party had not taken firm roots in the village by the 1950s, and
“functioned as a label for conservative-agrarian interest-politics that could be replaced more
or less at will.” (Balcar 2004, p. 11) The candidate’s name really mattered. With the
expansion of education and social security, notables and their specific distinction lost
importance. But parties relying on bourgeois assets also had to transform: The German
Christian Democrats, for example, needed to transform from an electorally successful notable-based party with a surprisingly tiny membership of around 220,000 in the 1950s and only 286,541 in 1968 to 652,010 only eight years later, in order to catch up with the Social Democrats, who had gained no less than 954,394 members as a party introducing the cadre concept into Germany (Wiesendahl 2006, pp. 27ff.). The main difference with Lebanon is surely that no family or party functions, or functioned, as a surrogate of the state in the way that Lebanese political organizations do. Yet, obviously, personalized politics do not necessarily rule out the idea of referring to concepts reaching far beyond the single person or family.

6. **MODERNITY AND DEMOCRACY AS PRODUCTS OF A STRUCTURAL CHANGE**

Understanding this background of all these shortcomings of Lebanese partyism is indispensable for one particular point of reference for the adherents of those parties I researched: modernity as a normativity, as an expectation of how to do politics. Lebanon is a country, it seems, where everyone is deadly serious about what the country allegedly isn’t: “real politics.” Anyone who wants to take the moral high ground does so by claiming to do “real politics.” For example, former Christian warlord and Minister Elie Hobeika tried to delegitimize his wartime rival Samir Geagea by narrating their first post-war meeting as himself talking serious politics, while his counterpart preferred a cozy, convivial evening together in company of their wives (Charbel 2011, p. 83, the whole interview pp. 15-118). “Real politics,” the normativity of establishing the “real state” and a “real party” as opposed to “chaos,” to the “feudalism” of the old notables, the “cause” as against the narrow “personal interest,” the “public interest” against the shallowness of a nice evening together, is what matters – not enjoying some chitchat around the fireplace.

This study’s purpose should therefore not be related to a renewed version of “modernization” theories. But at least there are things at the very root of these sentences, these claims and demands, that remain unspoken. All those “realnesses” of organizations, politics, states, armies, and other parts of administrations are articulated valuations that would not make any sense without a background of a normativity that allows for valuations and comparisons altogether. Or could there be any “wrong politics,” “wrong states,” or “wrong parties”? Thus, I will lay out in this section what I understand as “modernity”, in order to relate it to political

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parties and to outline how it brought about the concept of democracy. Both will help us to see that, when dealing with the history and narratives of those Lebanese political parties discussed here, they did indeed refer to ideas of modern democracy, although that might not always be visible at first glance.

Generally, modernity is, in the context of our study, both a structure and a legitimatory reference: in the very center of modern identities actually stands, as Shmuel Eisenstadt noted, the self-perception of being modern (Eisenstadt 2003, p. 499). We should understand this perception as a phenomenon of potential universal validity, for which distinct interpretations are sought. The original Western variant constitutes the starting point and remains a highly ambivalent reference (Eisenstadt 2003, pp. 503f.). Modernity as an encompassing formation might have originated in a West that is geographically not even roughly Western (Australia is geographically Southern but politically Western), yet is made up of “the established nations [that] are those states that have confidence in their own continuity” (Billig 1995, p. 8). How exactly it came about, cannot be discussed in this work. What interests us here, are those inner-societal changes it brought about, 40 constituting more than just a traumatic encounter of “non-Westerners” with imperialism. Those who understand it as such an encounter, although not unaware of “a little more” at the core, laid their focus first and foremost on the relationship between a center and a periphery. They emphasize primarily the representation of a Western self-image as the “modern” part of the world, as distinguished from its poor relation, the still “backward” (former) colonized regions (most prominently: Said 1993 and 2003; Bhabha 2007). The idea of “modernity not so much a stage of history but its staging” (Mitchell 2000, p. 23) focuses predominantly on the way knowledge of what “we are” (and what “they are”) is acquired by encountering. Inner-societal processes beyond articulated differences are, in contrast, in that perspective less emphasized, if indicated at all. Although Homi K. Bhabha, for example, explicitly acknowledges the “idea of civility” as one “theoretical genealogy” of modernity (Bhabha 2007, p. 48), he does not go any deeper into it. Instead, “modernity” and “postmodernity” alike are seen by him as being “constituted from the marginal perspective of cultural difference” as brought about by capitalist imperialism (Bhabha 2007, pp. 281f., the whole essay: pp. 245-282).

However, the very problem under examination here cannot be reduced to a “staging.” Even if we want to acknowledge a strong tendency within narratives of modern society to obscure the

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40 For a very good and critical overview on macro-sociological approaches on modernity and its roots: Knöbl 2007.
divisions within the constructed identities (C. Lefort 1986, pp. 195-214), there remains something beyond a mere “Western” self-perception. Oliver Marchart remarked that there is no public staging without an underlying conflict (Marchart 2004). That means in this context that what could from a post-colonial point of view be understood as a rupture between the (former) colonized and their (former) masters could also be seen as something indicating a significant change within, even if it arose from an often traumatic encounter. A new phenomenon like that of a political party demanding the broadening of the base of those formulating politics might indicate a “leaving of the old and entering the new,” (Marchart 2004, p. 10) which tends to be staged by those considering themselves as the “new,” yet, it constitutes a true change. So, as Jürgen Osterhammel put it, postmodern critique did not render the grand narrative illegitimate, but it will lead us into narrating it more carefully and more consciously (Osterhammel 2010, p. 19).

It is not impossible to see this change beyond the “West”. Most ideas and concepts dear to the institutions of modern governance, as Saba Mahmood once acknowledged, may have indeed originated in the West; yet they owe “less to Christianization of non-Western societies and more to their secularization under modern rule” (Mahmood 2010, p. 295). Reinhard Schulze probably went farthest, referring to a global process of modernity as a broad referential framework leading to global convergences in relevant fields of imagining politics and society. Therefore, Schulze (1994, esp. pp. 13-17) rejects following the tendency to claim ideologies in the Middle East as offshoots of Western concepts. We should rather ask how any understanding of supposedly Western ideas could have been possible without having been made plausible by one’s own situation and history (R. Schulze 1996, p. 277). In other words: How could someone ever get into an ideology if it had absolutely nothing to do with his horizon of understanding and perception?

Jürgen Osterhammel (2010), in his turn, elaborated how an epoch has been constructed with an imperialist Europe as a specific center, but also an ensemble of several panoramas where an accelerated interweaving of different spaces brought about similarities in economics, politics, fashion, etc.\footnote{Less elaborated and with a slightly different focus, Thomas and Meyer argued about states being derived from broad global conceptions of rational organization, cf. Thomas and Meyer 1984; Meyer et al. 1997.} – similarities based on asymmetrical references (“asymmetrische Referenzverdichtung,” Ibid., pp. 1292ff) that brought about meaningful convergences, not replicas.
Shmuel Eisenstadt insisted on “multiple modernities,” relying on “ecumenical” narratives, which need to be “vernacularized” (Eisenstadt 2003, I, pp. 101-104). Yet, whether we accept the notion of “modernity as a civilization” (Ibid., vol. II, pp. 493–518) or not (Arnason 2003, pp. 50f.), structural analogies exist between these contextualizations: To insist on “multiple modernities” should not seduce us into losing sight of shared ideas and structural similarities.

Regarding modernity as a human self-conception, we might consider primarily the emergence of a general public, resulting from technical innovations as well as from an emancipation that it greatly supported. Made possible by the use of media technology to develop the idea of a wider audience (Anderson 1991), it became, as the right place for discourses, situated between the private sphere and the ceremonial mise-en-scène of what we consider the state. This space is beyond face-to-face-communication, and differs from the immediate institutions holding power. Yet it is not just about communication; it signifies a “common space,” holding something in common (Taylor 2007, p. 187). Thus, it supersedes the idea of a strict separation between public life and the realm of a private patrimonial household, whose subaltern members, unlike property-holding citizens, were not part of the public sphere and therefore not considered worthy to participate in it (Habermas 1999, p. 3). The concept of modernity also differs from the idea of regarding lordship as a kind of domination blurring the lines between private and public. Lordship displays the attributes of domination publicly, based in an honor-centered hierarchy around a court, not among equals (Habermas 1999, pp. 7ff.). Notwithstanding some preceding traditions of public reasoning (Salvatore 2007), the term “public” hardly meant under premodern conditions the public space as an imagined debating multitude, but the space where domination is represented, i.e. “before” the audience, which the ruler does not represent: he simply is the country that he embodies (Habermas 1999, pp. 7ff.; Kantorowicz 1997; al-Azmeh 1997, pp. 119f.). The country was not made up of individual citizens forming a unified whole, but a hierarchy of different, complementary orders (Taylor 2007, pp. 164-171). Power was therefore visually celebrated from a “ceremonial distance” (Osterhammel 2010, p. 827), public reasoning was much restricted (Gerber 2002). Consequently, the emergence, or densification (Gerhardt 2012), of a public had a tremendous effect (see esp. N. Elias 2000). It brought about the ability to address distant fellow-citizens as partners in personal communication and to imagine a tangible, acting collective sovereign (Taylor 2007, pp. 185-206). Yet, the notion of publicness used in this work is not based on a specific rationality of discursive action, but on the possibility of

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42 For the great importance medieval Islamic literature put on distance, see al-Azmeh 1997, pp. 131–153.
ubiquitous, synchronous and supra-local mass-based communication. It came together with a
tendency, starting in Britain, to dismantle the uniqueness of absolute monarchy (Habermas
1999, chapter III), a process that became even more urgent in British America, where printing
and the idea of relating oneself to an impersonal, collective decision making became closely
intermingled (Warner 1990). This depersonalization of politics is not to be understood as a
shrinking of personalization in general, but as a transformation of what personalized politics
are imagined to stand for: the ruler is no longer the mystified body of the whole, but is only
speaking for it. Therefore, this process was accompanied by a reevaluation of the individual
as a worthy, self-interpreting entity (Soeffner 1992, pp. 20-75), to be represented by just
another individual. To understand why language-games are that much important for our age,
we need to understand these deeper changes allowing for a people to be constructed by “a
partial component which nevertheless aspires to be conceived as the only legitimate totality”
(Laclau 2007, p. 81).

Granted, every public is indeed subdivided into different subgroups, constituting smaller
competing sub-publics that might be densified to communicative spaces of varying intensity
and differing patterns of communication (Habermas 1987). Peter Ekeh has rejected the
existence of a single public in the former colonies. Due to a lack of identification with the
freshly emerged states there, “two publics” would exist: the morally laden primordial and the
civic one, the latter largely identified with pursuing material benefits only (Ekeh 1975). This
proposition was rejected by later scholars (Browne 2014), but it does, of course, remind us of
the “public” as a notion between empirics (communication not being absent) and normativity
(reasoning, consensus-oriented, establishing a common bond between the communicators,
etc.). The idea of different audience subgroups (“Teilöffentlichkeiten”) tries to deal with
exactly that problem by acknowledging fragmentation and segmentarization (Habermas 2009,
chapter 8; pp. 329ff.). A recent contribution even asked whether these fragments do actually
communicate with each other at all, arguing that unplanned, unanticipated encounters and
common experiences shared with “the other” constitute a key asset for democratic reasoning
(Sunstein 2007). However, the idea of dialog should not lead us into an unquestioned
romanticism of it: the public sphere, as Shmuel Eisenstadt put it, remains an imagined space
where power is narrated and perceived (Eisenstadt 2003, I, pp. 400f.); nor does it need to lead
to benign pluralism. Rather, democracy does not need to be more than a broad conception of
doing politics, based upon this change of an impersonal, collective decision making, assuming
the demos narrated in exactly this public to function as subject and object of politics.
This self-conception, the demystification of actually being the country one rules, enforced new ways of doing politics. The public as a space of power narration constitutes an indispensable necessity for the emergence of parties. Modernity’s frontal assault on the existence of one cosmological binding truth, its appreciation of the commoner (Taylor 1989 and 2007), and the constant structural compulsion for communication with the “heretic” other by the emerging public brings about parties that might be warring but – with notable exceptions – pay tribute to the concept of addressing and representing a *demos*.

We even need modernity to have political parties at all: However, a few authors working on Middle Eastern parties have called those premodern political factions, often based upon genealogy of a “house” (*bayt*), such as the “Qaysites” or the “Yamanites,” the “Yazbekis” and the “Jumblatts” political parties too (Aboujaoude 1985). Admittedly, the *bayt* offered the reciprocity of an identity that, as Khaled Ziadé perceptively remarked, transcended the family to which its honor was attributed (Kh. Zadé 1997, p. 268). Nevertheless, it lacked the idea of representing someone on the basis of *individual consent*. The latter thought constitutes a concept that became a core characteristic of democracy within the framework of modernity (Taylor 2007, pp. 165-70). With the same hindsight, it also differs from European medieval elections of a ruler as well as from the pre-modern Islamic oath of loyalty (*bayʿah*), which did not explicitly necessitate individual consent: the electoral body in a Roman-inspired context did not define the exact content of the royal position, nor did the feudal oath possess a constitutive instead of an exclamatory, merely reinforcing, effect (Ullmann 1975, pp. 133ff.). Likewise, after those capable of appointing the rightful caliph had chosen a suitable ruler, the Muslim community’s oath would simply have been taken for granted, and imagined as having been already taken by the elite (Badry 1998, pp. 131, 149). “Counseling” as a possible part of selecting a ruler was not seen as setting up the institution of domination as such, but was to provide for a suitable ruler by “best practice.” In general within the pre-modern Islamic caliphate, the older tribal ideas of a relationship based on genealogically narrated reciprocity were replaced in the Abbasid era by pre-Islamic Persian theories of government reflecting the divine omnipotence, without the ’ummah forming a base at all (Lambton 1985, p. 309). Only within the overarching confines of one compulsory cosmological order could the popular forms of customary law establish reciprocity between rulers and ruled beyond the officialized theories of domination. Parties, instead, grew out of the idea of *creating* order out

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43 Cosmology refers the order of the whole cosmos back to the divine *logos*, which only makes the world a world with all-encompassing ethics: see Brague 2003, pp. 4ff.

44 On the idea of reciprocity in a Greek Orthodox context see H. G. Beck, 1994, pp. 44–51.
of some “social contract” since modernity replaced the natural order of the Middle Ages by the tendency to determine a purpose by positive human acts (Laclau and Zac 1994, pp. 11-39; Taylor 1989, pp. 82ff.; Idem. 2007, pp. 207ff.). Now, previous experience and expectations for the future disintegrate considerably, allowing for utopianism (Koselleck 1988). Thus, society develops the capabilities for self-questioning and self-transformation (Arnason 2003, p. 47).

Democracy should therefore be seen as the self-perception of a society to set order, to formulate public opinion, which, in turn, is detached from single subjects and addresses society as a whole (C. Lefort 1988, esp. pp. 9-20). Society now imagines itself as originating from this process of articulation as a “direct access society” without relying on vertical, indirect access (Taylor 2007, pp. 207-211). Thus, political parties as groups aimed at accessing a sum of untouchable resources are genuine products of a modernity based upon the principle of an order based upon an acting demos.45

The epistemology of modernity outlined above constitutes the reason why we could rightfully speak about “democracy” being nothing than an ideal type that came about as a structural result of those changes brought about by modernity. Modernity, thereby, also meant democracy; not in the sense of not allowing for the persistence of sacred, cosmological monarchies such as the kingdom of Saudi Arabia – but insofar as those societies in which the changes outlined above had occurred need to be democratic. One has explicitly to opt out of this scheme. Consequently, radical evangelists, ultramontanists, Salafists (especially the so-called “Islamic State,” but also the kingdoms of the Persian Gulf) and Ultra-Orthodox Jews might not support the epistemology of democracy; nevertheless, they have to operate inside modernity’s framework. For example, both the originally anti-modernist conservatism in Europe (Langewiesche 2000, p. 43) and its Islamic counterparts underwent tremendous change (Arnason 2003, p. 26; Krämer 1999). They felt a pressing need to express their voices in a way bearing a remarkable formal resemblance to the “liberals”; if only to deal with the very existence of the public, they need to address it, and all the “heretics” present therein (cf. Asad 2003, p. 187).

Thus, democracy, as an ideal type, is a hegemonic model. Yet it is by no means restricted to a liberal interpretation. We might resent it, but the process of such self-articulation could be also undertaken in an authoritarian context: rulers here present themselves in dialogic form,

45 Thus, I do not agree with Carlyle on using the notions of “constitutional theory,” “election,” and “contract”: Carlyle, 1962, pp. 147–69.
even if this dialog is only thought of as existing in the ruler’s intuition. So, Antun Sa’adah, the Greater Syrian nationalist who ruled his party with a firm hand and with strict authority, nevertheless considered himself a “democrat” since, according to him, “the leader is no dictator; the leader is the highest and greatest institution built on free and voluntary service that originates in deep personal conviction and mature consciousness and awareness.” (quoted in: Nordbruch 2009, p. 44) Likewise, Benito Mussolini described fascism as an “organized, concentrated, authoritarian democracy on a national basis” (quoted in: Nolte 1965, p.7), and Communists rooted themselves in “People’s Democracy.”

In short: I treat democracy solely as a system that bases itself on the aspiration to embody the “people’s will,” based upon the underlying notion of the demos as both the subject and object of politics. Of course, this insight into the conceptual roots of democracy might run contrary to the common liberal understanding of being democratic. Yet I consider it necessary to bear in mind that the often-heard criticism of Lebanese parties as not sufficiently democratic (for example: Suleiman 1967 a and b; T. Khalaf 1976, p. 46; Hitti 1991; Messara 1996; Ishtiyy 1997a; al-Khazin 2002, pp. 82-92 and Idem. 2003; el-Husseini 2012, pp. 38ff.) results solely from the assumption that “liberal democracy” equals “democracy.” At the very least this is a questionable assumption. In my understanding, “liberal democratic” rather resembles the version that bases itself on institutionalized dialog and private property. What renders it exceptional surely is exactly this institutionalization, guaranteeing protection from power. The lack of any such assurances or the necessity of employing coercive means to bring this assumption in line with the various formulated “people’s wills” (in fact, outside political rhetoric, they are always in the plural) determines whether we can speak of an “authoritarian democracy” or not. These institutionalizations of participation, the formal processes of bestowing someone with power, and the right to resist, constitute the characteristics setting the liberal version of democracy apart from other democracies. To see “democracy” as related to the idea of modernity allows us to see in those parties in question here various elements of a normativity hovering around the idea of actually having a society “self-articulated” as a whole down to the last individual (Voegelin 2000; Gebhardt 2005, pp. 30f.) – that very concept at the core of all parties I researched in Lebanon. Yet they are not necessarily liberal.

This is exemplified by Christoph Schumann’s (Schumann 2014a and 2016) and Bruce Rutherford’s (Rutherford 2013) differentiation between “democratization” and

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46 Likewise, in the same spirit Carl Schmitt attributed to fascism the idea of being the better democracy: Schmitt 1988, pp. 110ff.
“liberalization.” The first term refers to “the people” as sovereign, rendering decisive legitimation to a given regime in a society that opened up popular participation in politics. Liberalization, in contrast, signifies strategies for restricting the use of coercive means, carving out residual zones of privacy, controlling and juridifying power. Yet, illiberal forms of basing oneself on the “people’s will” were always an option – in the Middle East as elsewhere. The concept used here acknowledges that and opens up ways of understanding why political actors employ repressive techniques without the slightest compunction, by articulating what they consider to be the “people’s will,” even at times with the willing consent of a part of their population.

Thus, this structurally informed history-of-ideas-approach which I try to introduce into the debate on parties in Lebanon also serves to avoid using the notion “being democratic” as if granting the notion an automatic aura of nobility – thereby rather resembling a moral teleology, resulting in an almost endless plurality of adjectives attributing to the notion of democracy and a hidden continuation of traditional modernization theory. The result of this nomenclature is, firstly, a conceptual mess (Krennerich 2002), and secondly, the tendency to take the respective own normativity as a universal measurand without naming it as such: thus, we could, and should, ask why establishing a “women’s quota” is at times considered as remarkable progress toward “democracy,” whereas a confessional quota is considered to be at odds with the concept of democracy: Thus, the Boell Foundation, run by the German Green Party, complains about the confessional formula, but demands a women’s quota.47

7. THE FORM MATTERS, TOO: THE NATION-STATE
Whereas political theory of decision making is very much centered on the consent of the individual, paradoxically, that one intellectual and organizational concept, which deals most influentially with the form modernity needs to assume when forming a territorialized polity – nationalism – is actually about the idea of solving conflicts by combining societal groups into a common identity. Consequently, it also demands something from the individual. I argue that expectations as to how to behave, anticipating both an input and an output, constitute an important element of every kind of utopian politics under modern conditions. I will argue in this section that at least for most parties in Lebanon actively bringing about the administrative apparatus of the nation-state constitutes the legitimate form of how to do democratic politics.

That is probably the more astonishing since the latter has, since the so-called Cultural Turn, become considerably less fashionable among social scientists.

Rather, predictions from the academic community for the nation-state were extremely unfavorable. Slavoj Žižek, for example, has proposed the thesis of “… the ‘withering away’ of the traditional nation-state based on the notion of the abstract citizen identified with the constitutional legal order,” that has hitherto as a “… Leviathan [been] parasitizing on the Lebenswelt of society, totalizing from above” and yet became “more and more eroded from both sides … the new emerging ethnic communities … [and] the multiple transnational links.” (Žižek 1994, p. 2, with a similar observation among others: Hobsbawm 1990, pp. 191ff.; Bauman 2001 and 2007)

In the same vein, Martin Albrow has argued that we could no longer attach our analytical models to the nation-state, since “our” current discourses allegedly “produce self-descriptions which are incommensurable with those of the earlier period [i.e. modernity as opposed to its successor: postmodernity, C. T.].”(Albrow 1997, pp. 5, 79) Even international relations have been predicted to develop toward “real reciprocity” in an age characterized by a “trend from boundaries to flows” (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, p. 216), with states turned from “melting pots” into “mosaics” (Kamens 2012). With regard to the more fundamental epistemologies of how to act socially, Frederic Jameson, in turn, has argued that postmodernism had undone the modernist utopian culture, in order to establish alternative orders. As a result, everything, from arts over theorizing to utopian thinking, would nowadays mirror the logics of a compartmentalized society, splintered by what he calls the “dispersive and atomistic” (Jameson 1991, p. 343) logic of “multinational capitalism.” Unable yet to form new classes, we are said to be bound to think in lifestyles, thereby abandoning society as a whole (Ibid., passim). Thus, spatial has replaced temporal utopianism: the possibility to live particular group identities has supplanted totalizing societal models.

However, probably the whole perspective has been always “too European,” since hardly any state in the Middle East has ever been characterized by what Žižek dubbed an “umbilical cord” Žižek 1994, p. 2) between an ethnic community and a state. To define this cord constituted, and still constitutes, a powerful idea in most parts of the Middle East: Among young Middle Easterners, the demand for a larger role of the state is a priority (Albert and Hegasy 2018, p. 251). The notion of the nation-state, to be sure, is here solely understood as a community defined by the will to live up to that paradigm of modernity as described in this chapter, imagined as being one and attached to the modern administrative state, with which it
might not even coincide in all cases. Charles Tilly observed the relevant practices of these states among others as a high degree of homogeneity in culture and governance; a centralized institutional structure; popular mobilization; and routinized relations between government and population (Tilly 1975, pp. 3–83).

Not living up to these specific practices of statecraft is usually not seen as legitimate in the Middle East. For example, when the former Egyptian president Muhammad Mursi used two words associated with personal closeness, even family ties, “ʾahli wa ʿashirati” (my people and my kin), he unleashed an outcry at how the whole region could be set back thereby.

The country consisting of compartmentalized “millets and sects,” institutions being staffed with “my people and my kin,” might be a common practice in the Middle East, but they are not usually referred to openly as normativities. Quite the contrary: I had the interesting experience of all my interviewees conceding that they might formulate their political programs through a sectarian filter without a single one abandoning the official normativity of a program for all Lebanese, a state not defined by confessionalist notions but as a “real state.”

Michelle Obeid has suggested that the inhabitants of ʿArsal, a town right on the Syria–Lebanon border, despite having ample ties to the bigger neighbor, and despite many negative previous experiences with their own state, are still “… trying to assert themselves as citizens of a broader Lebanon” (Obeid 2010, p. 331). Their boundary might be well described as a flow rather than a line around some secluded space, they might be dwellers of a region full of all interstices and ambivalences, yet they consider their marginalization to be a consequence of the absence of a state on whose citizenship they dare to pin considerable hope. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to call politics in Lebanon – as elsewhere in the Middle East – an existentialist thing to encounter. Thus, Lebanon is a country whose army cannot defend the borders, where dialing the emergency line at night is often useless, since the call is not always answered, where policing is barely done by the official police, where nearly everyone has a weapon at home, where the generator provides electricity when the Electricité du Liban cannot sustain the demand, and where around 31.6% of the Lebanese face at least weekly water cutoffs in summer (National Survey 2006, p. 90).

ʿArsal, at the border with Syria, is

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48 We could further differ between an ethnonationalist version of it and one centered on a state. However, since that does not really stand at the center of my work, I will not expand on this difference, especially as it is seldom as clean cut in the Middle East as suggested by, for example, research on the Balkans (see, for example, Sundhaussen, 1994).
surely one of those places where this absence of the state is felt, with all its consequences. Thus, the Lebanese nation-state might be reduced to a “banal identity,” simply resulting from having existed for long enough (A. F. Weber 2007). However, notwithstanding all shortcomings, a very meaningful normativity arose from this presence and its link to an ambivalent global reference: that of living up to standards and of being cared for by a polity. Not even in Iraq, a country that has assumed the image of the prototype of state failure in the Middle East, sectarian identities are hardly used without couching them in the language of an Iraqi nation-state (F. Haddad 2008 and 2011). Typically enough, even some among the Islamists, at least those theoretically engaged in establishing potentially totalizing alternative orders, often seek the common ground of establishing the *daulah qadirah* (the capable state) with non-Islamist actors: for example, Hezbollah and its newly found Christian ally, the FPM, in their 2006 “Document of Mutual Understanding,” called for “effective democracy,” a “national character,” and building a “modern state.”\(^{52}\) The last electoral program produced by the “Party of God,” (Hezbollah 2009) which has never officially renounced the kind of theocratic order in place in Iran, tellingly emphasized its function of prioritizing the *daulah qadirah* over the “governance of the jurist” in order to appeal to a broader spectrum of Lebanese than its more radical members. Referring to a “capable state” linked by an “umbilical cord” to its citizens obviously constitutes an idea powerful enough to allow for slivers of common ground between Islamists and secularists. They even play their role in the legitimatory narratives of those rulers who can still count on a cosmological narrative and the image of a ruler as a caring tribal father, like the monarchs of the Gulf (Demmelhuber 2015). Although not employing the narratives of the “citizens” as subjects and objects of politics, they too need an output, and to promise to produce a country able to conduct itself effectively in a world still predominantly organized into nation-states.

We could probably criticize Žižek’s perspective on the state as somewhat harsh, even for European cases – has any state ever been the “parasitizing Leviathan” (Žižek 1994, p. 2) beyond a totalitarian context? I, for my part, still credit the state with certain functions that are not easily to be shifted to other frameworks. There might be indeed a weakening of what Eisenstadt called the “charismatic locus of the major components of the cultural program of modernity” in the nation-states’ centers (Eisenstadt 2003, I, p. 125). Still, the state is the primary political entity to which aspirations, complaints, etc. are addressed, no matter how much sociologists have elaborated the reach of social relations beyond geographical borders.

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(for example: Urry 2000). It is indeed only within their framework that some structural denationalization takes place, “… reorient[ing] particular components of institutions and specific practices – both public and private – toward global logics and away from historically shaped national logics.” (Sassen 2006, p. 2) Yet the rules of this partial reorientation are explicitly formalized on the localized, national level, whereas internationally seen, they tend to be “wired into the structures,” often in “new forms of unaccountable power,” as Saskia Sassen has pointed out (Sassen 2008, p. 71; see also Idem. 2015 and Behr 2002).

There are reasons for this remarkable persistence in the face of many predictions. Andreas Vasilache (2007) has shown that the state with its borders functions as indicator of very fundamental epistemologies of living together. Moreover, several authors have argued how often nationalism has appeared in the form of modernity, even bringing about a lot of the latter’s content (Habermas 1998, pp. 91-101; Canovan 1998; Poole 1999; Kymlicka 2001, pp. 203-220; and with some flaws: Greenfeld 1992 and 2004) – especially in a postcolonial context, with the perceived need to get on a par with a universal standard (Chatterjee 1993). Others have indicated the strong tendency to build a nation-state in its own right (Billig 1995, pp. 134-143; Reinhard 1999, pp. 317-356). Michael Billig has reminded us of the repetitious settling of national identities in our daily lives, reproducing themselves without receiving too much notice (Billig 1995). In addition, Margaret Canovan has polemically analyzed the lacuna of discussing the collectivity of the nation-state in contemporary political theory as being caused by the respective theorists’ social background in stable states already possessing a considerable degree of collective identity (Canovan 1998, p. 24); stable enough, so to say, to survive a certain degree of deconstruction.

While modern thinkers used to take the conflation of society and state as forming an indissoluble unit for granted (Albrow 1997, pp. 41-44), Nancy Fraser has suggested that a “transnationalization” of the public sphere is taking place (Fraser 2007). Yet, notwithstanding migrations or the formation of a “global civil society,” (Albrow 1997; Keane 2003; Sassen 2006) most “civil society” actors operate within a public that cannot easily go beyond the local by active communication – restricted not only by language but also by the way that symbolic reproduction is structured in daily lives: news of nearly every kind has a focus that is somehow bound to a locally established polity, even when those participating in it do not necessarily live there physically. The result oscillates between audience subgroups who are only “hyphenated,” in a sense of not taking “fully” part in one public alone, and those “distant

53 “Put simply, democratic politics is politics in the vernacular,” Kymlicka 2001, p. 213.
nationalisms” (Anderson 1992) who are translocal, but not transnational; although the proponents of these concepts are “hyphenated,” their nationalisms are far from transcending a localized polity (Bock-Luna 2007; Sundhaussen 2012, pp. 305f.). Those who do not harbor fully elaborated concepts emphasizing borders as a political concept might influence discourses, but they cannot evade the effect of the nation as a framer of public spaces. While denying Habermas’s optimism on the normativity of republican autonomy in transnational spaces (Habermas 1998, pp. 151-156), they still need “translators” to address their discourses to the wider public of the nation-state in which they actually live – a deficit aptly demonstrated by the failure of Turkish–German bilingual newspapers in Germany (Kulaçatan 2013, pp. 29-39, 266f.; Schumann 2014b). Only an intellectual elite, or at least a part of it, is able to communicate politically in a supra-national space (Billig 1995, pp. 134-139; Münch 2001, pp. 291-294). Moreover, the various fissures running though these migrated audience subgroups, effectively dividing them in even smaller entities, largely reflect their original countries’ political landscapes (Schumann 2014b, pp. 449ff.). In both cases, the fact that the world is principally made up of nation-states, their publics and the epistemologies conveyed through them, hardly allow them to escape their frameworks.

If the question of what holds societies together, i.e. how sociability is achieved on a durable base, still plays such an important role in many discourses, why then does a good deal of academic writing in the “West” focus that much on its opposite? One strand of literature, trying to avoid a deeper theoretical discussion, suggests that it is out of a “governance”-oriented perspective of the failure of states as an unfortunate risk one has to deal with, especially when conducting foreign policy (for example: Münkler 2002; Risse 2011; Caspersen 2012). The focus here is on repercussions on the international system, not on intellectual history within those states that are falling apart. Thus, it is rarely asked whether those actors replacing a fragile state in certain policy fields cherish what they, like the Islamic State 54 and other Jihadi groups, do, or if some of them see replacing the state merely as an unavoidable evil. Consequently, governance-related literature clearly puts its focus on “institutionalized modes of social coordination to produce and implement collectively binding rules, or to provide collective goods.” (Risse 2011, p. 9) Yet a kind of normativity from more theory-oriented writings has also occasionally sneaked into this strand of literature, which has been influenced by a trend in international (mostly “Western”) social sciences since the

54 This state presumably implies a reference to the present, but only in the way that an all-encompassing divine will needs some earthly authority as a substantiation of the Islamic utopia without differentiation between the state and the ʾumma and therefore stands in an ambivalent relationship with its immediate socio-political surrounding: Günther, 2014.
Cultural Turn with its focus on fluidity and ambivalence in the late twentieth century. We should therefore probably start out by understanding our notions of living together first and foremost as metaphors, as an intellectual self-conception. Thus we should take Urry's findings one step further (Urry 2000, pp. 21-35). The emphasis on the network, the fluid, or the interstices is as much metaphorical as other such notions have been before: the organism, the exchange, the structure. They try to describe what we (or, better, some of us) believe that we see, which carries along an intellectual self-conception (see: Skrbiš and Woodward 2013). And this is exactly how, in my understanding of it, we shall understand “postmodernity,” that notion so often associated with the Cultural Turn. This is not the right place to discuss both terms in any deeper sense. However, some perception has been established, and shapes an important part of our socio-scientific thinking. I argue, in a way, that makes us dangerously blind for utopianism in different contexts.

The postmodern is, as I see it, less “a post-modern condition” (among others: Lyotard 1984; Jameson 1991; Cammilleri and Falk 1992; Featherstone 2007) than an intellectual self-description (as postmodernism), if not a claim as to how one actually should be. It resembles therein the concepts of “Enlightenment” and “Reformation” This does not mean that economic capital has not become more mobile and that communication has not become more “cosmopolitan” since the late twentieth century (Agnew and Corbridge 1995; Sassen 2006, pp. 44ff.). Yet, I doubt at least a part of the impact these tendencies allegedly have brought about. However, interestingly, Zygmunt Bauman’s works (esp. Bauman 1992, 1997 and 2007) are in fact less a sociological analysis of postmodernity, or in his case: “liquid modernity” (Idem. 2000) which, to be sure, does not differ in its predictions of the future of “progress,” “utopianism,” and the nation-state from “postmodern” scholars (similar to his thought: Lash 1990; U. Beck 1996), than an occasionally essay-like intellectual autobiography of an eminent thinker who had lost his faith in an enforcing vision and yet did not feel at home in the liberal system he was living in after leaving Communist Poland. We could probably also read Spivak, Said, or Bhabha with their wave of deconstruction, as biographical encounters shattering the results of their intellectual upbringings. But it is not only in the Middle East that the loss of previous collectively shared convictions is not about everyone feeling lost, and everyone focusing on the ambivalence of the in-between. Thus, for me, “postmodernity” rather constitutes the context of discovering those intellectuals who felt a drying-up of the great aspirations that they themselves went through. As with all other

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55 Also proponents of a “liquid”, “privatized,” or “second” modernity, such as Lash 1990; U. Beck 1996 or Bauman 2000 see structural changes at work.
changes in self-perception, this leads to changed concepts of how to see oneself. Yet the metaphorical language of social analysis based upon these concepts tends to make “us” somewhat blind to the tendency of metaphors to develop a life of their own. Thus, the assumption of the “dissemination” (Bhabha 2007, pp. 199-244) obscuring the nation and its nation-state does not abolish it. Accordingly, Homi K. Bhabha based his dealings with the nation on the paradoxes of formulating the nation together with its nation-states’ identity as if it existed in singular and thereby visualizing – involuntarily – its plurality (Bhabha 2007, pp. 199-244). The resulting paradox, explicitly introduced from a biographical perspective (Bhabha 2007, p. 199), uncovers an important mechanism but it does not dissolve the nation as such, as Bhabha knows. Yet he much overestimates the undermining effects: Not even the presence of those from the former colonies in their former colonizers’ countries plays such a crucial role as Bhabha assumes. Instead, many of these assumptions tend to ignore that versions of “nationness” were always perturbed by the existence of those not fitting into a certain scheme – “the language of national collectivity and cohesiveness” (Bhabha 2007, p. 220) was always at stake, and if it was only by political opponents, arguing for different versions of being French, German, Spanish, or Lebanese, to name just a few especially contested examples. Thus, at times, there is a strange tendency among postmodern or postcolonial theorists to construct the “pre-post” way as more uniform than it actually was as if to emphasize the effects of the “post” more highly than they merit. The territorial state was never a “container of society.” (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, pp. 92ff.) But the bias on this form compelled “us” to act if states were such “containers,” and to enforce concepts of territoriality. However, neither did this enforcement bring about unitarian states, nor was this self-conception exhaustive. The same is true for the metaphorical language of fluidity, the interstices, the ghostly, or the ambivalence. It is neither exhaustive nor anything other than an interpretative self-imagination. In this context, the role of states as an enforcing agency in particular evoked a discourse that has in the meantime in its lesser variants acquired a life of its own. At times, it is even assuming what Michael Billig has described as a veiled teleology, a “celebration of the West and its supposed culture of diversity” (Billig 1995, p. 155). These versions of the “post-” discourse arriving in the slipstream of postmodern intellectuals have seen the fall of the nation-state as a process of liberating citizens from the restraints of constricting domination toward “embracing humanity rather than dividing it” (Albrow 1997, p. 83). That is indeed nothing but part of a blunt teleology that has moved far beyond postmodernity: the predicament of some intellectuals losing their former convictions. On the contrary, despite their focus on “fluidity,” “interstices”, or “ambivalence”, these lesser
versions may adopt the discourse on culture and deconstruction, yet at times hold strong normativities, making ample use of administrative coercion. A good example of this kind of Jacobinism could be seen in a recent decision of the New York City council to abolish two-gendered-toilets for the sake of subaltern identities: The allegedly postmodern idea is as enforcing - it prescribes gender-neutral toilets by administrative means - as it is teleological: since it is opposed to “bigotry,” as the New York Times saw it (New York Times, 2016-03-25). Or these versions assume the vision of a new non-national polity as the cheerful advent of a world society of free citizens whose members seem to equal no less than a “new man.”

Thus, they are far from not sharing important (and unquestioned) elements of utopian thinking. And surely they are not solely an “individual escape from individually suffered discomforts” with no way leading to it (Bauman 2007, pp 94-110, quotation p. 103).

Not only in the Middle East, but also globally, this thinly veiled new teleology expressed in metaphorical analytical language immediately runs into problems when dealing with the problem of how sociability could be possible – if at all. Jürgen Habermas (1998, p. 133) has criticized the strong tendency among postmodern theories (ironically!) to imagine history as a linear concept denying any possibility for collectively binding decisions, such as forming a body politic on any basis at all. The very contradiction of formulating a political society as one and thereby rendering its fissures of contesting visions highly visible (Bhabha 2007, pp. 199-244) is inherent in simply every political entity (C. Lefort 1986, pp. 270f.). Despite being full of contradictions – like many other communities functioning as a body politic: parties, unions, under certain circumstances even churches, etc. – this entity still is not “withering” away, to use Slavoj Žižek’s (1994, p. 2) words, nor are her boundaries toward “otherness” primarily shifted inward (as claimed by Bhabha 2007, p. 215).

Yet, the focus on temporality, on ambivalence and fluidity, tends to distract our perspective into one on a seemingly endlessly decentered multitude. However, that cannot free us from the necessity to acquire the ability to act politically. Here, the concept of representation steps in. “Social Representations” might, on the individual level, be “stored information” (von Cranach 1995, p. 25), but they also demarcate, by the limits of shared knowledge, the borders

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56 As currently proposed by the “Pulse of Europe” movement: see esp. Guérot 2016. The radical left-wing “Anti-Germans,” far from being “postmodern” at all, went one step further and assumed, based upon an only superficially purely negative understanding of Adorno, that any socialism would turn totalitarian as long as it accepted, among other things, the polity of the “bourgeois” state, or the nation at all: see Grigat, 2007, pp. 239–54, 327f., 357–363. Ironically, the narrative factually ends in a pretty concrete utopia by claiming Israeli nationalism as a mechanism against nationalism (pp. 328–350).

57 Oliver Marchart, arguing out of a post-foundational view of society, characterized postmodernity as a “stray modernity, confusing contingency with arbitrariness”: Marchart, 2013, p. 41 (my own translation).
between social groups. Therefore, the “representation” as referring to human self-interpretation through symbols, indeed marks the most basic prerequisite of the political: To see ourselves as an articulated whole whose agency is brought about by representations whose invocation allows for some of us to act for society imagined as a whole (Voegelin 2000, vol. V, pp. 109-28). Parties evoke representations of which a part is usually imagined as a localized polity (“the state”) standing for “us.” Proposing a deeper view of them, to speak with Bhabha, on the “pedagogical” side of the representation (Bhabha 2007, pp 297ff.), their intellectual history and enforcing qualities, instead on focusing on contesting daily practices, helps us to render more visible the prevalence of utopianism of modernity together with its polity, the nation-state; a prevalence stemming from a structural change described above as being original for modernity.

8. THE STATE AS ORDER

Yet my insistence on the state within this study should not lead us into an “over-stating” (Ayubi 1995) dealing with the state means dealing with order. Reducing the state to the foremost of localized polities evoked by parties to the skeletal existence of a superstructure without further meaning, or – the other way around – to grasp it as the “subjective realm of plans, programs, or ideas” (Mitchell 1991, p. 82) of those ruling it, should be considered a grave mistake. Yet, just like “the person,” “the state” is an idealist entity. It appears in our lives in tangible, everyday forms. In principle, it is nothing other than the materialized, visualized effects of the hegemony of defining what “we” are (Marchart 2013, pp. 368-380). What constitutes it at its roots is the line between state and society as “… a line drawn internally, within the network of institutional mechanisms through which a certain social and political order is maintained.” (Mitchell 1991, p. 90) This definition of the state, of course, effaces the difference between what is usually considered a “state” and the “political system.” In other words: what interests us as “the state” is what conveys the impression of separateness (Mitchell 1991, p. 91). The state is nothing other than the personalized actor of a specific political order: the state is order. That this order has to be defined and established brings utopianism back in.

However, when speaking about Lebanese parties as a true encounter with modernity, being influenced by the concept of democracy (either actively affirming or rejecting it) and imagining the normative expectations therein to be fulfilled in the nation-state, we need to deal with Theodor Hanf’s “Jacobinism” (Hanf 2015, p. 28) as an important facet of bringing
all that about by creating order. The unifying element in every political system, including the liberal model, stems from the sheer number of symbols allowing the *demos* to recognize itself in them as “articulated” (Voegelin 2000), i.e. to act as a collectivity, a *body politic*. This collectivity can be imagined as a nation bound to the state, with the latter simultaneously a personalized imagination of the *demos* and yet separated from it. What conveys the impression of separateness is in fact the core of those resources within an order considered to be untouchable: certain interpretations of the “sources of the good life” (Taylor 2007) are offered in order to go beyond specific situations and provide for axiomatic invocations of a common good. Apart from being an intrinsic part of interpretative sense making, they enhance the validity of what they claim to be untouchable and remove it from those subjects to be legitimately discussed in a given political system (Vorländer 2013 a and b). The more that is taken as indispensable and untouchable, the greater unity should be. The problem would “simply” be how many of these symbolic resources are actually perceived as being “us.” “Jacobinist” actors claim a vast amount of resources as untouchable, thereby enshrining their particular vision of the nation as “une et indivisible” in an often thoughtless manner. Enshrined in institutions – that is, social behavior invested with permanence, recurrence, and reciprocity – these resources provide for a state. However, related social conflicts can be transformed into political *cleavages* by giving them coherent, organized outlets (Knutsen and Scarbrough 1995, pp. 493ff.), bound to define what actually could not be discussed legitimately since it would question this imagined separateness.

We might have the impression that the basis of normative references (*demos*, the monarch, or a divine will) together with its actual set of institutions, designed to carry out governmental politics, actually forms the state, rather than these resources. However, both base and institutions are merely superficial indicators of something deeper: there are myriads of institutions that we do not associate with the normative concept of holding authority of a similar kind to that of the state. Likewise, the actual *demos* can change considerably by redefinitions of who might count as part of the in-group; yet it is constantly reproduced by imagining it as a public. Thus, we need to inquire into those “untouchable” resources considered to be of a special quality.

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58 A cleavage should be understood, according to Gallagher et al. 2006, pp. 264f. as follows: “First, a cleavage involves a social division that separates people who can be distinguished from one another by key social-structural characteristics such as occupation, status, religion, or ethnicity. … Second, the groups involved in this division must be conscious of their collective identity. … Third, a cleavage must be expressed in organizational terms.”
We should therefore ask about the respective political actors’ conceptions, what they consider to be “untouchable,” and whether they succeed in enforcing that on society. Jacobinism means a strong emphasis on a metanarrative bringing about the tendency not to see oneself as merely communicating one societal segment’s social order toward others, as the postmodern version of an intellectual would propose, but of choosing the “right” order, creating knowledge and implementing it. As in Zygmunt Bauman’s (1987) words, to see intellectuals as legislators rather than interpreters. We will see in the course of this study that all three parties here in question have strong Jacobinist tendencies: they consider themselves as legislators, willing to bring the right state – i.e. societal order – about, rather than mere interpreters.

Nevertheless, acknowledging a state as something imagined to be separate from “us” as being based upon untouchable resources is not as questionable as it might sound at first (and as Timothy Mitchell actually understood it). I do not propose some “post-statism” (as done by: Wissenburg 2008; Ince and Barrera de la Torre 2016). Untouchable resources and the separateness they bring about are a corollary of social relations. Abolishing an entity functioning as a state would be dependent on replacing plurality by sameness and scarcity by abundance. Instead, to acknowledge two different yet interrelated entities means to concede that power exists at all. If Jacobinism goes just one step further and denies these imaginations as being valid at all, it turns totalitarian. If “state and civil society are assumed to have merged …” (C. Lefort 1988, p. 13) power can no longer be criticized (Ibid.; Laclau and Zac 1994).

Thus, if ruling the state is a strict necessity for all parties, agreeing to uphold the state likewise turns into an imperative for remaining a party as one among others – in other words: for pluralism. Consequently, Jacobins are those versions of utopianisms making ample use of coercive potentials arising from separateness, even if that is imagined to be only in the interim, before the party, state, and the “real” people are finally merged into an organic entity. Therefore, no protection from these coercive potentials is offered. In short: notions such as party and state do allow for a minimal protection from both of them by allowing for spheres beyond their reach. This particularity stands at the very root of those liberal ideas we might often attribute to the concept of a party. These protective effects of separateness were of considerable importance during the years of early Phalangism and during the civil war. This was no leftover from ancient times, but an original part of articulating different versions of representing the demos. I argue in this study that a good many of the reasons why the parties here in question failed yet to achieve order can be traced back to those phases in their respective histories when they denied that there could still be a difference between them and “the people” as such, when they considered their “Dream of a Republic” being within reach: it
did not fail because “sectarianism” was so atavistic, or because all representations were intrinsically instable - “the fullness of the community” is always impossible (Laclau 2014) - but because no institutionalized spaces for ruptures were acknowledged to be in need any more, since state and demos were considered being one and undivided.
CHAPTER II: THE EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN LEBANON

I will deal here with the birth of the Lebanese Republic and of its first Christian parties. These did not come as a total break from the status quo ante, but tied in with already existing structures and ideas. Since Maronites form the bulk of the Lebanese Christians, I will use those classic authors frequently named as key authors to shed some light on texts signifying a slow but continuous change in self-perception from a congregation of believers toward the concept of the demos entering politics. The state did not play any role in earlier texts. They were about a community constituted by dogma and ruled by a genealogically constituted hierarchy. Later on, a state turned into a polity that should be brought about for exactly this demos. We will see how the emergence of parties is related to the idea of modernity oscillating between a global reference and a structural, societal change within Lebanese society embedded in these globalized patterns. This change also brought about an adaption of a specific set of patterns of political organization. It came into existence juxtaposed to the old principle of serenity, which, in turn, was forced to adopt some of these new patterns. This change allowed people to relocate themselves in a world that has lost its certainty: party founders felt a need to form their organizations in situations where the questions of what one should be became pressing and when it seemed urgent to them to fight off the “wrong” answer on them.

1. ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN LEBANON

Jibra’il Ibn al-Qila’i (d. 1516) could be rightfully claimed as the first Maronite historian whose historiography is still preserved (Salibi 1980, pp. 16f.; Graf 1947, II, pp. 94-102) and occasionally still referred to.59 His picture of a Christian community in the Lebanese mountains is one of a gilded past. It is not even clear to which age, if to any at all, he might have been referring (Salibi 1980, pp. 36f.). In fact, Ibn al-Qila’i was merely a mediocre medieval chronicler – he did not bother to check names and places – but one whose intention was to outline an ideal order,60 which amounted a dogma to be received and affirmed actively.

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59 I once ran into a thread in the LF online forum where members discussed reading it. The thread is no longer online. Ibn al-Qila’i’s works have predominantly been preserved by Catholic clergymen, who continue elaborating his works as mainstay of their historiographies. There are two notable editions to which I refer here: a French–Arabic one of two of his letters (Ibn al-Qila’i, 2001) and his panegyrics (Zajaliyyat) on Mount Lebanon: Ibn al-Qila’i, 1982.

60 Salibi found dozens of mistakes. Graf 1949, vol. III, p. 328f. describes it as a “very free treatment” with “literary fabrications” and “lacking reliable sources”.

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Basic epistemologies of sociability were not to be questioned, hence there were no political parties. This Catholic orthodoxy was to be defined against an Other (Islam and Judaism), but primarily against the enemy within: non-Catholic Christians. For obvious reasons, there cannot be any legitimate plurality therein. The dogma is of outstanding importance here. It is the sacred, which, as Mircea Eliade (1957, pp. 9f.) put it, is the “wholly other”: it cannot be grasped by any category outside itself. As the “paradigmatic solution for every existential crisis” (Ibid., p. 210), the submissive repetition of the sacred has to be employed to secure the realm: Mount Lebanon is not secured by knights, but by keeping faith pure (Ibn al-Qila’i 2001, verses 130, 131). The Maronites as an ethnos are here not seen as an ethnic group, but “the people” as such. Defined by performing faith, they are the refined, purified people of Hosea 2:25 (laos), the Israel restored, whom sin has scattered into the Mountains. This interpretation was by no means unique: many Orthodox Christians saw the fall of Constantinople in 1453 as divine punishment for their human sins (Runciman, 1991, pp. 1f.). “Israel” does here not refer to a specific ethnicity, but to the archetype of performing faith. It is timeless in a sense of “… time as the locus for the recurrent embodiment of archetypes, not themselves temporally placed” (Taylor 2007, p. 288), Thus, it still lacks the modern idea of “progress” restructuring this horizon of expectation, in which cyclical time was to be at least partially replaced by “moving forward” (Koselleck 1995, pp. 362-369) as an indispensable precondition for holding any “dream of a republic” at all.

There is no institutionalized state separated from this “people”, by a line drawn internally, within the network of mechanisms through which a certain social and political order is maintained. Rather, a divine law is positioned beyond the limits of what could be questioned. This law is taught by the Pope as “gubernator,” a juridical title to be understood before the background of the universal, all-encompassing pyramidal divine order of creation (Ullmann 1975, esp. pp. 27ff.). The exact prerogatives of worldly rulers and clergy were of no importance for a cleric like Ibn al-Qila’i, who assumed the righteous to be an indivisible body constituted by a faith brought about, in turn, by keeping to the law. The Maronite Patriarch, in practice acting more or less like a tribal leader (Salibi 1998, p. 92; Douayhi 1993, p. 163), did not add any more pressing need to encompass elements of a nascent Thomism and its “scientica politica”. Thomism considered nature as a condition of man, that necessitated an own inner logic of exactly this divinely created nature, thereby allowing for the idea of some human autonomy in doing politics (Ullmann 1975, pp. 174-185). Clergy and “secular”

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muqaddamun\textsuperscript{62} were not separated at all. Although the title was inherited, the muqaddamun, having received the lower rank of sub-deacons upon ordination, were included in the Church’s institutional framework (Douayhi 1993, p. 162, FN 9). Their role within the hierocratic system was clearly visible during their investiture: a new muqaddam was anointed on the arm (Ibid.). These ceremonies were no accident, but fitted into a broader liturgical scheme similar to the coronation of European rulers: Whereas kings, whose role was not exclusively derived from a Catholic context, but also from pre-Christian customs, were anointed on the head, the Holy Roman Emperor, who played an especially important role inside the strict hierocratic ideology of the medieval Church, was, like the muqaddamun, anointed on his arms and between his shoulders, to illustrate his intended role as assistant to the Pope (Ullmann 1975, pp. 109ff.).

Under the Mamluks and the Ottomans the Christians of the Mountains were integrated into a wider political framework, set up by local dynasties. However, they were not in control of the state. As dhimmis (Cahen 1983; Grafton 2003, pp. 18-42), they were not part of the body politic. Ussama Makdisi remarks that “rank rather than religion was the all-important marker of elite status in rural Mount Lebanon” (Makdisi 2000a, p. 185). Similarly, Axel Havemann concludes that “confessional and ethnic differences did not constitute a criterion of social stratification and political action” (Havemann 1983, p. 37, my own translation). Both are right insofar as no adherence to a confessional group could automatically bring about a place among the “commoners” or the “lords.” Nevertheless, Muslims had to pay tribute at least to the Shari‘ah’s provisions that a “believer” should not be under the command of an “infidel,” although the Mamluks officially acknowledged also Christian muqaddamun in Bsharri, the Maronite region (A. Hourani 1966, pp. 14ff.). To uphold the normativity of the official order, at least toward the Sublime Porte, Muslims had to be in the highest positions in government, as their imagined cosmological order of things prescribed: Druzes dominated the court and the army under the local Ma‘ani dynasty (sixteenth–seventeenth centuries), Sunni Muslims and Jews the administration. Maronites fulfilled subordinate functions. Under the Shihabids, ruling after 1697, Christians at least increased in numbers within the princely administration (A. Hourani 1966, pp. 17ff.). When the official order of things was not adhered to, and especially when important Muslim families converted to Christianity,\textsuperscript{63} this should be seen as a symptom

\textsuperscript{62} Roughly, a local community leader; the term “chieftain” might be appropriate.

\textsuperscript{63} While officially adhering to the Sunni Muslim faith, the ruling part of the Shihab family had secretly converted to Christianity in the mid-eighteenth century; the Druze sheikhs of the Abi-i-Lam'a also converted to Christianity: see Harik 1968, p. 155; Hottinger 1966, p. 89; Chevallier, 1971, p. 251; Abu-Izzedin 1984, p. 207;
of the empire’s fading abilities to uphold its own order in peripheral areas; it did not signify a deeper change. Consequently, Istifan ad-Duwayhi (1630–1704), one of the foremost Maronite clerical chroniclers of that time, did not draw any direct connection between the Maronites and the ʾimarah (emirate), the rule of the Maʿani emirs he witnessed (ad-Duwayhi 1890). In his historiography, which covered several centuries, he placed the Maronites in a wider context, translating Crusader sources and mentioning Muslim rulers holding official sway over the Lebanese mountains, although they were not considered to be “ours.” He did not really treat the emirate as a form of domination (I. F. Harik 1966, p. 40). Always connected with “unbelievers,” state and government were obviously of no further importance for Maronite self-conception. About a hundred years later, we find the first writings transcending a perspective of what “we” should be. Tannus ash-Shidiyaq (1794–1861), (for details on him and his opus: Salibi 1980, pp. 161-233) a layman, well aware of being a part of a wider system of mediated relations, wrote about the mode of exactly this mediation: families and genealogy. His work, too, is not at all theoretical: he collected family histories, and tabulated the country by its geographical entities and these families’ activities. None of these works was concerned with a theory of domination in the proper sense: elite tradition and divine cosmology did not allow for such a systematized concept of how to organize the political.

When the Ottoman Empire, of which Lebanon was a part, began to decay from the early nineteenth century on, Middle Eastern Christians became a part of Great Power politics that regarded them as allies. This also resulted in Western education imported into the Eastern Mediterranean. No longer as hard pressed by Muslim superiority as in previous centuries, they also underwent changes in their self-perception. Niqula Murad (1796–1862), a Maronite archbishop, for example, did not write a history of notables, but rather one about the people, mixing his local understanding as a Maronite clergyman with Western nationalism (Murad 2007). He did not only write in the “Westerners’” language, French, to influence a foreign audience. He argued for a Christian state in the Levant, and introduced numerical superiority as an argument, deeply related to the idea of democracy as a demos deciding its own fate, instead of fitting into a (Muslim) cosmological order. The idea belongs to a time when the dynastic order in Mount Lebanon had already faltered. The nineteenth century was characterized not only by foreign intrusions, but also by juridical emancipation within the framework of the Tanzimat period. However, the number of pogroms against Christians rose considerably (Denoeux 1993, pp. 51-69). The changing roles Christians played in society not

Hanf 2015, p. 56. Havemann 1983, p. 8 states that Emir Bashir II only “most likely” converted to Maronite Christianity.
only provoked Muslim resentment, they also led to an open Christian self-articulation, for example in the Lebanese Christian peasant revolts of this period. Most commoners lived in an isolated, localized environment – especially in the mountains. A later source, the Lebanese writer and linguist ʿAnis Freyha (1903–93), who was much occupied with Lebanese humble rural life, described in his autobiography how World War I was experienced in his home village of Ras al-Matn, slightly to the southeast of Beirut. The news of the war spread via the narrator’s father, a teacher. He alone was able to transcend the parochial context of the purely local, “… since he was familiar with the world and what happened in it and not as the Sheikhs of our village, who used to live as (they did) for centuries. From the field to the house. Whatever happened in the world happened as a thing outside of the framework of their knowledge and care.” (Farihah 1989, p. 50) It is he who informed the village elders, who passed the knowledge down to those who were interested. However, despite the fact that the Ottoman Empire was in 1914 already a secular – although an increasingly Turkish – modern state, the villagers did not care about its war:

“As with regard to us and the events, we did not care about the matter of the war and its events. … The news of the war was let to the Sheikhs. They expected Naʿum Effendi to come forward with updating them on Fridays, to inform them with news of the war. … News of the war was of absolutely no importance and I do not remember I [ever] heard one of the [common] people to talk about the war. [Common] Talk revolved around the problems of live. They only expected Saʿud Naʿum Effendi to inform them on the battles, victories and defeats. They were concerned about the victory of Russia. But no one knew when Russia retreated from the war in 1917 and the Communist Revolution arose. Communism? No one had heard about this word [before].” (Farihah 1989, pp. 50, 53; my own translation)

This complete lack of interest was obviously not only due to limited local communication. The Christian villagers of Ras al-Matn at least had a very rough idea about something outside their small world: there was a “High State”64 to which they belonged, and other countries out there. They felt especially connected to Russia, which “God helps,” and was connected to their own Greek Orthodox Church, and they reacted to the war by “retreating into our own ranks and into the confinements of ourselves” (Farihah 199, p. 50). The Ottoman Empire was foreign to them, as they still perceived it as a Muslim entity, to which they felt no connection, relying instead on their own in-group. Muslims, although living mostly under similar

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64 The century-old formula to designate the “Ottoman Empire.” Originally, it meant “high dynasty.”
parochial conditions, tended to regard the “High State” as legitimate “Muslim” rule for as long as it lasted (Gerber 2002, pp. 67f.).

Occasionally, however, the hierarchical social order was broken, with revolts occurring throughout the centuries. Yet, these rebellions changed during the nineteenth century. Places, procedures, and the rebels’ language all showed strong similarities to former peasant revolts (Havemann 1983, p. 245; see also: Izzi Dien 2002, pp. 57f.). Nevertheless, formulas such as “bi-quwwah al-hukumah al-jumhuriyyah” (by authority of the masses’ government) or “bi-quwwah al-jumhur” (by authority of the masses) were used in 1858/69 by the rebellion’s leader, Tanyus Shahin, to legitimate his mission (Chevallier 1971, p. 275; Havemann 1983, pp. 247ff.). Taken together, all these elements indicate a certain change. For example, as Dominique Chevallier and Axel Havemann noted, jumhuriyyah, given the insurgents’ limited educational background, did not refer to the neologism “republic,” nor did jumhur equate to the Marxist “masses”; it rather referred to a multitude as such mission (Chevallier 1971, p. 275; Havemann 1983, pp. 247ff.). Likewise, the idea that domination benefited “the people” is an old one, but the new Maronite society of commoners declared in that particular revolt that it was no longer possible to be represented by an emir without the people having a say. Rooting hukumah (government, rule) directly in the masses resembles the process of introducing the idea of representing an articulated multitude and finding legitimacy therein.

The vision of the rebellion that started in 1858 was, at least for the radicals among the rebels, really something new. The sheikhs, according to the peasants involved in the rebellion (probably in 1858, after electing Tanyus Shahin as their representative), should no longer stand above the commoners (“the position of the mashayikh is to be of our rank in all things, absolutely without any exception”), nor should they any longer be appointed by government as delegates for the peasants (“that not a single one of the mashayikh is ordered [as an administrator] over us”), but by the peasants’ councils themselves. Some of their letters started with a reference to “bunud matlubah … lina” – “(contractual) points, essential for us.” The decisive point is not so much in the contractual language as such, but in the whole document: contractual concepts of former times knew reciprocity, but only as a submission and not about the very bases of government. The “social contract” firstly lifted the reciprocity

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65 “Bi-quwwah” still holds a rather physical than legitimatory dimension: in a rural context it was what the lord had to do to impose on his unruly subjects: see I Gilsenan, 1986 and 1996, p. 84; Shahin’s formulations therefore meant that the “commoners” enforced their will by empowering themselves.

66 It is not even clear whether Tanyus Shahin could read at all; at the least, his letters were most probably written by clergymen: Makdisi 2000a, p. 194.

67 Facsimile of the original text in Havemann 1983, p. 402, points 3 and 4. Also in: Thompson 2013, p. 47.
of former times to an abstract level, leaving behind the limitations of striking an agreement with a representative to formulate one’s complaints to the government, as had been done in former revolts. Within a wider framework of pressure for reform throughout the empire, these ideas broke also with the official conceptions of the body politic having been solely formed by Muslims. In 1858 equality was defined in terms of one’s own group and the wider society alike. It was formulated by rebellious peasants against their own leading families, and it questioned why Druze landlords should hold sway over Christian subjects. In the mixed areas in Central Lebanon where sericulture blossomed, a gradual population shift of Christians from the north had frequently resulted in such feudal Druze–Maronite-relations. Breaking the old order led to the first modern civil war in Lebanon, a Druze–Maronite war spreading as a Muslim–Christian clash throughout the region. It sparked the Damascus massacre of 1860, in which the Christian quarter was severely damaged (Fawaz 1994; Rafeq 1988). For sure, the peasant rebels had no proper knowledge of anything such as a “social contract” as formulated by a universal, liberal, reform-minded discourse with reference to Rousseau. Nor did they formulate their demands in the increasingly fashionable language of nationalism. Rather, as Ussama Makdisi pointed out (Makdisi 2000b), the central state’s discourses of equality and reform were simply appropriated by the rebels, and fitted into already existing notions, whose contents were gradually changed thereby.

The European Powers’ reaction to the massacres of 1859/60 was – as before – to call for the separation of populations with boundaries. Political entities, autonomous from each other and the Ottoman Empire’s central administration, were to be created. After some diplomatic quarrels, France got her will in the so-called Organic Statute, implemented by the Great Powers in 1861: Lebanon became an autonomous province (mutasarrifiyah) of the Ottoman Empire, ruled by a Christian, non-Catholic governor and an administrative council comprising twelve members, reflecting a confessional formula (four Maronites, three Druzes, two Greek Catholics, two Greek Orthodox, plus one Shiite, Sunni, Jew, and Protestant). They were elected for six years by the village heads, one third every two years. Inside the autonomous territory, elections with a meritocratic character were staged: those elected were largely qualified by their social position, their fortune, or the merits of having obtained an advanced education. These indirect elections gave rise to new political elites in accordance with a general societal change, especially within the Christian sects (al-Khazin 2002, p. 17). The

68 “Whereas the Sublime State – may God the creator preserve it – has granted general equality and complete freedom for not having distinction or disregard in addressing [someone] …” as the peasants referred to in their writings, original letter reprinted in Havemann 1983, pp. 403f.
69 For elections inside the autonomous province, see Khatir 1996, pp. 59–105.
sheikhs themselves were elected by popular vote, suffrage being restricted to those with certain qualifications (Khatir 1996, pp. 59ff., esp. pp. 73f.). The formula of confessional representation was soon adopted at all administrative levels (Qabbani 1981, pp. 276-303; Fawaz 1994, pp. 215ff.), thereby deepening the practices already in use before the violence and officially enshrining a pillarized society. The projected system did indeed reflect the idea of changing power structures from hierarchical indirect rule within an official set of religious laws (and its more profane daily practices) to the idea of having the *demos* as the locus of power.

Elsewhere, in those areas only to be annexed in 1920, politics and elections likewise assumed a meritocratic character within the context of the Ottoman Empire proper. Yet there were also the very first “timid experiments” (‘Ishtiy 2006, p. 61) at political parties covering the whole of the empire, such as the Committee of Union and Progress, with increasingly aggressive Turkish nationalist learnings, and its main opponent, the Liberals, which existed under several names – in both the *mutasarrifiyyah* (Zamir 1985, pp. 19f.) and in the Ottoman part of contemporary Lebanon (Farha 2015, p. 93). Their appeal to religious minorities was limited, but not non-existent; they appealed to Muslims by and large by using Islamic symbols and/or taking up hopes for liberal reforms (see for example: Khalidi 1984; Kayalı 1995).

Within the *mutasarrifiyyah* and its adjacent territories the most remarkable party was the Syro-Lebanese nationalist Lebanese Union Party (Hizb al-‘Ittihad al-Lubnaniyy). It was founded in 1909 by Lebanese migrants to Egypt, opposing the Ottoman government’s demand to take part in the general Ottoman elections. Yet, the party did not oppose the incorporation of all of geographical Syria – i.e. including Lebanon – into the Hashemite kingdom of Syria (Zamir 1985, pp. 23, 49). It was followed by some rather thinly organized notables parties (Gunter and Diamond 2003) such as the Nahdhah Lubnan (Renaissance of Lebanon) or the Association of the Cedar. Other associations of a similar kind followed, such as the Party of Ottoman Administrative Decentralization (al-Hizb al-Lamarkaziyyah al-‘Idariyyah al-‘Uthmaniyyah), founded among others as a reaction on the ongoing centralization efforts of the Young Turks (Farha 2015, pp. 93ff). After World War I the Hizb at-Taraqiyy (Progressive Party), which featured some prominent personalities, made what was probably the most prominent case for Lebanon’s independence from the French Mandate, opposing any rapprochement to the simultaneously emerging state of Syria (Saghiyyah [Saghieh] 1997, p. 20; Zamir 1997, p. 35).
These parties were staffed both by the traditional landholding elite and (increasingly) by the new middle class elite, who held a certain sociological bias toward Beirut. Competition between them could be fierce. They did not produce complex, encompassing, detailed programs, yet they were not interchangeable in some programmatic terms. However, bribes, gifts, pressurizing, and sheer personal weight could also garner support. Mobilization and, interwoven with it, the programmatic function, still reflected an overlord–subject relationship rather than one based on active citizenship. This relationship is nowhere better expressed than in the oath that parliamentary candidates of a purely patrimonial-based faction took in 1953, directed to their patron, Suleiman al-ʿAli:

“We swear by God Almighty, by our honor, and by all that is dear to us, that – having agreed to participate in the battle of legislative elections on the same list – we pledge ourselves, in the case of victory by the grace of God, to follow in the Lebanese Parliament the directives and the policy that will be dictated to us by His Excellency our companion in the struggle, Suleiman Bey al-ʿAli al-Maraʿaby, and to act in a manner to carry out all that he wills. We pledge ourselves to back him in all that he desires, in the Ministry or outside of it, and not to swerve one bit from the attitude he intends to adopt with regard to the authorities as a partisan or as an opponent. If we do not keep our promise and fail to fulfil this oath we recognize ourselves to be unworthy of the human species, and deprived of honor and gratitude.” (quoted in S. Khalaf 1968, p. 255)

At least lord–subject relations were slowly changing. These changes were indicated by the idea to appeal to something transgressing the narrow power-relationship of traditionally sanctified domination into one, which needed to add the capability to act for the best of an electorate to traditional lordship. The most important lords, playing on the national, supra-local level, needed to refer to some common interest, although with the paternal attitude to know better wherein this interest could lay. Suleiman Frangié, as a president probably one of the most blatant symbols of the zuʿamaʾ system, expressed this paternalism in the phrase of having established “a natural kind of socialism,” describing himself as belonging to a “natural elite” providing generously for its clients (Hanf 2015, p. 124).

The only thing that could be expected of the commoners was therefore a passive one: submission; this was in stark contrast to the philosophy of the new parties, which, no matter how avant-gardist and non-dialogical they were, all formulated expectations how the “masses” should behave actively. But, as can be seen from episodes such as the revolt of Tanyus Shahin, ideas of being something more than just a submissive subject had percolated
down into the countryside as early as the nineteenth century, especially in the Maronite areas, where at least basic literacy was already spreading. Violent demonstrations of strength, the ability to exercise power by force, as in Michael Gilsenan’s peripheral village (1996), was no longer sufficient everywhere, but remained a necessary defining feature.

In stark contrast to the zu‘ama”s thinly organized parties, new, thickly organized cadre organizations entered the political stage during the 1920s and 1930s. The leftists came first. As elsewhere, “wandering intellectuals” were shocked by the harsh conditions of life imposed on agricultural and industrial workers, severely aggravated by the results of World War I (Suleiman 1967a, pp. 57ff.). The first of these parties to be founded was the small leftist General Party of Work (Hizb al-‘Amal al-‘Amm) in 1921; shortly after that, in 1924, the Lebanese Communist Party (CPL) held its first meeting. In 1936, after its official registration was withdrawn, the CPL formed the Party of the Lebanese People (Hizb ash-Sha‘ab al-Lubnaniyy) to secure a legal platform for agitation. The Arab Nationalists founded organizations such as the League of National Action (‘Usbat al-‘Amal al-Qaumiyy) or the Arab Nationalist Party (Hizb al-Qaumiyy al-‘Arabiyy), in 1933 and 1935 respectively. The Republican Independence Party (Hizb al-‘Istiqlal al-Jumhuriyy), a leftist party, came into existence in 1931, the pan-Syrian Syrian Social Nationalist Party (Hizb as-Suriyy al-Qaumiyy al-‘Ijtima’aiyy, abbreviated as SSNP) in 1932,70 followed on by the Arab nationalist Najjadé and the Lebanese Phalanges Party (Hizb al-Kata‘ib al-Lubnaniyyah) in 1936 (Dates and names according to El-Solh 2004, pp. 27–31; Nordbruch, 2009, p. 11; 'Ishtiyy 1997a, pp. 441-444). All these organizations, different as they were in their ideologies, were united in being against the status quo in the country (Jeha 2004, pp 14f., 75-120).

The new partisans of the various organizations were at the beginning largely middle-class students. Their relative lack of economic assets, compared to the zu‘ama”,71 had to be compensated for by cadre politics. They thought of themselves as sha‘abiyy organizations, representing the “ordinary people.” From the very beginning, representing the proverbial “little man,” was never without a demand for an input: to behave properly according to a utopian model for new society. This thinking reflected the idea of transforming things in various ways: of giving the hitherto unheard a voice, but also to teach them their “objective identity,” whether a class identity or a Lebanese, Syrian, or Arab one, that would fit into the universalist model of modernity: “The intellectual ideology of culture was launched as a

70 Originally the Syrian Nationalist Party; the “‘Ijtima‘iyy” was only added in 1947.
71 See, for a categorization of them, Hottinger 1966, p. 86.
militant, uncompromising and self-confident manifesto of universally binding principles of social organization and individual conduct.” (Bauman 1992, p. 11) A new generation of young men and women was being formed by the generational experience of undergoing a new kind of education opened up by new institutions and the formation of a bourgeoisie (Schumann 2001 a and b). The scarcity of this precious resource undoubtedly led to a self-conception of identifying “truth”: intellectuals wanted to see themselves as legislators rather than as interpreters (Bauman 1987). Arab nationalist thinker Constantin Zureiq’s description of the sciences’ role mirrors this idea strikingly, as he wanted his students not to engage in the “preaching of enthusiasm and haphazard opinions, but the study of the fundamental problems which the Arab society faces, [imbued] by a scientific objective spirit.” (quoted in Jeha 2004, p. 87)

In one of their historiographies, the Phalangists open up one of their self-presentations – obviously intended to reach a local, Lebanese audience – with the question as to what Lebanon understands about political parties, about what their nature actually could be (Sharaf 1979, p. 5). They answer this rather rhetorical question themselves, making use of what was then state-of-the-art scientific wisdom (Duverger 1954): A party, we learn, is characterized by ideological convictions, and should be related to the “struggle of these parties for domination in the democratic society.” It should be held incontestable that they emerged in the West out of the “national, homogenous society, united in the form of basic organization,” (Sharaf 1979, pp. 5f) as motor and by-product of social change. Now, finally, this phenomenon was also taking finally hold in Lebanon:

“But in present-day Lebanon, there is the Western political thought coming up in the organization of its public matters, which is based on rationalism as the (very) base for society’s advancement and its progress.” (Sharaf 1979, p. 6)

Nationalism as a form of society, so the Phalanges argued, came from Europe, but it constitutes a role model transgressing social classes inside a unified community whose common bases seem to be natural. Arriving in the East, it should serve as the origin of the “nation’s greatness” by freeing her from foreign dominance, unifying the classes, groups, etc. (Sharaf 1979, p. 63; al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, I, p. 84) Division, for its part,

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72 42% of those living around Beirut were illiterate around World War II. That number was considerably higher in the more rural regions. In Eastern Syria it was no less than 90%; see Perthes 1989, p. 221.
73 And – to be sure – “intellectual” here first and foremost means the pretension to actually being one. Antun Sa’adeh, as an exceptionally striking example, had only a basic formal modern education and little or no insight into history or philosophy. His only academic job was teaching German at the AUB.
blocks the nation, impeding rationalism and, thereby, democratic parties as a genuine rationalist phenomenon (Sharaf 1979, pp. 6f.). Consequently, the nation and the party are mutually dependent as symptoms of the only form of society to live up to a universalist standard. Yet, the Phalanges argued, this order could only stem from a considerable behavioral change: Politics should no longer be “self-serving,” but “an instrument for improving man and society,” to build a “modern state,” also by inducing an “intellectual revolution” to overcome the present mindset, as a “guarantee for the liberation of the intellect which transcends its [own] self, and [also] for finding the mental capabilities to renew man in his struggle with the foreign powers.” (al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, I, pp. 83f.)

To be liberated means thereby to emulate those who do better:

“Therefore, there is no doubt of a new “political elite’s” emergence, responding to the era’s spirit, helping Lebanon on his historical journey strong and united among the nations.”

(Sharaf 1979, p. 102)

That drive for “rationality” did not just stem from a wider array of educational capabilities and an international scheme of reference; it also arose from a loss of certainty. Tellingly, one of the Phalangist historiographies conveys the founding story of the party by quoting Pierre Amin Gemayel Sr. (1905–84), the Phalanges’ founding “Supreme Leader” (ra’is al-ʿa’la), who formulated cascading questions as to one’s place in this world: “Who am I, to which country do I belong, where does destiny lead, what is my fate, why am I without an identity and without affiliation? Or which relationship ties me to the fatherland or the state?” (quoted in: al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, I, p. 87; a slightly different version in: G. Harik 2007, p. 32) These questions roughly reflect the catchy formulations of the Romanian ultra-nationalist poet and politician Octavian Goga: “Who are we? How many are we? What is given to us? Who gives it? What is our right?” (Quoted in Dinu 2013, p. 27) That is no accident: it caught the mood of a time marked by passage from the subaltern subject, unquestionably positioned within hierarchy, toward citizens needing to locate themselves in a world of modern societies. Yet the passage is not just about one’s place within a given society, but also how this society itself should look – in this case, what Lebanon should be, if it was to exist at all.

74 To question what one should be is obviously important; Karim Pakradouni also used it to describe the mood of the days in which the Phalanges were founded: see interview with him in, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sn2FpIiKXr&feature=youtu.be (documentary series “Azhab Lubnān” [Parties of Lebanon] by Farid ’Assaf, 2000–02, aired by NBN), rev. 2016-04-11.
2. THE BIRTH OF GRAND LIBAN AS SITUATIONAL BACKGROUND

With the downfall of the Ottoman Empire and the replacement of the old Petit Liban by the new Grand Liban, the question arose as to what should be done with the new country that had been founded as a French Mandate. Lebanon had always been a part of geographical Syria. Since regional identities such as Syrian or Lebanese were until the nineteenth century not related to precise political aspirations of forming a sovereign state, they were used in a complementary way, without excluding each other logically (Philipp 2004). This was now no longer the case.

Fawwaz Traboulsi (2007, pp. 82ff.) identifies four positions among Christians in Greater Syria during those times: Arab federalists, striving for an Arab federation; Syrian federalists, “Protectionists,” who aspired to the closest possible alliance with France; and “Independentists,” seeking an independent state of Lebanon. While those were indeed the main options, this summary misleads: some Syrian federalists drew a sharp line between Syria and the rest of the Arab world; some did not even see Syria as a part of Arab culture. Likewise, independence could be seen as being based upon institutional arrangements or on culture – the latter often understood in a very Christian way. Thus, the question of integration into a wider region, inhabited by a Muslim majority, was paramount. I will call it the “contextualism” vs. “exceptionalism” divide. I borrowed the first notion from a Christian theology that developed later on around the likes of Archbishop Grégoire Haddad and Yuakim Mubarak (see: Fleyfel 2011), without intending to use it in a religious way here. Contextual theology means that local contexts are respected as part of an authentic experience, which needs to be preserved within a vernacularization of Christian faith. It stood opposed to concepts of educating the faithful toward a centralized orthodoxy. In a Christian Middle Eastern context, the latter point is of considerable importance, especially as Latin Catholic education, organized by Francophone orders, tended to “Westernize” local Christians. Rejecting such a process enabled common ground to be found with the surrounding Muslim regional majority (the so-called khaymah, literally “tent”). This conception is therefore about embedding oneself into something that transcends the sense of being a minority. The “exceptionalist” option instead emphasizes communal distinctiveness, setting the minority apart from the region, as long as the latter is understood as a political and not as a solely geographical term. It bases the call for cultural autonomy on exactly this status as a distinct cultural group. I do not intend to use either of these options in a demagogic way:

75 Often inspired by Lammens’ (1924) work. Antun Sa’adeh, for example, was heavily inspired by a secularized “Christian sectarian fanaticism,” setting the “Syrians” apart from the rest of the region: see Achcar, 2010, p. 77.
Both result from experiences, shaping further perceptions and expectations. We will see that the two concepts were not always clearly separated. But in the long run all Christian political self-conceptions in Lebanon approximated positions determined by this cleavage line.

Even during the last years of the Ottoman Empire, with constitutional Ottomanism weakened and Turkism being no viable option, various Muslim and Christian notables beyond the quasi-statelet in the mountains had called for an autonomous or even independent Greater Lebanon within the reform-oriented discourses running throughout the region (Zamir 1985, pp. 29-33; Farha 2015). Nevertheless, the state emerged as a “Christian home” in 1920. Any chances for integrating larger Christian areas into the wider region were, of course, severely strained by the traumatizing experiences of the war (Farha 2015, p. 106) with its genocidal mass murders and a famine ravaging the country (see for example: Schilcher Schatkowski 1992; Mouawwad 2006). Much of the Christian population of what is now Lebanon simply seized the opportunity of securing a Christian state (Zamir 1985, pp. 22-37). In his autobiography the Lebanese author Edward Atiyah summarized his first impression of Beirut as a child with the simple sentence: “Christians versus Moslems: this was my first notion of collective human relationship.” (Atiyah 1946, p. 10, italic in the original text) He continued, casting an occasionally ironic glance back at a society deeply affected by past murders:

“To my mind at the age of five or six the world consisted entirely of Moslems and Christians in antagonism to one another – two natural inevitable groups, as natural and inevitable as the world itself, to one of which – the weaker but more righteous one – I belonged. … From my earliest days, I was hearing to talk about “Christians and Moslems.” This was one of the chief and most recurrent topics of conversation among the Christians of Beirut at that time, … and they [these conversations, C. T.] would indulge in reminiscence of the Christian massacre by the Druses in 1860 – of how the Druses treacherously induced the Christians to surrender their arms, and then led them into the courtyard and slaughtered them like sheep, … how finally France intervened and landed troops, though by then the massacre was over.” (Atiyah 1946, p. 10)

The territorial expansion of the mutasarrifiyah reflected the desires expressed by a Maronite delegation at the 1919 Paris peace conference, as well as those of France (A. Hourani 1966, p. 24; Arsan 2015). Although the French intentionally promoted Catholic Christians’ fears of a possible massacre at the hands of Muslims, they nevertheless did not at first support a

76 A Protestant from a Greek Orthodox family from Syria who settled in Lebanon.
Lebanese state, fully independent from Syria (Zamir 1985, p. 41). The idea was to give Mount Lebanon its own breadbasket, by adding agrarian plains and the city of Beirut to it (Ibid., pp. 14ff.). Areas with sizable Christian minorities were to be protected from domination by the Muslim majority. Incentives to do so appeared immediately, as, in anticipation of the potential creation and enlargement of a Christian state, armed Muslim gangs started to terrorize Christian villages (Zamir 1985, pp. 82–86; Traboulsi 2007, p. 80)77 all over geographical Syria, but with a focus on the south of what is now Lebanon, where Christians had actively collaborated with the arriving French colonial troops.

However, the new country’s population was less Christian than ever, bringing their share of the population down from around 79.5% in 1911 (58% Maronites)78 to 55% in the 1921 official Lebanese census. All in all, only 35% in the newly annexed territories were actually Christians (Zamir 1985, p. 99). In the south and east of the new Mandate territory of Grand Liban in particular, Shiites, largely ruled by big landholding families, dominated; in the traditional cities along the Mediterranean shore Sunnis made up the majority of the population. Thousands of Christians had already made their way to the coast, especially to Beirut, which was turning into an increasingly multi-confessional city (Zamir 1985, pp. 26f.). Contrastingly, in districts such as Zaghurta, Bsharri, and Kisrawan, which were almost exclusively Christian, local traditions did not really encompass pluralist, confessional tradition; thereby most of their inhabitants could hardly be expected to play a constructive role in building a pluri-confessional state (Saghiyyah 1991, p. 23). Consequently, most Maronites did not care about this slight majority – they still considered it sufficient to control the country (Zamir 1985, p. 118). The widespread view among them of what Lebanon should be – a nation-state for the Christians – could be best grasped from the words of the patriarchal vicar, Bishop ʿAbd-Allah al-Khoury:

“The Lebanon within its present boundaries was established with the approval of France in order to serve as a home for the Christians in neighboring Moslem countries in case they should be compelled to flee from the persecution of their neighbors.” (quoted in: Zamir 1985, p. 124)

77 Sometimes also Jews were attacked, for example a Jewish family was murdered by a Druze gang at Bhamdun in the ʿAley district: Firro 1992, p. 74.

78 Additionally also in the original autonomous mutasarrifiyah, the population had, due to immigration and war, almost halved: Zamir 1985, pp. 98ff. Hanf 2015, p. 66 gives 85% Christians in Jabal Lubnan, 60% of its whole population being Maronite.
How to deal with the new state-to-be was largely influenced by confessional identity as a filter of political perception: The coastal towns’ Muslims rejoiced when the Hashemite Emir Feisal, who tried to establish his own Arab Syrian state, including Lebanon, called for declarations of allegiance to his rule from Damascus (Zamir 1985, pp. 50f.). Many of them imagined Lebanon as part of a Syrian Arab state with deep connections to other Arab states, dominated by Muslim culture and ruled by Muslims (Haim 1955; van Dam 2011, p. 17). To the Druzes, the idea of a Christian state did not sound like a promise: In fact, Druze villages had protested their possible incorporation into a potentially Christian state (van Dam 2011, pp. 54, 67f.); they had a checkered history of cooperating with Christian politicians. Many among the Greek Orthodox were, in contrast to Catholics, more reluctant: whereas in Syria proper it would have been dangerous to swim against the tide, in Lebanon many if not most quickly settled for the new state that made it easier for them to let their voices heard (Hopwood 1969, p. 178).

The majority of the new country’s Muslims, at least the Sunnis, did boycott its institutions from the very beginning (Zamir 1985, pp. 126-132). This included boycotting the elections of 1922 (Ibid., p. 145). When they finally took part, Sunni representatives of the new majlis in Beirut refused to serve the new state and vowed to abolish it; Sunni groups in the coastal towns called for an outright transfer of the newly added territories from Lebanon to Syria. It is thereby of only limited importance whether the Sunni notables, as Carla Eddé (2001, p. 96) argued, acted primarily pragmatically and regarded national politics as a means to realize purely economic interests. First, I doubt whether we could indeed disprove any deeper, more fundamental idea about politics. Second, they had to mobilize support – which purely economic considerations would not have done. In fact, only those Sunni notables who kept some distance from the French managed to hold their political positions in the long run (Hottinger 1966, p. 94). Finally, Khaled Ziadé (1997, pp. 263ff.) shows how much Tripoli’s new patron, ‘Abd al-Hamid Karameh, had to appeal to Arab nationalist feelings in order to develop into a popular leader, outclassing those traditional families who chose to side with the French. All this, of course, only holds true for a “relative distance,” since many, primarily those from the countryside (Firro 2003, pp. 84f., 100-111), still accepted official positions – if only to maintain contact with the French. How dangerous this balancing act could have been was aptly demonstrated by the Muslim director of the interior who was assassinated for

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79 For Shiites the problem was far more complex, since they were torn between the probabilities of losing their traditional de facto autonomy to a strong colonial state or being ruled by either Christians or Sunnis: see Zamir 1985, p. 68.
cooperating with the Mandatory power (Zamir 1985, p. 131). This tense conflict led into what Edward Atiyah described as “a haunting sense of insecurity,” characterizing Beirut around World War I: “It was not considered safe for anyone to walk alone at night in Beirut at that time, or even to open the door before making sure who the visitor was.”(Atiyah 1946, p. 11) When Christians joyfully commemorated Emir Feisal’s defeat at Maysalun, Lebanese Muslims retaliated in kind by celebrating the Turkish victory over Greece in 1922 and by observing Muslim holidays to an extent unknown before (Ibid., pp. 128, 131). In the Shuf region, the Beqaa, and further to the south, Muslim armed bands – many of them former soldiers of Feisal’s army – clashed bloodily with their Christian counterparts (Firro 2003, pp. 73f.). To provide the necessary organizational structure to promote their interests, Muslim notables formed a host of thinly organized notable networks such as the Syrian National Bloc, the Party of Arab Independence (Hizb al-ʾIstiqlal al-ʾArabiyy, founded in 1919), the Party of Syrian Union (Hizb al-ʾIttihad as-Suriyy), the Republican Independence Party (Hizb al-ʾIstiqlal al-Jumhuriyy), and the Conference of the Coast (Kutlah Wataniyyah Suriyyah and Muʿatamar as-Sahil) (see: El-Solh 2004, pp. 7f.; ʾIshtiyy 1997a, p. 441; Traboulsi 2007, p. 99). On the other side, in 1934, the Constitutional Bloc (al-Kutlah ad-Dusturiyyah80) was founded to support Béchara al-Khoury and his politics. Four years later, in 1938, Émile Eddé founded the National Bloc (al-Kutlah al-Wataniyyah). These latter blocs emerged as the foremost gathering points of the country’s Christian elite. Their fierce competition occasionally turned into open violence, divided the parliament in two, and opened up chasms within the Maronite clergy (Sharaf 1979, p. 15).81

Béchara al-Khoury was not just a president known for the rampant corruption under his watch, but also because many of his campaigns were sponsored by his brother-in-law Michel Chiha, a successful banker and proponent of an urban, supra-confessional idea of Lebanon, who advised him in almost all situations (Zamir 1997, p. 33). Remarkably, even back in the 1960s al-Khoury’s party secretary was unable to provide his party’s policies on any of the major topics of Lebanon because of an imminent election (Suleiman 1967a, p. 254, FN 153). Yet, not least because of Chiha and the polarized situation, al-Khoury addressed at least rough mentalities when dealing with the constitutive question of what Lebanon should be. I

80 So called, according to a suggestion made by Sheikh Farid al-Khazin, because a “return to the full constitution” had been sought, since a full constitution would actually mean a sovereign Lebanon: see Sharaf 1979, p. 16, FN 2.
81 Interestingly the rivalry between Béchara al-Khoury and Émile Eddé was mirrored on the Maronite ecclesiastical level by a likewise personally and politically inspired strife between Bishop ʿAbd-Allah al-Khoury and the Archbishop of Beirut, Ignace Mubarak, who proposed a Christian “Petit Liban” instead of a greater version.
understand these mentality as a “mental disposition, [the] direct minting of man through his social life-world and by life-experience emanating from it”, in contrast to the rather abstract, reflected sense-making of an ideology (Geiger 1987, p. 32, my translation). Thus, he stood, supported by the newspaper Le Jour, for full independence from France, and of course also from Syria; he wanted a sovereign Lebanese republic, but also deeper ties with the Arabic countries surrounding it. Fluent in Arabic, he was personally acquainted with Muslim leaders such as Riyadh as-Sulh and ʾAmin ʾArslan (El-Solh 2004, p. 16). Notwithstanding this, in the charged confessionalist atmosphere back then, many Muslim parliamentarians refused to vote for him in 1936, as they considered his “Grand Liban” aspirations as much more Christian supremacist than his opponent’s idea of ceding territory to neighboring Syria (Zamir 1997, p. 177). Yet in fact, there is an ongoing discussion as to how committed Khoury had really been to Chiha’s ideas, and how far his convictions had actually been shaped by opportunism; especially since his most influential friends included his cousin Bishop ʿAbd-Allah al-Khoury, who defended the idea of a Christian refuge in Lebanon so emphatically. Meir Zamir argues, and he is certainly right, that Béchara al-Khoury developed from a Maronite “exceptionalist” into a “cooperationist” because he needed a cause for a campaign against his personal arch-rival Eddé (Zamir 1997, pp. 34ff.). But it seems to me not to be of particular importance whether opportunism, sincere conviction, or simple pragmatism informed his beliefs: what counts is rather that he had to choose a standpoint and could not easily change it in dealing with fundamental matters. Michel Chiha helped him make a choice. Born in 1891 into a wealthy Chaldean Catholic family, and formed by the experience of cosmopolitan city life, Chiha and his close friend Henri Pharaon managed a bank, controlling no less than 14% of Beirut’s silk trade (Traboulsi 2007, p. 59), and, despite having been educated according to Catholic principles, both admired British liberal traditions. Chiha, for example, stood for a mixture of ideas that turned increasingly into an unofficial ideology of those who wanted to bring the Muslims in by embracing Phoenicianism by turning the latter from a Christian exclusivism into a concept more open to Muslims (see for example: Chiha 1949 and 1964). He had started out very much an exclusivist: in 1919 he had not only located Lebanon in the Latin world, he had also referred positively to French Integralist writer Charles Maurras (Kaufman 2001, p. 192, FN 42; Darwiche Jabbour 2004, p. 23). Later on,

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82 Notwithstanding this, in the charged confessionalist atmosphere back then, many Muslim parliamentarians refused to vote for him in 1936, as they considered his “Grand Liban” aspirations as much more Christian supremacist than his opponent’s idea of ceding territory to neighboring Syria: Zamir 1997, p. 177.

83 For example, even some of Chiha’s later writings clearly resembled the French Clerical Fascist Charles Maurras’ dichotomization of the rationalist, calculating North and the Mediterranean as the region of intelligence.
he refined it as a mostly liberal–institutional idea, inspired by a wide mixture of different approaches. He combined a typically French inspired “Lebanese geography” with the liberalism expressed in a laissez-faire economy as well as in an institutional and societal order (Zamir 1997, pp. 36ff.). Obviously, by describing Lebanon as Phoenician and Mediterranean, Chiha maintained a conscious difference from Arab identity as a common identity that could unify in a political way. Nevertheless, he did not exclude close cooperation in nearly all aspects (Chiha 1964, pp. 124ff.) – a line President al-Khoury chose to follow, becoming the first prominent Maronite politician in Lebanon to acknowledge the country’s “Arabism,” but not feeling any zeal for actually uniting the Arabs into one state (Suleiman 1967a, p. 252). That pragmatism had become necessary since in the longer term the French Mandatory power proved to be a decisive factor in slowing down a great part of the Maronite political establishment. Martiniano Roncaglia (1999, p. 340) remarked: “The Maronite political power was not only not restored; to the contrary, the Mandate signified its end.” (my translation, italic mine) Hampered by financial difficulties, a strong political divide between left and right, a lack of clear vision, and the inability to enforce their original agenda on the countryside, the French turned to pragmatism, especially since the new “Mandatory responsibilities” were rather unpopular in France proper, resulting in a penurious administration (Khoury 1989).

al-Khoury’s main opponent was Émile Eddé. From a sociological point of view, both rivals were of a new bourgeoisie, and both had profited greatly from French domination, rising through its administration (Zamir 1985, p. 58). Eddé, for his part, came over to a Christian audience as a convinced exceptionalist. After the corruption under the Khoury governments (1927–28 and 1929), he arose as a “strong man” to “rebuild” Lebanon (Zamir 1997, pp. 69ff.) according to a vision of Phoenicianism emphasizing a Lebanese and/or Syrian character, distinct from “the Arabs.” Born in Damascus, Eddé married into the Greek Orthodox Sursock family from East Beirut, thereby getting access to their enormous riches and forming an important alliance (El-Solh 2004, p. 14; Firro 2003, p. 108). The francophone poet Charles Corm, one of the most outspoken defenders of a “Phoenician Lebanese identity” of solely “Mediterranean” orientation (read: related to its Western Shore, i.e. France), was a close


Basically, Chiha himself did not even consider Lebanon as part of the Arab world – at least not consistently. Whereas in one well-known work he described Lebanon as a mixture (including Arab influences) and bluntly answering the question whether the country could be Arab “… the population of Lebanon simply is Lebanese …” he later showed a slightly modified position (possibly due to circumstantial necessities?), ruling out direct political unification, but seeing the country as an integral part of an Arab world that for him constituted an “Arab community,” not a state: Chiha 1949, p. 48.
friend of his (see: Aulas 1986, p. 15). Eddé himself did not consider anything “Arab” as part of Lebanon’s identity: his own command of the Arabic language only improved after entering parliament in 1922 (El-Solh 2004, p. 15). He once reproached a Muslim Lebanese, saying that if he wished to have an Arab nation, all he had to do was to go to Mecca (R. Haddad 1993, p. 34; Traboulsi 2007, p. 94). Unlike al-Khoury, he thought that France should play a much bigger role in an independent Lebanon’s future, and he feared that maintaining the “Grand Liban” would endanger Christian supremacy in the country (Zamir 1997, pp. 70-73; El-Solh 2004, p. 15). Even his alliances with Muslim leaders such as Muhammad al-Jisr were only struck with Eddé hoping for the French to render this formal participation factually meaningless (El-Solh 2004, p. 15). He had previously opposed the very creation of the “Grand Liban,” since he considered the new state a sure way to lose Christian dominance (Hanf 2015, pp. 69ff.). This culminated in an article, published in 1930 in the newspaper L’Orient, proposing the idea of ceding the Muslim-dominated territories of the Beqaa, Tripoli, and Southern Lebanon to Syria, accompanied by a “population transfer” between the two countries to preserve the idea of a Christian state (Zamir 1997, pp. 113f.; Traboulsi 2007, pp. 90f.). Thus, he truly stood for a Christian exceptionalism and a recognizable political option.

Especially towards the end of the French Mandate, the question of providing the “basic ontological conceptions prevalent in a society” (Eisenstadt 2203, II, p 494) with an organizational outlet became once again more urgent. It reached its first climax in 1936, when the question arose whether Syria and Lebanon should each be awarded a place in the League of Nations, or if they were to be recognized as one country for a society articulated as one body politic. This led to fierce competition among young academics hoping to set out the one “true” order. So, at Lebanon’s universities “nationalism (became) a fashion.” (El-Solh 2004, p. 26) Communicating in public means to perceive a plethora of “heretics” as competitors: When the SSNP was founded in 1932, with a pan-Syrian, laic conception and without a place for an independent Lebanon in it, it gained widespread support, especially from the academic youth, including many Christians. That increased pressure on those who held a different idea about Lebanon and its place in the wider Syrian region (see: Entelis 1974, pp. 47f.). Out of every political standpoint’s perspective, the other, rivalling side had already alarmingly gained ground: Constantin Zureiq, for example, used his position as a professor of history at the American University in Beirut (AUB) as a means to assemble like-minded followers around him. In doing so, he succeeded in turning the Arabist current into the strongest at this prestigious institution (Jeha 2004, p. 86). The soon-to-be-founded Phalanges knew that: they feared the pan-Arabists’ campaigns, lamenting that the traditional political actors would
simply give in, especially in the light of the Palestinian conflict (P. Gemayel 1948, pp. 111-14) that was developing further south into an important catalyst of Arab nationalism (dawisha 2003, pp. 75-134) and thereby bringing them closer to the surrounding region. In the next chapter I will inquire more deeply into their intellectual and social roots, indicating how they left a legacy of how to do politics.
CHAPTER III: A PARTY, OR RATHER “STANDING OVER THE PETTY STRUGGLES”? 

Beyond this fierce competition with other visions of Lebanon, the Phalanges did also constitute a break within the Lebanese Christian political landscape itself. Their founders gathered adherents from the camps of both Béchara al-Khoury and Émile Eddé (Interview Iskandar Ghassan, TV-series “ʾAhzab Lubnan”, R. Haddad 1993, p. 55). They perceived it as wrong both to become part of a Syrian state and to take refuge in a “shrinking back” of the country’s Christians into an isolated community completely cut off from the region. Instead, they claimed an allegedly scientific “Lebanese spirit,” historically and geographically constructed and therefore intended to encompass the Muslims too, but within a Lebanese nationality (qaumiyyah) distinct from others in the region. They strove for independence from French administration, although with mutual consent (Sharaf 1979, p. 109). Initially, the French had expected them to confront the Muslim-staffed Arab nationalist “shirt parties” on the streets en lieu of the official institutions. But this cordial relationship soured after the Phalanges gained considerable strength: When France was not willing to give in, on November 21, 1937 they called for a rally in Beirut that was dispersed by Senegalese colonial troops at the expense of two dead Phalangists. Seventy more were wounded, among them their young leader Pierre Gemayel himself (Entelis 1974, pp. 52ff.; Zamir 1997, p. 54).

Initially, the Phalanges were not even a party; they considered themselves a paramilitary organization. As we will see, these young Lebanese Christians stemmed from a far-reaching societal transformation, they stood for the integration of broader parts of the demos into the process of doing politics, the “invention” of youth, and for a widespread sentiment of crisis. They appropriated a number of different discourses and adapted them for their own contexts, without copying them completely. I argue in this chapter that the idea of “forging” men into a society stood at the core of their thinking, which belonged to a wide array of organizations at times dubbed “shirt parties.” This was, so to say, one specific, militarized version of utopianism. Despite all the overlaps, we should not confuse this with Fascism, which was nothing but the most radical version of a new concept of how to do politics. Yet, the results of the vernacularization of that Zeitgeist had been the long-lasting problems in understanding

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85 Georges Naccaché, one of their founders, consulted the French commanding general in the Levant, Charles Huntzinger, on October 24, 1936 to discuss the possibility of training the Phalanges militarily: see R. Haddad 1993, pp. 29–34.
oneself as a party. These doubts over the optimal political role remained part of several parties’ identities, even when they, like the Phalanges, became integrated into the Lebanese political system. They are derived from the idea of utopianism, of imposing order instead of “merely” functioning as a translator of specific interests.

Subsequently, I argue, the newly formed parties, including the Phalanges, remained largely restricted since they had to operate within a system that did not favor them and yet was changed significantly by them. These deficits lead us straight into the “gilded age” of Lebanese partyism, a decade when parties were integrated into a coalition to bring about a stronger state with a less uneven society. Yet, we will see that this pre-war climax also provided for a situation that turned a foreign conflict into one of internal mobilization and counter-mobilization – only to end in the civil war of 1975–90. To accurately retrace the history of Lebanese partyism, an array of primary sources and interviews will help us to link the phenomenon to secondary literature dealing broader with the genesis of a specific understanding of how to do politics.

1. The Fascism Reproach
The name “Phalanges” does, of course, evoke certain associations. The most obvious might be the Falange Española, the Spanish single state party under General Juan Francisco Franco. The second might be the circumstances under which the organization was founded – after Pierre Gemayel visited Berlin in 1936. Also, when writing about the Phalanges and their offshoot the Lebanese Forces, there will always remain the wartime massacres, especially that of Sabra and Shatila. When I told a colleague in Beirut that the LF is one of my research topics, she immediately replied: “Those? But they are Fascists?!” The Fascism reproach might sound convincing, especially as an often superficial encounter with name and origin of the Phalangists seems to justify the label. Wikipedia, for example, starts both in English and in German by stating that the party was inspired by the Spanish Falange before moving directly on to the civil war. None of the quoted sources offers a discussion in its own right to explain the label so readily offered.

Certainly, it is no accident that popular scientific articles written in a Western language start out by rooting the Phalanges directly back to an encounter with the West, as every

86 There was also a Polish “Falanga,” embracing Catholic Integralism, founded in 1934.
87 Interestingly the French article offers the best version. It may have been written by a Lebanese party sympathizer.
historiography searches for a genuine seminal event. It is no less likely to be accidental that the German source emphasizes the Fascism reproach most directly. On the contrary, the Phalangists’ accounts only mention the visit as one that impressed their leader and inspired him to actually form an organization. They prefer to start out by locating themselves in a wider societal and historical horizon, a specific situation, not a visit.

However, despite those intersections that we will soon encounter, Fascism functions primarily as a discursive element. Since World War II it has been hardly used by any political group of itself, but by the political left to label others (Schumann 2004, p. 181, FN 7). Occasionally it also works out the other way around. Thus, even the prevalent racism in talking about “the other” that one can encounter when dealing with some Christians in Lebanon should not seduce us to roll out the old Fascism reproach again. Not even the fact that Phalangists were responsible for some of the worst massacres of the civil war between 1975 and 1990 is a reason to do so. Neither is the fact that the LF is right wing and conservative: “Fascist” is not another word for everything “racist.” Rather, “Fascism” constitutes a specific right-wing ideology. Moreover, there is no such thing as a “Fascist practice” – being racist for example – existing independently of a genuine Fascist system of ideas and notions, which would justify introducing the Fascism reproach through the back door of a non-theorized practice. Racism in general is not “Fascist practice”; it is a “racist practice,” which, to be sure, in Lebanon is not restricted to some members of certain parties alone, although authors such as Noam Chomsky (1999, p. 332) have proposed such nonsense. The “balance” of massacres during the civil war is roughly equal (Hanf 2015, pp. 324-330) and sectarianism is not restricted to just a few organizations. For example, Kamal Jumblatt, the iconic leader of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), representing Lebanon at the Socialist International, in an interview accused “the Maronites” of possessing a “psychotic and medieval mentality” and referred to them as making good scribes, but not good rulers (Joumblatt 1982, pp. 40f., quotation p. 46). The tone might have been influenced by the outbreak of the war, but nonetheless, it is racist. More

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88 Bashir Gemayel, addressing the French Socialist parliamentarian Michel Rocard in 1981, saw the Fascism reproach during the civil war primarily as a means to justify the massacres of isolated Christian populations in Lebanon under the pretext of fighting Fascism, criticizing the leftists for their historical teleology associated with the term “progressivism,” as camouflageing their own authoritarianism: see Geha 2010, pp. 223f. Interestingly, the same labeling also works out the other way around: Samir Geagea, in an interview with an-Nahar, accused the rival SSNP of relying on Fascism as “spirit and lifeblood,” further accusing Ba’athism of having been imbued by “manifest traits” of totalitarianism, whereas al-Kata’ib had, according to him, been the only ideological party in the Middle East without a totalitarian nature: see an-Nahar, 1984-06-25, quoted in al-Fikr wal-l-Qadhiyyah [The Thought and Cause], in al-Masirah, 1996, an anthology of quotations, formerly available at http://www.lebanese-forces.org/hakim/thoughtandcause/introduction.htm, rev. 2007-03-06 (no longer online).
recently, in 2009, Kamal Jumblatt’s son Walid, unaware that he was being filmed, in a private conversation with Druze Sheikhs, referred to Lebanon’s Maronites and the Sunnis from ‘Akkar as a “bad [or crooked] breed” (jins ‘atil) that won’t change. However, as far as I know, no one ever proposed throwing the PSP out of international party congresses, labeling them “racist” or “fascist.” Therefore, we need to deal with these grave reproaches carefully: we need to inquire more thoroughly how the respective actors imagined politics to be done and what they perceived those Fascist symbolisms they obviously received from the West to be.

2. YOUTHFULNESS AND REBELLION

Al-Kata’ib’s origins probably provide foremost reason for its association with Fascism, related to the strong sentiment of prevalent crisis that replaced the enthusiasm for liberal progress, which had dominated till roughly the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

“We will never build a new Lebanon with the old leaders and the old political mentality, but we can with the young,” in the words of a LF spin-doctor (Hanf 2015, p. 429). This ties in with the new emphasis on rujulah, or youthful masculinity, as “boldness, physical fitness, chivalry, fighting spirit, self-sacrifice, and priority of the community over the individual,” (Wien 2005, p. 10) which became so popular from the nineteenth century on, first in the West and then rapidly in the Middle East.

We should start out by asking why making a clear break is so often connected with the idea of being “young.” “Young” is, first, seen as something positive, and second, it is nearly always connotated with rebellion and the overturning of the old, the already established and settled, since “the young alone are unlimited enthusiastic, because they are young … the youth is foolish one says, but foolishness is beautiful.” With that romanticist eulogy of the emotional, this rejection of skepticism and heavy good sense, its author, Moussa Prince, a law student and from 1944 to 1952 member of the Phalanges, sought the truth, the authentic, and the passionate as ideals of an expressivist thinking. He felt that it should reignite the allegedly already existing nation, which he considered as having grown cold, by sparking up, like the poet, “the national flame in my heart.” With this enthusiastic appeal to the Phalanges, Prince began his cycle of poems on the “Land of Adonis” (i.e. Lebanon), written as he stated

himself, “with the youthful heat of 18 years, that wants ‘to do something’ for Lebanon, as insignificant as it might be,” addressing the Phalangists as “soldiers of the first line … in the service of the very same immortal Lebanon … being their holy mission.” (Prince n. d., p. 13)

One of the general tendencies of modernist thinking, as Charles Taylor has observed, is regarding “one’s feelings as a key to good life,” replacing the “higher activities” such as the monastic life of former times (Taylor 1984, pp. 155f.). Against the alleged “old,” a personal sphere of agency and autonomy is claimed.

“One being young” is no modern invention (Orme 2003). Yet, socio-structural changes allowed for a re-evaluation of its range and exact contents. That implies age-specific rights, the prolongation of childhood, the approximation of the age of marriage, and finally, as a tendency, the gradual shift from social respectability toward physical attractiveness as preconditions for personal relationships (Kohli 1985, esp. pp. 7ff.). One aspect of the new “expressivist” (Taylor 1989, pp. 374f.) thinking is undoubtedly “revolt,” which changed from the more or less unthinkable into a periodic part of the life cycle, as an age of “utopian speculative reflection of the world.” (Döbert and Nunner-Winkler 1975, p. 43, my translation)

This should normally be roughly between the ages of thirteen and twenty-five, as long as those affected have not taken definite roles in society, burdened with binding obligations. Beginning in the bourgeois segments of society, being young increasingly designated a life span spent in some sort of familial and educational protection. It thereby replaced the hitherto early breaking away from these two environments to live in some kind of semi-dependency, not allowing for a universally recognized age grading (Gillis 1981, p. 2). It is therefore no wonder that the Phalangists in Lebanon originally stemmed from the bourgeois students of the Christian high and vocational schools and universities. Only they were able to spend time in camps and on jamborees. With their exemption from the “seriousness of life,” revolt, as a period in life, became an important part of legitimating narratives: From the end of the nineteenth century being young became one of the most fashionable and frequently used symbolisms in Middle Eastern politics (Skovgaard-Petersen 2005, pp. 21-34; Erlich 2015, pp. 1-63).

This new-found expressivism does not exist solely for itself or, better, for the individual. Rather, the individual is seen as a social entity, functioning like a “germ cell” of the greater

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90 The Université Saint-Joseph, the Institut Technique des Frères, the La Sagesse School, the School of the [Maronite] Patriarchate, the Collège Notre Dame de Jamhour – all were among the country’s best Christian educational institutions, all catered for the children of the bourgeoisie, and all were run by the Maronite Church: see al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, I, p. 106.
community: only if the “right consciousness” is achieved individually, can society develop into something bigger. Thus, the idea of a rebellious youth encompasses utopian elements, far surpassing its immediate sociological sources.

Another result of these changes was the replacement of the old idea of Platonic friendship between adolescent boys with a harsher camaraderie, upheld by group control and self-discipline (Skovgaard-Petersen 2005, p. 23; Wien 2005, pp. 11f.). This strong emphasis on masculinity blended youthful rebellion with the nation’s normativity in the vigorous and forceful Lebanese and Christian identity endorsed by both al-Kata’ib and the Lebanese Forces, in, as Sune Haugbolle fittingly dubs it, a “Muscular Maronitism.” Its combination of youthfulness, forcefulness, awakening, and clarity resembles those strikingly typical topoi of the Zionist self-image (Haugbolle 2013, pp. 208f.). It includes the deeply modernist longing for unambiguousness (Bauman 1994, pp. 143-169 and 2001, pp. 281-297), resembling Zionism’s yearning to escape “from eternal wandering, merchandising, and intellectualizing … and was to become whole again in body and mind, as well as in nationality.” (Erikson 1969, p. 160, emphasis in the original) That longing to become “whole” reflected a suffering from human estrangement in modern, industrial society91 as well as a failure to live up to individual expectations of strength. In Europe this tendency was strongly aggravated by the crises after World War I, in the Middle East by the colonial encounter and the frailty of the newborn states. Moreover, for young Christian Lebanese weakness also meant the same feelings of past vulnerability that haunted Zionists and runs throughout the Phalanges’ writings.

It is within this broader context also that the Phalanges’ origins have to be sought. They started out as a youth movement, aiming to call in the young to “save” the country, to do away with what they considered “old” or representing the “wandering and merchandising” Lebanon, the weak country “split in itself,” in desperate need of “existence” (wujud), “virility” (hayawiyyah), “unity” (wahdah), “independence” (’istiqlal), and “vigor” (’unfawaniyyah), for “raising its position among the higher developed nations.” (Sharaf 1979, p. 102)

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91 What has been aptly grasped by the provocative request to see the Nazis as “citizens” looking for a solution to the “Social Question,” quoted in Bauman 1997, p. 5.
3. **VISITING BERLIN AND FASCISM AS A TANGIBLE SYMBOLISM**

“Organizing” (*tanzim*) the Lebanese to stimulate patriotic feeling, “communitarizing” (*tajam‘u* or *jam‘a*) and “instructing” (*ta‘alim*) were designated, in what seems to have been the first political speech ever delivered in public by Pierre Gemayel, as Lebanon’s fundamental necessities (cf. Sha’aban 2000, p. 145). This triad of “organizing, communitarizing, and instructing” was repeated innumerable times as the basis for bringing in a new Lebanon “by serving the fatherland, the development of patriotic feeling, the coalescence of generations torn apart,” which could not be done other than by the young Lebanese breaking with their old lives (Sharaf 1979, p. 102). This “training” was thus not only understood as an intellectual education in the traditional way: the first activity the newly founded Phalanges organized after the inaugural session of their central committee was paramilitary-style physical exercises, led by a former French–Lebanese officer on a sports ground at Furn ash-Shubbak, near Beirut (Sharaf 1979, pp. 70ff.; R. Haddad 1993, pp. 31ff.). This all-encompassing “conception of order” (*fikrah at-tanzim*) did not spring from the will to form a party, but rather from those free-time activities that the founders were involved in, seen by them as providing “sporting morality” and “magnanimity” as well as “blind loyalty,” both needed for “serving the common good” (Sharaf 1979, p. 101). Already in 1922, Pierre Gemayel had followed a global trend – in 1920 the First World Scout Jamboree had been organized in London – by joining the scouting movement and, together with a friend, founding a branch in his hometown Bikfaya, slightly to the east of Beirut (Sharaf 1979, p. 98; R. Haddad 1993, p. 63).

The immediate impetus to form a new organizational vehicle had been a visit to Berlin in 1936. Gemayel himself explained in an interview with British journalist Robert Fisk:

> I was the captain of the Lebanese football team and the president of the Lebanese football team. ... We went to the Olympic Games of 1936 in Berlin. And I saw then this discipline and order. And I said to myself: “Why can’t we do the same thing in Lebanon?” So, when we came back to Lebanon, we created this youth movement. ... When I was in Berlin then, Nazism did not have the reputation, which it has now. ... Nazism? In every system in the world, you can find something good. But Nazism was not Nazism at all. The word came afterwards. In their system, I saw discipline. And we in the Middle East, we need discipline more than anything else. (Fisk 1990, p. 65)

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92 Together with his deputy in the Lebanese Football Association, Hussein Sija’an, ‘Abd as-Sitar Tarabulsi, director for sports at the AUB, and Rashad al-Barbir. Pryce-Jones 1989, p. 201 falsely claims that he had attended a NSDAP rally at Nuremberg.
It remains highly doubtful whether Gemayel really had no idea about Fascism and no basic convictions when embarking upon his tour to Berlin, as his partisans claim (Sha‘aban 2000, p. 144). Certainly he had, already back in his schooldays, engaged in politics, when he joined the Lebanese Union Party (Hizb al-‘Ittihad al-Lubnaniyy) (Ibid., pp. 141f.). Another member of this rather loosely knit party was Youssef as-Sawda, who in the early 1920s had founded his own paramilitary organization, the Movement of Competition (Harakah as-Sibaqah). Later, in 1944, Sawda’s men joined the Phalanges (Saghiyyah 1991, p. 47). Sheikh Youssef Gemayel, one of Pierre Gemayel’s relatives and a signatory of al-Kata’ib’s founding declaration, had joined this organization, which had in 1921 opened its first branch in Bikfaya. It was a paramilitary scouting organization. as-Sawda had encountered scouting in Egypt, where the first movement of that kind had been founded in 1914. In 1921 he established his first group at Bikfaya, and giving it a flag, a Lebanese cedar on white fabric. The name refers to the vanguard of Emir Fakhr ad-Din II’s army (see Haroun 1979, p. 141, FN 7). Somewhat treacherously, one Phalangist source indicates Sawda’s closeness to Italian Fascism, while also quoting Pierre Gemayel as having said that he had learned his patriotism from his ancestors and Youssef as-Sawda (Sha‘aban 2000, p. 146). The latter advocated a break with the traditional past of “mixing faith and nationalism” by constructing a contemporary fiction of Lebanon as an ancient nation formed by the “Phoenician civilization,” culturally set apart from its neighbors. Yet, having been allied with Béchara al-Khoury, he maintained contact with Muslims and opposed Émile Eddé’s calls for a renewed Christian “Petit Liban” in parliament (Sharaf 1979, pp. 67, 75f.). Emphasizing the development of a patriotic spirit by sports and scouting (Haroun 1979, p. 121), he kept in contact with the Italian mission at Beirut, as did the Maronite bishops ‘Abd-Allah al-Khoury and Ignace Mubarak (Nordbruch 2009, p. 91). These relations were not necessarily based on ideological similarities, but on tactical motivations, as shown by the fact that the clerics were fierce rivals, whereas the Italians, while promoting themselves as guarantors of a Christian Lebanon, never hesitated to court Muslims as well; not least by Mussolini himself, wielding the “Sword of Islam” in

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93 Sawda later on founded another organization, al-Jabha al-Qaumiyyah (the Nationalist Front); it conceived itself as a vehicle for “preparing the youth for military service” (which did not exist in Lebanon at these times): see Sharaf 1979, pp. 55f.

94 Sha‘aban 2000, p. 146 says 1921 and confusingly calls it a “party”; Shawkat ‘Ishtiyy (1997a, p. 441) dates its founding (wrongly) to 1923.

95 The same quotation, without the reference to Italian Fascism, can also be found in Sharaf 1979, p. 97.
Italian Libya: Ironically, the sword he used during a visit to Tripoli in 1937 had been forged by a Tuscan Jew (Pargeter 2012, p. 27).96

Consequently, Pierre Gemayel was probably not the blank sheet he liked to claim he was (Sharaf 1979, p. 101), but in fact had a preexisting disposition to be impressed by the demonstration of strength he saw in Germany. Allegedly, he already had at least an interest in European youth organizations, among them the Slavic Sokoli (Falcons), and also the Hitler Youth at that time (Nordbruch 2009, p. 52). Obviously it would have been difficult for any foreign observer to see behind the glittering facades of the 1936 Olympic Games, let alone to predict Auschwitz; but the young Lebanese footballer with no clue about what was really going on in Germany in the 1930s is certainly a useful myth. Germany and Italy had been widely perceived by the Middle Eastern public as providing a “much more tangible symbolism” (Wien 2005, p. 14) than liberalism. The Arabophone press, at least, was fascinated by the symbolic power of 1936. Rashad al-Barbir, who had traveled to Berlin with Gemayel, reported enthusiastically about the atmosphere; the Lebanese physical instructor ‘Arif al-Habbal had already been to Germany a year before, in 1935. In 1936, during the Olympic Games, he also visited a Hitler Youth training camp, reporting enthusiastically about it in an-Nahar newspaper (Nordbruch 2009, pp. 51f.).

In general, a good many similar paramilitary organizations arose in the mid-1930s in the Middle East in general, and in Greater Syria in particular: Fakhri al-Barudi formed the Iron Shirts in Syria as a youth wing for the Kutlah Wataniyyah;97 in Lebanon, President Émile Eddé in 1936 approved the formation of the White Shirts to attract Maronite youths into the Hizb al-Wahdah al-Lubnaniyyah, heavily supported by Maronite Patriarch Antonius ‘Aridhah (Zamir 1997, p. 233; Traboulsi 2007, p. 102). They all adapted a similar set of symbols – the uniforms, the greeting resembling the Fascist salute, the discipline, the leadership cult, the rhetoric, etc. – which, as an ensemble, cannot have been accidental, as Christoph Schumann (2004, p. 175) noted in connection with the SSNP, another of these “shirt parties,” whose appearance “marked a distinct character within the existing spectrum of local forces … they combined activism with an elitist outlook … filling a void that was neither accessible to traditional notable politics, nor to the Qabadayat, the uneducated gang leaders and strongmen of the old-town quarters.” (Nordbruch 2009, pp. 47ff., italic in the original)

96 Generally spoken, Italian Fascism embarked rather later upon the anti-Semitism that was fundamental to its German counterpart.
97 Not to be confused with Eddé’s party, bearing the same name; on the Syrian organizations see Nordbruch 2009, pp. 48–51 and Watenpaugh 2002, pp. 325–347.
This is also true for the Phalanges. Whereas the first symbol shown below was, as far as I know, never used by Lebanese Phalangists, but was invented by American right-wing extremists, the second picture is, instead, a striking example of such a symbolic appropriation. It shows an al-Kata’ib unit passing Pierre and Bashir Gemayel in a parade during the civil war. The flag displayed is a close copy of the standards used by the German Luftwaffe during World War II, but with the colors changed and cedars added. This near-total congruence cannot be accidental. The khaki shirts (worn in a fashion resembling French than German military traditions), the salute, the designation of the chairman as “leader” (qa’id) – all this is far from being a mere coincidence, even if we admit that the Hitler salute indeed originated in the “Olympic salute” chosen by Baron de Coubertin (R. Haddad 1993, p. 27). The sum of all details simply is too much.

Bashir Gemayel, one of Pierre Gemayel’s sons, later to rise to prominence during the war, at least acknowledged having read Mein Kampf in his youth, and in Achrafieh, the party’s stronghold, observers witnessed a remarkable accumulation of SS graffiti during the civil war (Kuderna 1983, p. 116). Lyna Elias, a former LF functionary working closely with Bashir Gemayel, in an “open letter” (L. Elias 2009) to Bashir’s son Nadim Gemayel, spoke about the youthful Bashir Gemayel as an unruly young enthusiast who lacked proper supervision by his parents. Allegedly, a former friend of the latter had recounted to her several of his transgressions related to Fascism.

Picture 2
This symbol has, as far as I know, been never used by the Lebanese Phalanges; it was invented by American extremists operating as “Phalanges”: https://tinyurl.com/ycxbe3t2, rev. 2015-05-15.
Notwithstanding all references, these parties stood for meaningful, symbolic appropriations (Schumann 2004, pp. 175f.). They indeed adopted symbols, concepts, and narratives that had been taken from Western Fascist models, while omitting other elements, as suited their situation.

Foremost, states such as Germany, Italy, and Spain were seen as weak by their respective Fascist movements. At the least, a considerable number of their Middle Eastern counterparts agreed with that diagnosis, feeling that it was similar weakness that had brought their own countries under the influence of Western powers, especially since they shared the same enemies: France, Great Britain, and, increasingly, the Jewish population in Palestine. But the sharing of enemies alone is an inadequate explanation (see generally on that topic: Marston 1959; Krämer 2006; Wildangel 2007; Achcar 2010). In a deeper sense, mending rifts by instilling some “spirit,” to unify a country weakened by ‘inqisamat (divisions) (Sharaf 1979, pp. 101f.), and the strong emphasis on the nation as a community forged by destiny and culture, is probably the strongest parallel with the Phalanges’ Spanish namesakes, which were likewise haunted by their country’s powerful centrifugal forces (see: Böcker 1996, pp. 37-45).
The name alone, of course, was treacherous. It was only after 1945 that the Arabic version al-Kata’ib al-Lubnaniyyah prevailed in their documents, as John Entelis has argued (Entelis 1974, pp. 61f.), although I have never tried to verify his claim by checking all instances. At least the French name emerged first. That is indeed the sole indicator of foreign references, since Kata’ib had been used for other organizations too. There are several versions of the name’s origin put about by the party: One of the party founders traced the word “Phalanges,” originally in French, back to Georges Naccaché, a journalist and co-founder. The Central Committee thereafter translated it into Arabic. Another version claimed that it first contained the Arabic singular Katibah, designating a quadratic military formation, until someone introduced its French equivalent as an allusion to Hannibal’s Carthaginian (Phoenician!) armies (f.e. the discussions in: Sharaf 1979, p. 70, FN 16; Nantet 1986, p. 40). The version considered most likely by the most detailed party historiography is that the French name was originally an intuition to Pierre Gemayel’s father Amin Sr., which the already mentioned Youssef as-Sawda possibly translated into Arabic during the second meeting of the central committee at Sawda’s house on 23 October 1936 (Sharaf 1979, p. 70, FN 16). The French name as a possible translation of the Spanish “Falange,” interestingly even preceding the Arab concept, is, of course, another hint, which is too obvious to be purely accidental. The name is said to be connected the founders’ Catholic upbringing (Sharaf 1979, p. 79, FN 16, Nantet 1986, pp. 19f.). Why a Catholic education should have been helpful in choosing this name above all others is not explained. If it were just about having been inspired by Catholicism, “Heavenly Host” or something like might have been just as good a choice as a name for a paramilitary group. And why does it sound plausible that a Catholic upbringing led to the founding of such an organization rather than a prayer circle?

Obviously, the name and its relationship to Spanish Fascism must have been known to educated young Lebanese, fluent in French and with Catholic backgrounds, founding a paramilitary organization in October 1936, four months after the start of the Spanish Civil War (on July 17/18). The murderous anticlericalism of the Spanish Republicans, surely not attractive for any devout Christian, was widely covered internationally, especially the famous photo of the “execution of the Sacred Heart” taken in August 1936 on the Cerro de los Ángeles near Madrid. All in all, 6,832 members of the Catholic clergy did not survive the war in the Republican Zone (de la Cueva 1998). Interestingly, on the other side of the political

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98 Gilbert Achcar 2010, pp. 78ff. seems to have based his recent assertion that the Kata’ib was close to Clerical Fascism primarily on the name, since no further indicators are offered.

99 For example, the Kata’ib ash-Shabab organized from 1941 on by the Arab nationalist Yunis as-Siba’awiyy: see Jeha 2004, pp. 316f.
spectrum, leftists from Greater Syria followed the war in Spain closely, regarding it as a fundamental cornerstone of their political identities; some even volunteered for the International Brigades (Hanna 1975, pp. 61-73, 79ff.).

Indeed, the Catholic upbringing is a good hint. France had been, back then, a deeply divided nation herself, torn apart by the question of how to see the French Revolution, and taking the role of Catholicism in French society and politics as one central cleavage line. A militant Catholic “Nationalisme intégral” grew up among young academics. It intensified after the Dreyfuss Affair and the attempts of the Waldeck-Rousseau and Combes governments to enforce laicism, and even more when Léon Blum became in 1936 the first Jewish Prime Minister in France, allying himself with the Communists. “Intégrisme” (“integralism” in English) signified authoritarian, personalist leadership in an “organic”, unified nation confident of its Catholic cultural superiority, providing for a mental bulwark against the “chaos” of individualism and modernism (Nguyen 1991). The foremost organizational outlet was the Action Française (AF)\(^\text{100}\), which also inspired Spanish Fascism in its open embrace of Catholic symbolisms, like similar movements in Portugal, Brazil, Belgium, Yugoslavia (Croatia), and Poland (Feldman 2008), which differed from secular Fascism primarily “in their distinct socioeconomic strategies and cultural formulae.” (Payne 1987, p. 49) One of AF’s few parliamentarians, Maurice Barrès, had visited Lebanon in 1914, before the war. In a small booklet published after the war he praised the camaraderie he had enjoyed there with the French Jesuit instructors, and expressed his hope in their Maronite students to help in re-Christianizing a Europe he thought of as having already lost its faith:\(^\text{101}\)

> “So, here is that beacon of the oriental Mediterranean! What a lesson of magnanimity these religious people offer us! … Well, they aren’t part of France anymore! They [rather] create one. They go off on morally conquering the Levant . … These Jesuits, whom innumerable libels have accused to do damage to the lights of civilization’s progress, turn out to be most capable in civilizing these vast regions of the Orient. … Most flexible, for never being the organization of a state, less vulnerable to discouraging temptations, they succeed by a long series of experimentations in introducing occidental discipline into the Orient. … Ah! The eyes of these young Asians, easily to be seduced by everything that shines. … How I embrace the smallest [among them], what an enthusiasm among all of

\(^{100}\) Nolte 1965 in a deep analysis of antimodernist thinking, saw the AF as one sort of Fascism; Eugen Weber 1963, p. 134f. saw similarities and categorized both ideologies as being different. I chose Nolte’s approach as being more analytical.

\(^{101}\) A street in Beirut (Zokak el-Blat-quarter) named after him documented his positive reception among Catholic clergymen and many Christian Lebanese; the street has since been renamed Rue Amin-Beyhoum.
them. One would like to make use of such souls risen up. … Ah! The Middle East's spiritual sap is [still] not exhausted!” (Barrès 1923, pp. 33, 36, 116, my translations).

We see elements of exactly this orientalist discourse as a byproduct of the education Pierre Gemayel had himself undergone at the Jesuit University at Beirut:

“We Orientals are, by nature, an unruly and individualistic people. In Germany I witnessed the perfect conduct of a whole, unified nation.” (Quoted in: Entelis 1974, pp. 13ff.)

Having been banned at home, like other Catholic orders, “intégrisme” was popular among the francophone Jesuits of those days (E. Weber 1962, pp. 219-228), although Charles Maurras, its intellectual father, had been first indexed in 1926, then excommunicated by the Pope in 1927. And their students obviously responded positively. Hector Klat, a Lebanese Christian poet and publicist, in one of his poems credits his religious teachers with a “good fight” (bon combat), “enlightening the ignorant children” by virtually “reconquering the Orient seriously and unpolished.” (Klat 1970, p. 22) Klat himself as a student was chosen by the “Frères” to recite one of his earlier poems at Barrès’ reception (Ibid., p.p. 25f.). His writings on French warfare in World War I are packed with enthusiastic praise of the “Grande Nation” and her alleged civilizing mission (Ibid., pp. 54ff., 60ff.):

“Salute! Soldiers of the right and freedom,
Soldiers of France!
Salute! You have always, everywhere brought along
Relief!
You, that have picked up in your colors the azure,
Brave and calm ones,
Having set them up on the summits of the future,
Like palm-trees!
You that never had keen ears to interests

102 The Jesuits were frequently expelled from or prohibited in France: first from 1584 till 1603, then in 1763, 1828, 1880, and again in 1901.
103 Greek Orthodox by birth, but lifelong much influenced by his Catholic educational upbringing.
104 In his case, from the order of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.
The appalling appeal,
But whose role was to sow progress
Throughout the world!
...
But of all those countries anxiously following
This campaign,
No one watches out with keener eyes
Than my Mountain.” (Ibid., pp. 60, 62)

The author even calls France “Notre-Dame-of-the-oppressed,” thereby alluding to the Catholic-inspired discourses the French extreme right used for locating France’s role in a broader civilizational context:

“Our Lady of the oppressed, O holy France,
You whose heart is all love;
Martyr who wants to forget your suffering,
To rush to rescue of the other martyrs and for
Redoubling the gratitude
That the small countries already hold for you;
O Madonna to whom they raise the prayer
...
O our Lady of the miserable, ah! Be blessed,
O generous nation
By all the people in agony
...
Also, out of the deepest of our despair,
Let us feel our prayer to your heaven, O France,
Dove who holds out to us the branch of hope,
Rising from our hearts as from a thurible:
France, in which the ideal incarnates itself,
Our Lady of the lily flower,
You have saved the world on the bank of the Marne,
...
Our Lady of the victory!” (Ibid., pp. 95-98)

How deeply these Jesuit ideas and some Maronite self-conceptions had blended together could be seen from an allusion to Barrès’ motif of the “Orient’s spiritual sap” in a speech Bashir Gemayel gave before French guests, although ironically they were former Résistance veterans who would have probably been not too enthusiastic about a motif taken from Barrès’ or his clerical allies:

“The rejuvenation of the Christian Orient will emanate from us. Our “immoderateness” ... is nothing else than our unwavering belief that it is our fate and our determination to remain free. This is our struggle’s deeper sense. And this is why we, far from constituting Western Christianity’s last Byzantium, as one happens to say, we feel that we are the Western soul’s ‘New Jerusalem’.” (B. Gemayel 1980, p. 18)

The quotation, of course, stems from later times, it has been held during the civil war, but it aptly illustrates how much the speaker could actually base himself upon the kind of Catholic education he had received, which he obviously assumed was familiar to his interlocutors, and constituted common ground between them.

After World War II some of these sources of inspiration would be simply inappropriate for any purposes beyond the fringes of society. The more or less official sources therefore had to propagate another narrative: they traced the decisive influence on Pierre Gemayel back to the Slavic nationalist Sokol (Falcon) movement (as claimed, inter alia, in: Pakradouni 1967, p.
However, this particular origin is highly unlikely. The snag with Pierre Gemayel’s acquaintance with the Sokoli is basically that few details are known about it.

The journey to Berlin had allegedly been primarily for practical reasons. That is not unlikely. As the president of the Lebanese football federation, and organizing an increasingly popular game in a footballing terra incognita, Pierre Gemayel wanted to learn about the most recent training methods. His first stop was Vienna, where he visited Admira Wacker Wien, an Austrian football club, which he wanted to persuade to visit Lebanon (Sharaf 1979, p. 100).

How exactly Gemayel had encountered the Sokoli on this trip is unclear, but it was allegedly at a demonstration (Sha’aban 2000, p. 144), so it must have been in Austria or Czechoslovakia. One “Oberto Chris,” a name certainly not of Czech origin, is said to have established contacts for Gemayel (Nantet 1986, pp. 33ff.; Reich 1990, p. 203). What he actually understood about their ideas remains likewise obscure. As far as I could verify from asking Phalangist academics off the record, he spoke neither Czech nor German. The Sokoli’s underlying ideological framework was almost exclusively written in Slavic languages, and some texts were translated into German. No Phalangist source elaborates more than basic lexical knowledge of the movement, in the full sense of the word: the “History of the Lebanese Phalanges Party” simply cites an article from the French Larousse encyclopedia, a source interestingly also referred to by Entelis’ work on al-Kata’ib, the first work on the subject to come up to international scientific standards. Since it had been published a few years before the party’s own history, the reference was, most probably, simply copied from it. Compared to the elements that are similar to Fascism – the name, the salute, the cult of the leader – that is truly meager. The only thing ever reported on them seems to be that they emphasized “national rebirth” and paramilitary sports. The Sokoli were presented as a sports-based “liberation movement,” which rebelled against the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s

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105 But the author gives no details and no source. Richard Haddad’s work (1993, pp. 64f.) is likewise no help: he simply relies heavily on Jean Sharaf’s (1979) historiography, up to the point of more or less translating whole passages into French without questioning them and without acknowledging their source.
106 Pierre Gemayel’s former close assistant Joseph Abou Khalil also proved unable to substantiate anything on this encounter: interview, 2012-07-18. Antoine Najm could not produce any further details on the journey and how Gemayel actually could have understood the Sokoli (interview, 2012-07-20).
107 In 1974, the Tarikh Hizb al-Kata’ib al-Lubnaniyyah only dealt with the party’s history till 1967; the first volume is without a date of publication, but the library of the German Orient-Institute in Beirut dates it to 1979 (and also R. Haddad 1993), five years after Entelis’ work, to which it refers frequently.
108 Entelis reports a few questions on the Sokoli’s transferability, allegedly considered by Gemayel during his trip. The problem is rather that they were all formulated ex-post, prevalent in the party’s official narratives, and absolutely without any details on the actual reception of Sokoli thought. They are instead centered on the question of a Lebanese “rebirth”: see Entelis 1974, pp. 46f.
Habsburg dynasty, using the unifying mass sports to melt down society’s internal differences in a nation reborn (Sharaf 1979, p. 103). These brief references are literally all that there is of relevance. Entelis reports a few questions on the Sokoli’s transferability, allegedly considered by Gemayel during his trip. The problem is rather that they were all formulated ex-post, prevalent in the party’s official narratives, and absolutely without any details on the actual reception of Sokolist thought. They are instead centered on the question of a Lebanese “rebirth” (see Entelis 1974, pp. 46f.). Admittedly, neither Miroslav Tyrš nor Jindřich Fügnner, the most prominent of the Sokolist writers, were really well known outside the Slavic nationalist movements, especially their Czech variant: their thinking emphasized human self-perfection to bring about Slavic emancipation. It was strongly influenced by a peculiar take on Darwin, to revive an alleged “organic” Slavic democracy, said to have been subdued by “foreign” feudalism. Obviously not everything ever written on them was, as of 1979, available to the Phalangists (see Glettler 1970, pp. 64-69). How much insight Pierre Gemayel had into the Young Czechs has been much obscured: most probably he simply met some of them, possibly he observed one of their rallies, but that is it. Obviously, he had a far larger knowledge of Fascism. However, other Fascist elements (see: Nolte 1965) had no place in his thinking.

Admittedly, the Phalanges did not exclude violence from their brand of politics. However, they did not indulge in the feverish cult of violence so typical of Fascism. The decade between 1912 and 1922 had created a climate of violence and fear in the Ottoman Empire probably only matched in Russia (Kieser, Öktem and Reinkowski 2015; Hofmann 2016), but the Lebanese Christians had not been part of the fighting and lacked the active front-line experience of World War I or the Spanish war in Africa. To the contrary, commemorating the famine of 1915 in Greater Syria was largely undertaken in a passive way, lacking the glory of employing violence actively (al-Qattan 2015). Phalangist thought therefore reflected a good deal of the muscular anti-intellectualism comprised therein, yet they refrained from employing it in the kind of creative violent nihilism proposed by literature on the war experience (most prominently: Jünger 1922) or Italian futurism (see Hans 2015).

Expansionist foreign policies, some kind of “Phoenician Empire,” were never mentioned. Of course, they imposed their own limitations, given Lebanon’s small size. Antisemitism is said to have been repugnant to Pierre Gemayel (Nantet 1986, pp. 33ff.), and indeed, al-Kata’ib has

109 And, notwithstanding his acute inability to process the relevant literature on the genocide of the Christian minorities during World War I, but with an impressive insight into the traumatizing experiences of Muslims in the “long nineteenth century,” McCarthy, 2014.
a limited Jewish membership and small but important electoral support from the country’s decreasing community of Jews (Suleiman 1967a, pp. 78, 240; Hudson 1968, pp. 48f., FN 28; Entelis 1974, pp. 110ff.; Eisenberg 1992, p. 154, FN 22.). I found no Antisemitism in their writings.

Anti-Marxism as a typical trait of Fascism is important insofar as al-Kataʾib were clearly opposed to Communism: A graffito from civil war East Beirut, controlled by the Phalanges/LF, declared: “Vaccinate your children against the left international” (Traboulsi 1999, p. 144). Yet it was not to them of the same importance as it was for European Fascists, for whom it provided a major raison d’être (Nolte 1965). Collaboration between the Axis powers and al-Kataʾib during World War II cannot be proved. Italy did at least contact the Phalangist Supreme Leadership after the French military disaster of 1940 – interestingly via Youssef as-Sawda (Nordbruch 2009, p. 91). But, when the war broke out, al-Kataʾib contributed instead to civil defense in what was still French-run Lebanon. This did not change when Pétain’s Vichy government secured a hold on Lebanon (R. Haddad 1993, pp. 152-166). While the Phalanges did not utilize terror and rioting, their language, to be sure, was initially aggressive, self-assertive, and contemptuous towards their political opponents, especially the old elites. Furthermore, they obviously adopted Fascism’s and Catholic countermodernity’s contempt for the mercantile, with a strong prejudice against the “establishment.”

4. STANDING OVER THE “PETTY STRUGGLES”
In contrast to Antun Saʿadeh, the Phalanges did not explicitly call for a totalitarian state as an institutional alternative to the liberal state. Officially they argued later that what had put them off from embracing more elements of Fascism had been the latter’s emphasis on the “nation’s administration as a theoretical, conceptualized unity.” (Sharaf 1979, pp. 103, 239) The nation could, according to them, never be an “omnipotent being.” (P. Gemayel 1948, p. 70) However, possibly very much impressed by the well-ordered mass games he witnessed on his journey to Berlin, Pierre Gemayel initially did not speak about the individual but about the “whole”: he enthused about discipline, about “blind obedience” (at-taʾah al-ʾamiyaʾ), as a precondition for “the youth.” There is nowhere any suggestion that this “youth” would have been anything other than unified and unanimous, willing to subordinate itself to the common good. The democracy he aspired should have been “ordered and disciplined.” (P. Gemayel 1948, p. 4) This lacks the outspoken will to create a totalitarian state, and does not exclude the
concept of the individual as a person, but the emphasis is surely not on individualism. That becomes even clearer when taking their internal framework into consideration.

When the Phalanges were founded, they were organized into military units. Membership was only for “morally suitable” males, and applicants were required to be physically fit in order to enter their ranks; wearing a uniform was mandatory. Accession to the party is still organized as a solemn ceremony, the taking of an oath on principles, country, and flag and receiving a membership card in return (Entelis 1974, p. 103; Ishtiyy, 1997a, pp. 366-370; 1997b, p. 86; 2006, p. 63; Interviews with partisans). The Phalanges saw themselves as a “compact mass, homogenous, animated by the same faith, the same patriotism, the same spirit of sacrifice and abnegation, the same enthusiasm of the first hour,” as an “ardent and disciplined troop,” led by a “young chef, vigilant and brave,” (P. Gemayel 1948, pp. 38, 28) This “Supreme Leader” (or Supreme President/Supreme Head) nominated functionaries directly, after consulting the subordinate units that the nominee would have to lead, generated commissions, and appointed the top echelon of officers without further consultation (Entelis 1973b and 1974, p. 85). The whole scheme was adopted soon after the organization was founded. One account claims that adherents of al-Khoury and Eddé had clashed inside the party. The solution was to strengthen the leader (R. Haddad 1993, pp. 57ff.). These apologetics simply fail to differentiate between their Supreme Leader during the founding years and the Duce or Führer. Instead, Pierre Gemayel is said not to have been the “compromise” between some “interests,” of “fatiguing intrigues and long-lasting electoral campaigns” (P. Gemayel 1948, pp. 54f.); rather, his genius revealed itself and – in a manner quite typical of the pre- and inter-war cult of the charismatic genius (Bolz 1983) – was spontaneously recognized without any tit-for-tat-businesses. To live as one, something “great and beautiful” needs to be done: voluntarily accepting strict discipline, moral, “inner order,” a “just and respected authority.” Obstacles ahead necessitate “mains libres” for the leader – instead of bickering about details, he needs to exercise his power (P. Gemayel 1948, pp. 54f.). That fits well into the regional generational discursive structure of expecting a leader to be a savior (Wien 2004).

Moreover, it resembles in the context of a global referential framework, very much fitting in with Fascism’s drive for overcoming “petty peddling” by the absolute sovereignty of the

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110 Details on the party’s various organizational structures could be found in Sharaf 1979, pp. 248–74.
111 Compare that to the Romanian Fascist Vasile Marin claiming that “Vote-catching maneuvers do not allow for selection, because the masses lack the instinct of the hierarchy of values. … The universal vote has … the immense fault of creating parties, all ordered according to materialistic considerations. …,” quoted in Ornea 1999, p. 44.
common good. Hierarchy, loyalty to the autonomous leader, and command authority as against liberal functionality – the ideal of a community simply stood at the roots of the early twentieth-century's youth movements as well as of Fascism (Bracher 1964, pp. 131f.). According to Robert Wohl (1980, p. 62):

“All of them disliked parties of the traditional type based on “interest” and favored “organic” forms of political organization, in which leaders were not elected directly by the mass but emerged spontaneously and naturally from the body of their immediate followers.”

What it means to be a “shirt party” is probably best illustrated by the Phalangist notion that the organization, back then already officially a party, stood for “the people,” “… or of what it has to be.” (al-ʿAmal 1977, appendix 2, p. 102) The notion implies that an objective identity as Lebanese is required from Lebanon’s inhabitants. It quite strikingly resembles Nolte’s “the fatherland refashioned,” arguing that the Clerical Fascist Action Française’s conception of France did not deal with the “real French”: “… For just as the hunting field may have to be protected from the hunters, so France is not identical with the French population. …” (Nolte 1965, p. 105) We could relate that to “governmentality” (Foucault 1991, pp. 87-104): an expectation of what the demos should be. Foremost, it should acquire unity. Paramilitary organizational forms were thereby seen as a first step, as “precursors of a national rebirth,” (Sharaf 1979, p. 232) and sports as a means of a “rational instruction of physical culture” (P. Gemayel 1948, p. 3):

“Their goal is essentially NATIONAL: they [the Phalanges, C. T.] endeavor to form a Lebanese Nation, conscious of its duties and its rights, in an independent and sovereign state. For this purpose, they seek to form citizens, holding a national ideal; to prepare the young ones to fulfill all their civic obligations according to the notions of fatherland and family; to develop in them a sense of devotion and the spirit of sacrifice, of discipline and mutual aid; to instill in its adherents the feeling of honor, of duty and loyalty; to form their character and to accustom them to tolerance and absolute respect of others' liberties.”

( Ibid.)

The Phalangist founders had mostly attended schools and universities (mostly the Université Saint-Joseph [USJ]) run by Catholic orders, often by the Jesuits (see: Verdeil 2011). Their students came more or less from a socially coherent stratum – bourgeois and mostly Christian (Schumann 2001b, p. 188). Despite playing a crucial role in the efforts of the French to promote a Lebanese nationalism, these institutions differed in a decisive point from other colonial schools: normally, the colonizers taught their history, here they spread a reading of
history with the active participation of the colonized (Kaufman 2001, p. 177 and 2004a, p. 238). Mirroring their founders’ self-conception as “God’s soldiers,” they employed an exceptionally high degree of discipline. They prohibited, for example, bringing in books from the outside, limiting individualism to a minimum (Schumann 2001b, pp. 188f.). At least one important Phalangist functionary, Joseph Abou Khalil, himself a former student of the USJ, once tellingly compared his entry into the party with consecrating his life in a monastic order (‘Ishtiyy 1997a, p. 429). Hisham Sharabi’s autobiography, when dealing with his life as a student, describes what he, like many others of his generation, revolted against:

“The power of the professor resembled the power of the father over his sons. It was imposed from above, neither accepting opposition, nor criticism. ... All my teachers were a source of confidence, not knowing [any] doubt taking hold of their hearts. They used to enter the classroom with the confidence of an officer entering the barracks. ... This room was their barracks ... here their power was absolute and they had the last word.” (Sharabi 1988, pp. 26f.)

Ironically, despite being “revolutionary” by intention, the educational practices already at work in these times were copied and put into action: so to say, these self-claimed revolutionaries wanted to choose their own officers entering their recently set-up paramilitary camps – Sharabi himself joined the SSNP and adored its leader, Antun Sa’adeh.

We could object that all members joined these organizations voluntarily. Not initially part of the country’s ruling establishment, these organizations had no coercive means of clientelism at their disposal. Yet, the problem here results from transferring the patterns of common camp-life, situated within the sociological lifeworld, into the systemic realm of political organizations, as Dietrich Bracher has argued in the cases of a number of youth organizations that tried to do this (Bracher 1964, pp. 115ff., 129-133). The Phalanges, in a striking self-proclaimed contrast to standard patterns of behavior by Lebanese political parties, are said not to stand for “militant egoism, ... engaging into petty struggles, chicanes and discussions of the details.” The party does not see the whole picture; at best both interests coincide occasionally, and thus, a party cannot distinguish “between the good and the bad.” Out of this inability to name the sole, objective truth, it only “joins the existing organisms,” with all their “nefarious routines,” to be found in contemporary society – instead of educating

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112 Interestingly, both the Spanish Falange and Benito Mussolini used the same metaphor of entering an order with regard to the notion of taking up a position within the organization: see Böcker 1996, p. 55 and FN 300.

113 The Futuwwa in Iraq was state-led, but compulsory since 1939; see Wien, 2006; Achcar 2010, pp. 87f.) attributes far more room for maneuver to them.
it (P. Gemayel 1948, p. 72). The Phalanges, on the other hand, saw themselves as the simulacrum of the ideal Lebanese society. The closeness to elements of Fascist thought becomes obvious when comparing this conception of political activism with the self-characterization of the Spanish Falangists: “We are no political party, the spiritual and physical militias do not live out of public opinion.” (quoted in Böcker 1996, p. 55, FN 301)

This idea of having first to “educate” the Lebanese as part of an “impatient paternalism” of “nursing” society (Saghiyyah 1991) bears the strong danger of finally even overriding liberalism’s institutional framework of the state in order to do so.

The main difference with those offshoots of this fashionable Zeitgeist that finally lapsed into Fascism was that the Phalanges, at least after 1948, emphasized the “training” of society. Thus, the differentiation between state and society is still explicitly upheld but results in an uneasy tension between the “blind obedience” unanimously devoted to the nation (Sharaf 1979, p. 101) and the limits set by “moral and natural law,” “legality,” freedom of conscience, etc. (P. Gemayel 1948, p. 5) Taking over the state was not explicitly theorized as a necessary condition to do politics, and no explicit non-liberal framework was ever proposed to Lebanon as Fascism did, as a core category of its counter-modernity. At least the relative scarcity of accessible original sources out of these early years would not allow for any further-reaching conclusion. Nevertheless, taking over the state could have been an option as an interim to safeguard what they considered to be untouchable resources – with no guarantees of what would have happened then, as the civil war demonstrated several decades later. Thus, pluralism was intended, but was limited. It could, apparently, only have been within the “rationalism” (ʿaqlaniyyah) committed to the “national struggle,” which is

“raised with objectivity, far from [arbitrary] political vagaries and ideological discipleships for putting the homeland on the path of a new development, resulting in man as citizen, [thereby] replacing the insularity of sectarian-bound man. . . . The Phalanges are foremost a movement for the liberation of the individual from the bonds of the plagues, the reactionary customs, and the resignation into the evils of [social] practice in our Lebanese society. Further, the Phalanges are a movement for the societal liberation from ignorance, misery, feudal domination, exploitative companies, tyrannical laws, and all kinds of social oppression, since societal liberation constitutes the first step towards the emergence of the unified society as a base for man as free citizen.” (Sharaf 1979, pp. 106f.)

Calling for union with Syria, as many Islamic organizations did, would have been “irrational” or part of some “vagaries.” It is simply said not to be Lebanese at all (G. Harik 2007, p. 33).
Lebanon as unified and not “split in itself” (munqasim `ala nafsihi; Sharaf 1979, p. 61; al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, I, p. 81) was said not to share its “state of soul, its spiritual principles” with the Arab world (see Suleiman 1967a, p. 248). A “geographical Syria,” as Antun Sa’adeh proposed it, was resolutely rejected, along with an Arab nation to which Lebanon could belong (P. Gemayel 1948, p. 7). Thus, when Lebanese troops were dispatched to the border later on to fight the emerging state of Israel, Pierre Gemayel considered that briefly as an excellent opportunity to take power in Beirut to prevent any further rapprochement with the Arab world (K. E. Schulze 1999, p. 497). If the Lebanese did not know about their Lebanese identity that was because they did not know their “essence.” This “essence” is the Phalangist “untouchable resource,” the one legitimate version of Lebanon, which, if enforced, would render their formulator into formulators of the state – no matter whether or not he theorizes an institutional setting opposed to liberalism. This is not necessarily Fascist; rather, it belongs to an age when intellectuals functioned as self-proclaimed legislators and truth had to be taught. Yet the interface with Fascism was that the idea of forming a society necessitates making ample use of power. Consequently, blueprint utopianism, with its will “to bring about,” has obvious difficulties with granting safety from power. We find it in a similar way among other writings of that time, most radically pointed out in those of Antun Sa’adeh, who rejected the limitation of the leader’s prerogatives by elaborating:

“The corruption in the people and the spiritually corrupted people necessitates reform. This reform cannot be other than from the [deep] inside and it is necessary that the individual splits from it totally and breaks with his [old] atmospheres. This individual necessitates guarantees of the authority against the corruption of the people; it is not the people that needs these guarantees. ... And when we studied the history of the Syrian National Party well and examined carefully the experiences made by it, we found this unlimited power of the leader the sole guarantee for this party’s integrity, which resembles the Syrian nation’s rebirth.” (Sa’adeh n. d., p. 41, italic mine)114

5. BECOMING A PARTY
Of course, this unquestioned objectivism of formulating the “truth” sat uneasily with the idea of forming a party. Exactly that process, taking their shirts gradually off, was by no means

114 Similarly, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the Spanish Falange’s jefe, described the leader’s role as serving his people by serving the nation’s interests, even if “the masses” do not properly know what exactly could be beneficial to them. In short, destiny, not necessarily the plebiscite as such, provides the “common good”: see Böcker 1996, p. 59, FN 324.
uncontested behind the Phalangist façade of organizational uniformity (Entelis 1974, pp. 59-64; ’Ishtiyy 1997a, p. 303). The decisive point was to settle into gradually transforming from a simulacrum of society into one option among others. Nevertheless, the ideas of the founding era remained highly visible within the party, and remained powerful enough to become re-radicalized later on, during the civil war.

Originally, the Phalangists refused to refer to themselves as a party. But they were already somewhat divided about it: Before the Phalanges were officially founded in Pierre Gemayel’s pharmacy, a meeting inside the editorial office of Le Jour decided to establish a full political organization rather than one merely engaged in (paramilitary) training. The first current was represented by Georges Naccaché and Charles Hélou, the latter by Shafiq Nassif. Pierre Gemayel was obviously not present at that gathering. The common denominator proved to be the organization and education of the Lebanese youth (cf. Sharaf 1979, pp. 67ff.; al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, I, pp. 88ff.; R. Haddad 1993, pp. 26f.). Finally they chose to describe themselves as a “movement” or even (public) “life,” imbuing its members with what they needed for being spiritually able to be a Lebanese citizen (Sharaf 1979, p. 280), since “patriotic thinking” was said to be “half-alien” to them (al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, I, p. 85). With regard to elections, they simply claimed that they would not necessarily participate in democracy (Suleiman 1967a, pp. 238ff.); “some balloting” was used as a derogatory notion, which did, for everyone’s best, not restrict their own leader (P. Gemayel 1948, p. 54). Interestingly, the Phalangists nevertheless saw themselves as operating inside the “democratic camp.” (Sharaf 1979, p. 236) Their role therein was to remain

“above the parties and politics. [Since] their intention is uniting the youth, their instruction and organization for the protection, even the advancement of the patriotic sentiment in it.”

(Ibid., p. 68)

When it was originally founded, the Phalanges called itself Munazamah al-Kata’ib al-Lubnaniyyah – the Organization of the Lebanese Phalanges (Suleiman 1967a, p. 233). It seems that in 1948 Elias Rababi, editor-in-chief of al-’Amal, the Phalangist newspaper, first publicly suggested the necessity that it should a party (Sharaf 1979, p. 184). In 1952, under official pressure, the name was changed once again, this time to Hizb Dimuqratiyy Ijtima’iyy (Social Democratic Party), thereby temporarily dropping the word “Phalanges” completely for official purposes to get access to the country’s institutions. Twice dissolved, in 1937 by the French, and in 1949 by the Lebanese, after clashes with the SSNP and port laborers, they adopted for a short time yet another designation, Hizb al-’Ittihad al-Lubnaniyy (Lebanese
Union Party), before switching to Hizb al-Kata’ib al-Lubnaniyyah – a name that was only registered officially by the authorities in 1957 (Suleiman 1967a, pp. 234f.; Entelis 1974, p. 48 and 60, FN6).

The party explained its reasons for entering the game of political parties as being twofold: first, as a reaction to the danger of losing Lebanon’s sovereignty by joining the Arab League in 1945 (P. Gemayel 1948, pp. 14f.; al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, II). However, it also offered a second, more “revolutionary,” explanation: it was a reaction to the repressive capacities of the “men of power”; al-Kata’ib claimed simply to have shifted toward new fields of action. To represent “the people” and to present alternatives by transforming society from inside the system with a “powerful means of combat” (al-wasilah an-nidhaliyyah al-qadirah’ one needed to play at least partly by the already existing rules (Sharaf 1979, pp. 177-186; al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, II, pp. 7ff.).

To demonstrate their newly sought role, the Phalangists entered electoral campaigns. In 1944 Elias Rababi stood in a by-election in Mount Lebanon governorate, but lost (Entelis 1974, pp. 129f.; al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, II, p. 146).115 Nevertheless, the candidate felt it necessary to emphasize that there would be no difference between the party’s possible actions in parliament and those outside the chamber, announcing the “non-political” character of his candidature (Entelis 1974, p. 129). Yet taking part in elections obviously mattered. In 1945 the party tried its luck again. Its language again revolved around “struggle” and “battlefield” (nidhal, ma’arakah, mu’atarak, cf. al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, II, p. 146). Still the Phalanges as a whole freely claimed to be willing to serve the country: through legal electoral means or through violence: “Although we firmly espouse the first method, we do not reject the second.” (quoted in Entelis 1974, p. 130) Or, in another version: “the Kata’ib are from the people and for the people: the sufferings of the people are ours and its will is ours” – therefore, “the other means is resorting to violence.” (P. Gemayel 1948, p. 193) Nevertheless, in 1947 they chose the first way once again, losing because President al-Khoury’s men made ample use of the state’s security apparatus (Entelis 1974, pp. 130f.). The first Phalangist representatives, Albert al-Hajj and Albert Skaff, were elected to the chamber in 1951; Joseph Shadir (Chaderjian) won the Armenian Catholic seat in Beirut I with the official support of the Armenian Catholic Church (Migliorino 2008, p. 95). Pierre Gemayel himself did not make it into parliament until 1960.

115 His opponent, Philippe Taqla, belonged to the professional elite: he was a lawyer by profession, serving several times as foreign minister.
Yet, even when trying to regain its party license, which was intermittently revoked by the government, the Phalangists did not seem to sit really well with “partyism”:

“The Phalanges at this time went through a stage of their life in which they had to face many violent dangers in their journey. And the most important danger was not the confrontation with the Mandatory powers, but rather the mentality of the ruling men, squandering the patriotic values, dividing the citizens into parties and interest groups [sic], C. T.], hiding everything behind dogmata, to exploit the people for the sake of state and rule.” (Sharaf 1979, p. 181)

This narrative remains at its core today. In their newer accounts they continue to remind readers of an apparent contradiction between their “nature as a mass party” and their rejection of “partyism”; the author insists that their aim had allegedly never been to exercise power, but to transform the Lebanese, bound to “ideological” relationships, into a “society” as a necessary precondition of actually having parties for citizens (al-Lahham, Mausuwʿah Hizb al-Kataʾib, I, pp. 207f.; interview Jean Sharaf, TV-series “ʾAhzab Lubnan).

Of course, that “heroic” version of simply and voluntarily choosing a new path is not all — there are many factors, left untold for obvious reasons. The most obvious might be a desire to deny a close relationship with any kind of Fascism. After the war almost all parties dropped their inclination to wear “shirts.” Thus, international discourse did influence political behavior in Lebanon significantly. Second, al-Kataʾib had achieved their foremost objective, an independent Lebanon. Also, the Lebanese government put pressure on them, fearing armed rebellion, which the SSNP started on its behalf in 1949. Therefore, their very existence needed to be re-justified, the organization re-located. The third reason, as John Entelis elaborated, was to gain a hold inside the country’s institutional framework, most importantly to prevent any rapprochement with Syria (Entelis 1974, p. 61; R. Haddad 193, pp. 186ff.). That was all the more relevant since the Phalangists saw the influx of (Muslim) Palestinians into the country as endangering their conception of Lebanon (ʾIshtiyy 1997a, p. 300). Phalangism had always rejected an Arab identity for Lebanon as “unnatural”: Lebanon would belong to an Arabophone Middle East (ʿurubah), but not to a politically understood “Arabism” (ʿurubiyyah) (Khalifah 1983, p. 12). Political unity with the Arab world was thought to equal “Islamic unity,” according to Pierre Gemayel himself: Whoever said “Arab” back then in Lebanon allegedly meant “Muslim,” (Ibid., p. 37) since, as he saw it, Muslims would not be able to differentiate between religious and cultural unity (Mendel and Müller 1987, p. 11).
Nevertheless, the whole process of starting to play according to the already established rules illustrated the structural frameworks’ effectiveness: to adapt to institutions already in place, to fit oneself into an international discourse, to voice in public one’s conceptions against a plethora of “heretics” to assure oneself of what one actually is.

This transformation was also reflected within the internal organizational structure: when the Phalanges were increasingly adapting to the structure of a conventional party, their rigid top-down centralism had to be altered significantly. Ten years later, the still prevalent centralism was further softened by introducing internal elections, institutionalizing reciprocity. At first, not so much changed: the president still had the power to appoint functionaries at will. Yet, by creating a consultative council, this “absolutism” turned towards consultation, which was no longer an option but rather a necessity, prescribed by the organization’s “general regulations” in 1942 (Entelis 1974, pp. 86f.). Then, according to the General Laws of al-Kataʾib from 1956, the party president should be elected by the preceding president, his vice-presidents (currently three), and the members of the Central Council for three years. The General Council, consisting of the Central Council plus a number of other activists, and assembling only every six months, has only advisory functions. The annual Party Assembly is open for every paying member, but only the members of the General Council and the heads of the districts may vote (Suleiman 1967a, p. 237; Entelis 1974, pp. 88-100; Sharaf 1979, pp. 239ff., interview with a party manager, May 2012). Beyond these organizational patterns, one of the most important indicators of a changing role for the Phalanges might have been their program. “The individual has died,” postulated the Spanish Fascist Ledesma Ramos (Böcker 1996, p. 51). Such a bold sentence would have been too much for the Lebanese Phalanges. Fascism’s open contempt for the individual was, as seen above, initially not totally foreign to them, but it was never conceptualized, and it clashed with the idea of a person as conceived in conservative Christian notions of natural law. However, this tension was only theorized after the war, as an important step in the process of transforming into a party.

Of course, the concept of natural law, at least for Catholic teaching at the time, could only be seen from within Catholic morality – there was no possibility for the individual to be located outside it. However, contemporary Catholic concepts of the state were unlikely to be

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116 Originally written in 1952, amended four years later.

117 “Since, then, no one is allowed to be remiss in the service due to God, and since the chief duty of all men is to cling to religion in both its reaching and practice – not such religion as they may have a preference for, but the religion which God enjoins, and which certain and most clear marks show to be the only one true religion – it is a public crime to act as though there were no God …”: Papal Encyclical Immortale Dei [God’s immortal works],
imposed on Lebanon. A good deal of what basically made up integralism was not grasped by Asher Kaufman (2004a, Idem. 2004b, pp. 141-153; Idem. 2004c), who authored probably the most influential studies on the legacies of the French extreme right on Christian Lebanese nationalism: most references to these influences lacked a state conception of integralism.

In the interwar-era the well-known Lebanese Conservative Christian poet Charles Corm published, in honor of Barrès, a poetry cycle on Lebanon, called La Montagne inspirée, (C. Corm 2004) an allusion to the latter’s probably best-known title La colline inspirée (Barrès 1928). Except in its obsessions with searching for one’s roots in language and landscape, it lacks obvious political overlap with Barrès’ Catholic antimodernist integralism. What Kaufman does not see is that, in a frequently quoted passage, where Corm describes the Christians as the “true Lebanese,” (Kaufman 2004a, p. 243; Idem. 2004b, pp. 145-148; Idem. 2004c, pp. 10ff.) he acknowledges them as the epitome of Lebanon. He does not deny that the Muslims are also Lebanese, but he belittles them, virtually crowding them out of the picture by using Christian symbols both overtly and indirectly. In contrast, there was in French integralist writing no place at all in France for the unbeliever. The Christian nation was to be construed as a “totalitarian nation,” where the boundaries between state, society, and church would have become meaningless. These mainstays of political integralist writings were poorly received: Louis Cheikho, a Jesuit writer, is an exception (cf. Walker 2006). The Eddé tendency at least expressed its sympathies for Charles Maurras and his AF (Kaufman 2001, p. 193, FN 45). Corm, instead, was concerned with Christian avant-gardism, even cultural supremacy, not Christian totalitarianism. His book was a document of disappointment with Béchara al-Khoury, his rapprochement with Arabism, and his outright corruption, all of which Corm abhorred. He exalted the glory of the “Phoenician”-inspired mountains as a counterpoint to al-Khoury’s alleged degeneration into an everyday politician, the haggling on the marketplace (Salameh 2015, pp. 84ff.). Hector Klat, another well-known poet to whom Kaufman refers as a typical proponent of those Lebanese intellectuals influenced by Barrès, in 1941 accused the Free French Forces of committing “fratricide” by fighting those “that remained loyal to the Maréchal [Pétain, C, T.],” a man he revered deeply (Klat 1970, pp. 226, 235). He too described Lebanon in more or less unreflected Christian terms. But it remains

available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_01111885_immortale-dei.html, 2016-04-01; this became clear in 1867, when the Papal authorities in Bologna took a young Jewish boy, Edgardo Mortara, who had allegedly converted to Catholicism, from his parents: the natural law conception of family could not surpass the necessity to have a Christian boy educated by Christians.

118 He had, back in 1919, still supported a Greater Syrian solution, before becoming a dedicated Lebanese nationalist: see Kaufman 2004b, pp. 87–96.
unclear how that translated into a political model, and whether the author considered that at all. Klat rather superficially ridiculed the diplomatic talk on tolerance and the compensation offered by the National Pact in 1943 (Ibid., pp. 298f.). The “heart of Lebanon” beat for him at Ehden, the Maronite heartland in the north, the “clean [literally: virgin] earth, where the faith of the forefathers defied the century,” which awakes “in my Orthodox heart a Maronite soul.” (Ibid., pp. 136f.) Yet he saw Christians and Muslims alike as “Lebanese Lebanese,” as long as they advocated an independent Lebanon (Ibid., p. 332).

The Phalanges had their share of this Phoenicianist romanticism. Yet the way they treated Catholicism as a basis for politics is another important indicator of a meaningful symbolic appropriation of global discourses, since the Spanish Falange was an integralist Catholic party. It comprised a variety of different tendencies, especially since General Franco based his one-party state upon it: it encompassed the Carlists, who insisted on a pre-modern monarchy based upon traditional natural law; the secular Fascist JONS; the more bourgeois Acción Española, its name foreshadowing the Action Française; parts of the likewise bourgeois CEDA, the Catholic conservative mainstream party of the 1930s whose youth had increasingly become ardent supporters of Fascism; and the eponymous Falange. The latter was characterized by the personal piety of its leader, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, and, analogous to the French AF, the concept of Catholicism as the epitome of heroic steadfastness and orderliness, seen as moral idiosyncrasies of “Hispanicity” (Payne 1987, pp. 46-66). Only Franco’s pragmatism and the sudden abortion of the “Blue Phase” after 1945 prevented Spain from being turned into more than a conventional right-wing dictatorship (Payne 1987, pp. 413ff., 623-41). But these concepts were of course, to put it mildly, difficult to impose on Lebanon. Moreover, the Lebanese Phalanges apparently never contemplated it. To appropriate the whole model was not an option.

The “Primacy of the Spiritual,” al-Kata’ib postulated, was neutrally formulated; it did not presuppose a Catholic – or even a Christian – state (P. Gemayel 1948, pp. 69ff.):

“The defense of spiritual values, the exaltation of individualism [sic! C. T.], the moral reeducation of the nation, are the base of our acting” (Ibid., p. 71)

They were, for sure, an exceptionalist movement, but one that opposed a retreat into a renewed “Petit Liban” so popular among the Eddé partisans. Thus, in an early document from 1945 they set themselves sharply apart from an especially pronounced Christianity, which
they accused of seeking its spiritual home in a “reduced, emaciated Christianity,” restricted to “a village in the mountain”:

“... Our fatherland is neither the land of Islam, nor of Christianity. God wanted it as a country of spirituality and truth.” (P. Gemayel 1948, p. 162)

In line with the official line of the state formulated by Chiha and others, moving beyond the confines of the pre-1920 “Petit Liban” with its substantial Christian majority, was virtually exalted into a (Christian) “apostolate” (Ibid.).

Reflecting the new inwardness of the “Renouveau Catholique,” faith had already in the Phalanges’ earlier years acquired a primarily individual aspect, which they explicitly differentiated from those states they reproached for having enshrined Catholicism in their constitutions. The context (1948!) clearly tells which states were to be understood by this: the corporatist constitutions of Austria (1932–38), Spain (Leyes Fundamentales del Reino, 1938–77), and Portugal (1933–74), as well as various Islamic legal provisions stipulating Islam as the religion of the state, or at least the main one:

“We want religion, reigning the relations between the individual and God, to be practiced in the intimacy of the heart, rather than in the pomp of official pretentious showiness, and to help in bringing the citizens closer together instead of embittering the ones against the others as would be the case otherwise, by treating [them] differently. In one word: we reject vigorously every theocratic ideology, which, in other countries, constitutes the basis of the constitution. ...” (P. Gemayel 1948, pp. 69ff.)

They set “popular sovereignty” in contrast to “divine sovereignty,” invoking “enlightenment” as a basis for countering “tyranny” by a “universal idea” (Abou Khalil n. d., p. 2). Therein they were indeed closer to the Sokoli than to General Franco: Catholic clergymen had, interestingly, designated the Sokoli as a “godless movement” (Dinu 2013, p. 234). That the reference to “popular sovereignty” was not self-evident back then in a Catholic milieu becomes obvious on reading other Catholic sources of the same time: for example, a cleric wrote in the official paper of the Bavarian episcopate in 1946, against the background of the German constitutional discussions, that every sovereignty could only be a genuinely divine one.119

119 Anton Scharnagl, “Grundsätzliches zur neuen Verfassung,” Klerusblatt, Vol. 26, No. 5, 1946-12-01, pp. 33f.; When opposing the new Basic Law in the provincial diet, the president of the CSU group in the Bavarian parliament referred to the invocation that “the German people, in the exercise of their constituent power, have
The Phalangists, especially on becoming a party, invoked “spiritual Islamic–Christian values” as rendering Lebanon exceptional: the state was not to attain a specifically religious character (Pakradouni 1967, p. 27). And they insisted, when finally theorizing their own conceptions in a well-thought-out ideology, that their new explicitly Christian perspective should be based on something spiritual, not necessarily solely Christian, since the God in their often geometrically imagined slogan “God – Family – Fatherland” was said to be the God of all the three monotheistic religions (Entelis 1974, p. 72, 'Ishtiy 1997a, pp. 307f.). In the 1950s the freedom not to believe in God entered their writings (Suleiman 1967a, p. 243; 'Ishtiy 1997a, p. 309, FN 1). Pierre Gemayel stated emphatically:

"Lebanon, our Lebanon, the Lebanon of the Phalanges, is neither the Grand Liban nor the Petit Liban, it is the historical Lebanon, the Lebanon of 6,000 years, the Lebanon of the first Lebanese that went into it to make a country of freedom and humanity out of it, a land for all men, thirsting for freedom and not for a Christian, an Islamic, or a Jewish Lebanon. Lebanon is neither a delimited land nor a constitution, but a spirit." (quoted in: R. Ghanim n. d., p. 261 and 'Ishtiy 1997a, p. 311)

And elsewhere:

"Neither for the Muslim, nor for the Jew, but for a Lebanon as a home where man can believe, or not believe, to worship his lord as he wishes, or not adore him [at all]." (quoted in: R. Ghanim n. d., p. 263)

When writing their first party program at their first party congress in 1956, they began by deliberately emphasizing French personalist thinking, seeing it as “Christian Humanism, [for] reconciling Christianity and Socialism.” (‘Ishtiy 1997a, p. 304, quotation Abou Khalil n.d., p. 12) The nature of the human soul and its substance is traced back to divine creation, allowing for God as the “constant guardian” of citizenship rights, upholding their inalienability (‘Ishtiy 1997a, pp. 306ff., 316f.). This is a striking contrast to the SSNP, as others noted before: Man had no intrinsic value in Antun Sa’adeh’s thinking; rather, society becomes manifest only through the nation, whereas the Phalangists explicitly acknowledged a society of citizens (P. Gemayel 1948, pp. 70f.; Sharaf 1979, pp., 238f.; Entelis 1974, p. 71; Mendel and Müller 1987, pp. 15f.; ‘Ishtiy 1997a, p. 306).

The French philosopher Emmanuel Mounier (1905–50), quite popular in the 1930s among Catholic students, especially in France, had been inspirational for these thoughts. Essentially conservative, but embracing elements of the left, he had been untainted by integral concepts and their proximity to Fascism. Mounier reproached both Fascism and Communism for not unconditionally accepting an autonomous human personality, which he saw as having been created by God and justified by the passion of Christ (Mounier 2000, pp. 18-36). He rejected thought through individualist creativity alone, what he called bourgeois–liberal “heroic individualism”; meaningful existence could only be gained from a place in society (Ibid., pp. 11-17).

Personalism was first referred to by al-Kata’ib in 1952, when their intellectuals drew up the first draft of what was later to become their program. They encountered this new trend from France at their universities and made it popular inside the party: Edouard Sa’ab (1929–76), later the editor of L’Orient le Jour newspaper, was the first to do so (Interview Najm, ’Ishtiyy 1997a, pp. 314f.). The Egyptian-Lebanese, French-educated philosopher René Habachi, who converted to Catholicism, passed it down to various students in Lebanon. Habachi had studied at Grenoble, where he was acquainted with a rather left-leaning Catholic group editing the newspaper Esprit, which had broken with integralism. One of these student editors was Mounier (Hoss 2003, pp. 29ff.). Habachi also befriended Jacques Maritain, after he had broken with the Action Française 1926/27, probably the most influential philosopher of the Catholic left in France in the inter-war and immediate post-war era (Interview Najm, Bénéton 1973).

Nevertheless, its adoption within the party was no smooth process, since the “personalists” were staunchly opposed by those emphasizing the collectivity of being Lebanese. It was only in 1956 that the new program was decided, confirmed in 1970 at the third party congress. It emphasized the family as the “basic cell of society,” providing a moral basis (’Ishtiyy 1997a, pp. 304f., 309). In 1966 this “basic cell” became the individual, its importance eclipsing both “labor” and “private property.” (Entelis 1974, pp. 69f., 73)

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120 See, for example, his well-known contribution to the Cénacle, cf. R. Habachi 1960. Mounier allegedly also influenced Michel ’Aflaq: see Achcar 2010, p. 73.

121 He was also involved in scouting, according to http://jacques.abbatucci.pagesperso-orange.fr/zundel.htm, rev. 2017-01-03. A short sketch on his poetical work could be found in a eulogy: S. Habchi, 2009, pp. 57–74.
The Phalanges employed personalism in an open letter to a Soviet diplomat,\(^\text{122}\) asking him to distance himself from an orthodox Marxist–Leninist perspective:

> “Indeed, individual freedom is the bedrock. [Likewise] the independence and sovereignty of the fatherland does not mean anything if we do not protect the freedom of the individual against the whole. The individual liberty that Pierre Gemayel is talking about is more important than liberty of the country, more important than the nation, more important than independence.” (quoted in: ‘Ishtiyy 1997a, p. 316)

We can see here a shift from the focus on unity won through theorizing the relation between the group and the individual influenced by personalism.

After transforming themselves into a party, the Phalangists’ will to educate assumed a twofold form: first, they maintained paramilitary activities for their members; second, they turned toward more common forms of social engineering by using the means of the Lebanese state, especially during era of President Fu’ad Chéhab. The latter meant a more distributive pattern of social policies, fitting well into the Phalanges’ self-conception as a sha’abiyy organization. Even before becoming a party, they had in 1937 proposed a law to ameliorate working conditions and set a minimum wage (R. Haddad 1993, pp. 94f.). The Chéhab era also encompassed a remarkable enthusiasm for the state’s ability to plan a “new” citizen. Thus, Maurice Gemayel, cousin of the party’s founder and Minister for Finances and Planning, elaborated his field of political activities in a speech published as a booklet in 1958 by the Cénacle Libanais. The Cénacle functioned as a platform for conferences, and also as a publisher. Supported by the Lebanese state, it was meant to foster Libanité (A. Elias 2013). However, this was not necessarily only a top-down-project: it provided a genuine forum for discussion at a time in which mass media allowed for a larger audience to be reached by its publications (Haugbolle 2010, pp. 45-49). This allowed it to put some ideational flesh onto the bones of the National Pact of 1943. Ostensibly a rapprochement between Muslims and Christians, which came as a result of negotiations between Béchara al-Khoury and the Sunni za’im Riyadh as-Sulh,\(^\text{123}\) the pact, generally spoken, meant sharing the spoils. It reserved no more than a “symbolic hegemony” (Hanf 2015, p. 96) for the Christians, with a tendency rather toward equilibrium than disequilibrium (Ibid., pp. 86-96). Moreover, it encompassed a

\(^{122}\) I could not identify the addressee: Shawkat ‘Ishtiyy named a certain “Shilov,” foreign minister of the USSR. The problem is that there has never been a Soviet foreign minister of that name. Dimitri Shepilov, who held office in 1956/57, may have been meant. Otherwise, the Soviet embassy in East Berlin employed one Major A. S. Shilov in 1958: see Williamson 2012, p. 11.

\(^{123}\) A lengthy discussion on the pact can be found in Messara 1983, pp. 53–89.
shaky formula describing Lebanon as Arab by language but possessing “special culture.” One of the Phalangists’ founders, Georges Naccaché, was sentenced to a six-month term in prison together with the editor-in-chief of his L’Orient newspaper after calling the precarious compromise of Lebanon’s Arab identity “Deux négations ne font pas une nation” (two negations that do not amount to a nation). The expression gained some popularity among Phalanges partisans – although the party’s president, Pierre Gemayel boasted in an interview in 1964 that without his Phalangists’ support the agreement would never have been possible at all (Suleiman 1967a, p. 246, FN 124). Yet the party saw the “pact” as confirming Lebanon as a country of two kinds of Lebanese: Muslims and Christians (Sharaf 1979, pp. 147f.; al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb-l-Kata’ib, II, pp. 22ff.). Maurice Gemayel’s contribution to the Cénacle is therefore of some interest: it constitutes an indicator of adaptation to the patterns of political pluralism. Broadly utilizing some flawed political geography, Maurice Gemayel obviously drew on his French education; he described a genius loci as an unchangeable influence on man, which, together with a variable “spiritual principle,” formed culture. Lebanon, he explained, has to be seen as a natural geographical entity, providing asylum for all those seeking shelter therein. It was foreign influences that turned the seemingly natural symbiosis in diversity among the Lebanese into antagonism. The author remains quite unclear here, crediting the Lebanese with a spirit “favoring independence” but also tending to localism, egoism, and particularism. Thus, the state should spread its institutions, both distributive and educational, to the countryside. Whereas in Switzerland citizens were born as such, in Lebanon they needed to be educated to act as conscious citizens (M. Gemayel 1958). The “training” motive was thus transferred into a new setting, losing part of its former paramilitary orientation and adopting more statist tendencies.

6. A LIMITED BREAKTHROUGH

New thickly organized parties normally arise where traditional authorities are in decline. In Lebanon this meant that new political actors had to step in when the old notables’ traditional patronage capabilities reached their limits within an ongoing process of rural migration. The old elite failed to extend their either mechanisms of social control or their kinship-based narratives of legitimacy to the capital. Consequently the new southern suburbs of Beirut were controlled not by the old Shiite zu’ama’, but by the secular Shiite Harakah al-Mahrumin (Movement of the Disinherited) of the charismatic clergyman Musa as-Sadr (F. Ajami 1986; Norton 1987; Shanahan 2005, pp. 72ff.). Those in the Christian suburbs swelled al-Kata’ib’s
ranks. Politically, the new arrivals started to demonstrate their group identity more often and with more self-confidence than ever before (Khuri 1972, pp. 205ff.; Khuri 1975; Johnson 2001, pp. 12-21, 154-226). Urbanization obviously led to the necessity to create an identity over and above that of the extended family. The tendency to attend private-run schools, often with a religious program, in the suburbs certainly helped to foster this scheme (Nasr 1997, p. 173).

Although al-Kataʾib did use family networks, their general tendency was to recruit new members along socio-stratigraphic lines (Khuri 1975, p. 189). Various factors provided as, what would be a “social situation” (Hradil 1999, p. 368) in sociological parlance, for a filter of perception. First, almost all Phalangists were Christians. Before the civil war the party had a small Muslim minority among its members, mostly Shiites, apparently around 2,000 in the mid-1960s (Suleiman 1967a, p. 240, FN 106). In 1969 the members’ sectarian distribution is said to have comprised up to 80% Maronites, 10% other Christians, 6% Shiites, 2% Jews, and 1% each Druzes and Sunnis. Only in Beirut (3.6%) and in the south (31.2%) had any meaningful number of Muslims joined (Boustani and Abboud 1973, p. 27; Entelis 1974, pp. 110-114). Especially the high number in the South indicated that the Shiites still lacked considerably behind in organizing parties of a specific Shiite understanding despite having become more and more politicized.

In 1936, when the party began, Maronites made up 90% of the Phalangist membership (Entelis 1974, p. 114); today the percentage can be roughly estimated at around 70% (Interview 10). Despite the focus on the issue, no Christian party is monoconfessional. I myself encountered Greek Orthodox and Armenian members of both the Phalanges and the Lebanese Forces. They all felt “Christian,” demonstrating a remarkably increased “political ecumenism,” not only in Lebanon, but also in the whole region.\footnote{The same was true for the Maronites: they referred to “Maronite traditions,” yet felt that they were Christians and spoke for “the Christians.” Interestingly, this community building seems to continue: parallel to the common usage of symbolisms originally created by the Iranian Islamic Revolution and popularized though Hezbollah in Lebanon among Shiites throughout the Middle East and particularly in Iraq, as symbols for a politically active Shiite community, a Christian militia in Iraq adopted the telling name Kataʾib Babil – Phalanges of Babylon. That is nothing new: In Aleppo in northern Syria local Christians chose in 1936/37 the styles of the Lebanese Phalanges for their own local militia with a Christian communal background, Watenpaugh 2002, open edition, section 37, available at http://books.openedition.org/ifpo/3198.} Christian doctrinal differences have thus been reduced to rather vague filters: in 2009 Catholic Christians were more likely to vote for March 14 than Orthodox, yet the divide is far from being sharply accentuated (cf. Statistics Lebanon 2009). Smaller groups, especially those with strong links to areas outside Lebanon, like the Syrian Orthodox, who define themselves largely through
their former territories in eastern Turkey, which they lost during World War I, may be a different case (Leonhardt 2016, pp. 194ff.).

Regionally speaking, Kata’ib’s membership was heavily concentrated in and around the capital; in the outlying regions there were even fewer members. The student wing was almost exclusively active in and around the capital; the majority of those joining the party as minors came from the countryside. In the periphery itself, the youth organization lacked proper structure, but grew out of social, often family, networks (Boustani and Abboud 1973, pp. 19-25). In Mount Lebanon the party members tended to live in the districts around Beirut (Matn, Kisrawan, ‘Aley, Ba‘abda, Shuf). This area was characterized by Hazim Saghieh (1991, pp. 51f.) as a “confessional space,” as those territories had become confessionally mixed since the Maronite push towards the south from the sixteenth century on, and where traditional authorities could no longer maintain social control, as witnessed by the nineteenth-century peasant revolts.

It makes no sense to compare the data provided by different studies on Kata’ib membership. The lack of clarity as to how the social categories involved were used and established renders them hard to compare. However, the rough picture reveals a strong middle-class, even working-class tendency, whereas the party’s founders were highly educated Christian bourgeois academics, coming either directly from the capital or from its surroundings, and most pursuing liberal professions, having studied at Christian universities (Suleiman 1967a, p. 241; Boustani and Abboud 1973, pp. 37, 47-53; Entelis 1974, pp. 114, 118-124; Sayghiyyah 1991, pp. 52ff.). Peasants were said rather to distrust parties (Pakradouni 1967, p. 102). The most obvious characteristics the party’s new supporters had in common was their youth on joining the party: 80% were under thirty, 39% under twenty (Boustani and Abboud 1973, p. 22). The average age was twenty-four (Entelis 1974, p. 107); this, however, was not far from the statistical Maronite age pyramid (Rieger 2003, p. 250). Those who remained inside the party grew older within it, pushing the average age upward somewhat.125 But not all stayed. A striking peculiarity was the high volatility within their ranks: only 13% of those 15,000 members noted by Jean Boustani and Farid Abboud (1973, pp. 17f., 21ff.) after 1958 had held a membership card before the short civil which hit the country that year. This shows a partisanship dependent on the situation, and not easily consolidated within the proper Phalangist organizational framework.

Unfortunately, there are no more recent statistics, and I was not able to acquire any from the parties I researched. In contrast to the pre-war era, they have conspicuously tried to avoid delivering reliable statistical material. The refusal to give any exact numbers ranged from the eternal promise to hand it over at the next meeting to the rather bizarre explanation that the party – in that case the Lebanese Forces – simply did not know itself who its members were. It was not difficult to guess what is behind this non-compliance: first and foremost, any statistics would reveal their real strength to their opponents. Since they have competitors, and can no longer pressurize the old zu‘ama’ as they could do before the war, such numbers would therefore indicate all the rifts and conflicts they have undergone in the meantime. Security concerns are another important reason for concealing their actual membership. Lastly, the numbers could highlight the parties’ reservations about certain communities, thereby undermining their legitimacy of their claim to be “Lebanese nationalists,” a point that was often emphasized by referring to the non-Christian members of the parties in our sample. Sometimes they openly acknowledged the limited representation of other communities, and sometimes exaggerated their numbers to the point of pure nonsense: a member of the LF boasted that almost half of the party’s members are Muslims (Interview 5) – an inept effort to claim a broader Lebanese identity. A FPM functionary, like all the others, did not remember any precise numbers, but assured me that up to 40% of his party’s adherents had “at some time” been non-Christians, especially in Southern Beirut (Interview 26). Today their number allegedly stands probably at around 20% (Interview 28) or, according to another version, 6,000 persons, roughly a third of its membership (Interviews 21 and 25).

As for the pre-war era, I tabulated the available data on partisanship in the table below. The first one provides for an overview over the other parties, ordered according to sources. The second one is for al-Kata’ib membership alone.

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126 Such as a Phalangist, indicating that only 2% of the party’s present-day members were Muslims: see interview 6.

127 That cannot be totally excluded: Michel ‘Aoun hails from the southern suburbs, and some support could be even quantified among Shiites. A survey conducted in 1996 documented ‘Aoun as ranking third in popularity among Shiites, after Imam Musa Sadr and Grand Ayatollah Fadl-Allah, the Supreme Authority (marja’a) for many Lebanese Shiites, especially those close to Hezbollah. ‘Amal leader Nabih Berri ranked only fourth: see J. Harik 1996, p. 52.
Table 1: Party membership before 1975 (numbers in thousands)\textsuperscript{128}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number according to</th>
<th>Yamak, Entelis</th>
<th>Mermier</th>
<th>Zuwiyya</th>
<th>Suleiman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Year</em></td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Late 1950s/60s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLP (Chamoun)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50–70</td>
<td>60–70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSP (Jumblatt)</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10–12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSNP</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Bloc (Eddé)</td>
<td>11,887</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an-Najjadé (Arab Nationalist)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunchak (Armenian)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ramgavar (Armenian)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dashnak (Armenian)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{128} Data according to Yamak 1966; Suleiman 1967a, pp. 74, /193, 195f., 204, 255, 261; Zuwiyya 1972, pp. 10f.; Entelis 1974, p. 106; Mermier 2012a, pp. 191f.
Table 2: Phalangist membership 1936–1980 (numbers in thousands)

<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entelis</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42.2 (3 abroad)</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suleiman</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>54 (4 abroad)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuderna.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boustani and Abboud</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordbruch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mermier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuwiyya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These numbers indicate at least a tendency hard to miss: in a country with around 3 million inhabitants in the 1950/60s, only about half of them Christians, the membership of the Phalanges constituted a veritable mass party. Finally, despite all possible deficits of the number game, we could calculate an overall number of at least 150,000 party members for the 1960s in Lebanon. During this heyday of Lebanese partyism, that would equate to a quota of almost 5% of the overall population. By comparison, in Western European countries the mean average of partisanship in the electorate stood at around 10% in the 1980s, and in the 1990s it fell to 5–6% (Gallagher et al. 2006, pp. 311f.). Calculated on the base of the whole population, these numbers would have had to be reduced by a fourth. At least, the quota for

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130 The numbers for 1938 and 1942 can be partially explained by introducing “supporting members” and females to the official membership: see Entelis 1974, p. 104.
Lebanon was below a Western European mean, but not that far. After the slow decrease of partisanship in Western countries since the early 1990s, the Lebanese partisanship before the civil war actually indicates a striking normality when compared to Denmark (5.1% of the electorate in the 1990s), Germany (2.9%), or France (1.5%) (Ibid., pp. 312).

But numbers certainly cannot tell the whole story, as a closer look at Lebanon’s political landscape suggests. Even though the years between independence and the outbreak of war in 1975 have been called the Lebanese parties’ “Golden Age” (ʾIsthiyy 1997b, p. 89 and Idem. 2006, p. 64; al-Khazin 2002, p. 151), parties remained a minority phenomenon in parliament: Only a third of the Lebanese parliament belonged, immediately before the war broke out, to a party. However, this percentage varied from region to region, having been highest in Mount Lebanon governorate. But most Lebanese still chose to be represented by traditional notables (Hanf 2015, p. 191). In the 1950s around 20% and in 1968 73% of all of Mount Lebanon’s representatives had a party affiliation, compared to only 38.38% of all the country’s parliamentarians (Zuwiyya 1972, pp. 90, 93). The following table gives an overview over the pre-war distribution of parliamentary seats among Lebanese political parties:¹³¹

¹³¹ Numbers according to Messara 1996, p. 139; Baaklini et al. 1999, p. 684 offer different numbers. This divergence of numbers alone aptly reflects the problem in dealing with Lebanese parties.
Table 3: Party affiliation in the pre-war parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-Kata'ib</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an-Najjadé (Arab Nationalist)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hizb al-Wataniin al-'Ahrar (NLP, Chamoun)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Kutlah al-Wataniyyah (NB, Eddé)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hizb al-'Ishtirakiyy ad-Dimuqratiyy (PSP, Jumblatt)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dashnak (Armenian)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Party Members</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives without a Party Affiliation</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet, of the thirty-one or thirty-three\textsuperscript{132} party members entering parliament in 1968, only a few were fully dependent on their membership cards; around half of them still depended primarily on their own social assets but already needed a party affiliation to add some modernist narratives to their genealogical pedigree (I. F. Harik 1975, p. 212).

\textsuperscript{132} The numbers vary, depending on the author: Iliya Harik 1975, p. 212 counted thirty-three party members; Baaklini et al. 1999, p. 88, counted thirty-one partisans.
One problem of Lebanon’s elitism has always been that political organizations were not fully integrated into the Lebanese political system: if they were successful, only their leaders were to sit around the tables of consociationalism (Suleiman 1967c, p. 683; Messara 1996, p. 138; al-Khazin 2002, p. 82). That led to a crucial problem. Whereas it is unclear whether the National Pact was ever meant to encompass more than the state’s top echelon (Hanf 2015, p. 73), the formula trickled down through the offices of the state’s administration. In fact, it has led to an increasingly tight mesh of political patronage in Lebanon by bestowing public office on partisans. The formula has not created these opportunities, yet it adds to the usual tendency of compromise-based proportional systems to lay claim to the public realm for partisan elites. So, the number of civil servants increased from 3,600 in 1933 to 6,000 1947, to double again to 14,800 in 1953 (Owen 1976, p. 24-27). After the civil war, from 1975 to 1990, these figures rose even more, and in 1998 between 26 and 35% of the total workforce were indeed employed by the state (Kingston 2013, p. 58). Having a share in this process is thereby closely connected to holding a position of power. Consequently, all “real” parties experienced this problem in one way or another: they had to adapt to at least some of these mechanisms to make up for limitations of the weak Lebanese state, while at the same time they were calling for the strengthening of the state.

Thus, the Phalanges’ pre-civil-war history has also been largely characterized by constant meandering. It began with the question of participating in elections (see above), which they did for about ten years without convincing results. Their first organizational and electoral boost came in 1958, with the short civil war. They profited both from their role of the “Christians’ defender” during the war, and from not presenting themselves as being as hawkish as President Camille Chamoun (Entelis 1974, pp. 140f.; Saghiyyah 1991, pp. 66f.; Hanf 2015, pp. 115f.). Whereas the SSNP bore the brunt of the fighting, the Phalanges participated occasionally, restricting themselves mostly to joint patrols with the police in the core Christian areas (Entelis 1974, p. 177). During the subsequent Chéhab years the Phalanges belonged to the new President’s coalition, together with the PSP, with which they were at odds on matters of foreign policy. Yet Chéhab did not seek confrontation with the new champion of pan-Arabism, Jamal ʿAbd an-Nassir, as Chamoun had done. Consequently, foreign pressure decreased considerably and reduced possible tensions over Lebanese foreign policies. By contrast, both parties cherished the new politics of a strong state. Electoral reward came promptly: In a by-election Jezzine in the southernmost fringes of the former Petit Liban, al-Kataʿib won their first seat outside the capital and its suburbs against Camille Chamoun’s man. They won by securing far-reaching support, encompassing some of the most important
regional and national zuʿama’, an indication of their continuing integration into the country’s political system. This process became most obvious when Joseph Shadir became the first Phalangist to assume the key office of finance minister. In addition, Pierre Gemayel himself became a minister in October 1958, subsequently serving in various cabinet positions Entelis 1974, pp. 138f.).

Apart from this alliance forging, the logistical capacities of the Phalanges played an increasingly crucial role, since Joseph Abou Khalil and Joseph Hashim became the organization’s first full-time staffers after the short war. They were principally paid to study European parties in order to reorganize the own structural network, resulting, *inter alia*, in the creation of a well-organized general secretariat and organizational development in the country’s periphery (Saghiyyah 1991, pp. 62f.). Both – resources and the ability to evoke something beyond the local – became a point of growing importance in the following years, especially when the “Palestinian Question” made it as urgent as in 1958 to clarify anew what the body politic should be.

To understand this typical mixture of how an actual situation alluded to a cognitive filter in this epoch, let us consider the former party leader Karim Pakradouni, who claimed that the civil war of 1958 had triggered his decision to join the party. He had grown up in Catholic educational institutions, and described his way into the party as almost natural (Interview with him, 2012-05-23). “Natural” is here an interesting choice of word, since other first-generation party insiders had also used it:

“I do not exaggerate when I say I was born as a Phalangist and probably there was a spontaneous rush as a Maronite to defend this state and this entity.” (Joseph Abou Khalil, quoted in ‘Ishtiyy 1997b, p. 62)

Or, in another version:

“I am Lebanese by natural interest, I am Lebanese by family education. Contrastingly, my neighbor was not Lebanese by family education – he was an Arab nationalist, Muslim Arab nationalist, Muslim Arab nationalist who wanted Lebanon to be a part of the greater Arab state. … But we as Christians, we do not want to live as dhimmis. I need to fight for not living as a dhimmi. I chose the party that gave me the possibility of fighting.” (Interview with Antoine Najm, 2012-07-20)

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133 Jean Skaff had been included in an interim government for no more than four months in 1953, Entelis 1974, pp. p. 148, FN 1.
“Natural” always designated a filter of perception provided by an identity perceived as sectarian. It was, however, never “natural.” Najjah Wakim, for example (Interview with him, 2012.06-18), a former parliamentarian, presented his way into Nasserite leftism as likewise smooth – his family took part in Arabist–leftist (qaumiyy–ʾiasariyy) circles, despite being Christian (Greek Orthodox). “Natural” therefore stands for having been deeply embedded in a social surrounding that rendered the individual automatically receptive to a specific version of being Lebanese. “Natural” designates the province of unquestioned knowledge, felt to be the coherent arrangement of those lived experiences intersubjectively shared and passed down within the respective milieu (see: Schütz and Luckmann 1973). Characterizing himself as a believer, but with a certain contempt for religious practice as a mere matter of duty, Pakradouni took Christianity as a communitarian-inspired perspective, which brought about an idea of Lebanon as an independent state. He therefore joined the party a year after the short civil war of 1958, while still attending high school (he was born in 1944). He was active in the party’s social organization and in its student wing, which he led between 1968 and 1970, entering the politbureau for the first time in 1971, and officiating as General Secretary between 1992 and 1995.134 The interesting thing here is that he offers a threefold explanation: first comes the milieu, providing him with a certain reading of the clashes of 1958 that endangered what his upbringing considered “natural”: an independent state as seen from a Christian perspective:

“I neither studied the structures, nor the ideology, nor the politics. That was more like, let’s say, as if entering into scouting … [basically] I did not choose the Kataʾib. I found myself in a Phalangist milieu and I adhered to the party because all of my mates, my schoolfriends were Phalangist.” (Interview Pakradouni)

Second, Pakradouni offers a personal perspective: he went to the same school (Collège Notre Dame de Jamhour) as Pierre Gemayel’s sons Amin and Bashir. The latter is explicitly acknowledged, as having formed a like-minded group, which Pakradouni joined. Obviously, he was not simply exposed to a conservative Christian milieu that forged a Christian identity beyond a prima facie confessionalism: sworn leftists did attend the same schools without reacting the same way. The impact was rather that of peer-group interaction and the perception of Pierre Gemayel as a figure he admired from a distance. There was thus a preexisting disposition – he could have admired Nasser or ʿAflaq. Having been in an

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educational institution beyond the confines of the solely Armenian ones in his original Armenian quarter of Bourj Hammoud was decisive therein. It moved the young Pakradouni out of his family’s tradition into a broader, more “ecumenical,” Christian conservative one. His Armenian father Minas, who had settled in Lebanon in 1920 and chose to marry a Lebanese wife, adhered to the Armenian Dashnak Party. He learned about his son’s newfound political adherence four or five years later, when it was hard to hide it anyway, since Karim had already appeared in public. But Minas Pakradouni was liberal enough to allow him to make his own decisions.

The most likely alternative to joining the Dashnak would have been joining nothing at all, as Karim Pakradouni’s parents, especially his mother, saw it. Thus, the will to consider political scouting as something desirable shows, as in the cases of other first-generation party members, different cognitive resources. Students of a rather closed-up set of new educational institutions with similar ideas about education embarked upon nationalist ideologies carried by new organizational forms of how to do politics (Schumann 2001b). This is why Karim Pakradouni explicitly mentioned the “real” organization as a reason to join: “it was very dynamic, had well-organized structures”; the others were rather “parliamentary blocs, blocs to compete in elections.” By contrast, the new field of engagement was time-consuming, life-structuring. Here again, the exact form of the political organization was largely predetermined by the volatile Lebanese political landscape: being dynamic, offering a paramilitary Boy Scout organization, defending Lebanon was important: it stood for the promise to be modern.

Thus, engaging in it also broke with the bourgeois attitude that did not indulge in the self-imposed discipline of organized party politics as it was thought to overstep the boundaries of respectable behavior. The action of joining a party therefore demonstrated individual agency and rebellion as important assets of modern utopian thinking. It took a young person like Pakradouni from his group of origin, which was felt somehow to lack a “dedicated” spirit by simply focusing (in a mercantile country!) on economic success:

“My mother did not want me to enter any party because in our atmosphere, in our social milieu, people did not like parties. They said that the parties do not do anything but stir up problems for the young. ... Ugh, they did not encourage their sons and daughters to engage in the parties. On the contrary, they said: leave the parties aside, we have nothing to do with parties. That was rather the atmosphere of the middle class in Lebanon, which considered it necessary to produce, to be successful in one’s work, that engaging oneself with parties is a waste of time.” (Interview Pakradouni)
That ties in with the discourse of youthfulness and rebellion as “expressivism,” (Taylor 1989, p. 374) which obviously did not only work out for the first generation that joined, but also for those who entered an already institutionalized, organizationally thickened party. The open continuity between the younger generations and their parents lies in a Christian bourgeois understanding of what needed to be preserved: an independent Lebanon as a liberal country against socialist (including Arab nationalist) tendencies that blossomed back then. The break is in the way it was to be done. It is not narrated as being “natural”, although in a sociological it is: it stems from that part of the lifeworld Karim Pakradouni received from his environment at school. The life-structuring, if not all-consuming effect that provided the young Pakradouni with a place inside this organizational framework was, so to say, adequate for his freshly acquired cultural capital stemming from societal change: he not only developed a pragmatic sense for diplomacy with the “Arab countries,” a necessity in an organization about to integrate itself into the country’s consociational system. Moreover, he became a student functionary and one of the party’s most prolific authors. His first widely disseminated publication (Pakradouni 1967) was one of the very first academic studies on the party at all. As a diploma thesis, it shows us a young student of twenty-three, for which the author surely is not to blame. Yet, it is neither analytical nor inspired by any meaningful theoretical insight, but is an apologetic in support of his party. That proved to be somehow typical of a good deal of the literature that functionaries wrote on their organizations: mostly it does not question, it defends. Intellectuality was mostly a cultural capital offering distinction within the party and needed to serve the “cause”: The party needs to be defended, and the intellectual does so by offering teachings to the in-group and apologetics to the out-group. And by doing so, he uses his cultural capital to refine “instinctive” sectarianism into a properly defined nationalism. It was thereby also about producing and reproducing a milieu of supporters. This provides ample material to illustrate the constitutive teacher–student dichotomy that makes up a huge part of the party’s identity. Christoph Schumann (2001b, p. 193) has pointed out the almost indissoluble intermingling of teacher and political activist in Arab educational biographies between 1920 and 1958. A huge discrepancy between expectation and reality on the one hand, and a deeper educational divide on the other, brought about a certain role model of the intellectual, and certain organizational preferences. The young Pakradouni exemplified the experience of finding a place within the densifying party apparatus that tried to institutionalize the concept of “forming” a society via a political party oscillating between a “break” with the “system” and the hopes of bringing about a refined society by integrating oneself into this

\[135\] He used the notion “instinctive, inborn” (ghariziyah) in an interview with ʾIshtiy 2007b, p. 61.
system. It is not for nothing that he cited, along with the party founder, the above-mentioned Maurice Gemayel as a “visionary” who influenced him through his “modernism.” Maurice Gemayel stood in a sense for an organization increasingly becoming a pragmatic partner in governance.\textsuperscript{136}

These new efforts to form did at least result in a considerable outreach in the 1960s. When President Fu’ad Chéhab dissolved the chamber in 1960, the Phalanges finally made their breakthrough. In three out of the six constituencies where they had fielded a candidate, at least one of them was elected (N. A. Ziadeh 1960, p. 374; Entelis 1974, p. 140). Tellingly, four years later the Phalanges lost several of their seats in a time of lessened tension (Suleiman 1967a, p. 236, FN 97). Only in 1968, marked by an already aggravated conflict over the policies toward the Palestinians, did they regain electoral strength (Zuwiyya 1972).

7. More Strident Tones

The overall trend since the late 1968 is clear: the old families were forced to adapt somewhat to the new organizational practices, and vice versa. Thus, ironically, as Theodor Hanf noted, the za’im and the party each adopted the practices of the other: whereas parties needed something material to offer, the za’ama’ went on to “adopt more strident tones.” (Hanf 2015, p. 84) We can see that by looking at electoral slogans. Those from the 1943 election still resemble an overlord–subject relationship, alluding to honor to legitimize the candidate: “Vote for Asa’ad Bey al-Bustani … member of one of the most illustrious Lebanese families”; “Vote for Amin Bey as-Sa’ad, Maronit from among the oldest families”; “Vote for Kamal Jumblatt, the young Lebanese za’im, of the house of Jumblatt, who is going to take the leadership of the Jumblatts into his hands.” (K. Ghanem 1983, p. 101) Roughly thirty years later, Kamal Jumblatt opted for a modern identity by blending Druze traditional identity with a strong link to Marxist-inspired Arabism instead of presenting himself as an entitled prince (al-Khazin 1988). Thus, in 1972 he promised to execute “projects,” i.e. building a better state to come. Other slogans of that year’s election promised “a revolution” (Prime Minister Sa’ib Salam, a typical za’im), a “positive progressivism” (the same), the “constitutional revolution” (Ghassan Tuéni, the owner of an-Nahar newspaper), or asked whether “the regime” could be transformed by a parliament (Kamal Jumblatt) (see K. Ghanem 1983, p. 101-108). On the

\textsuperscript{136} Interestingly, Maurice Gemayel himself expressed remorse in an interview with Entelis in 1969 over transforming the organization into a political party, calling its new character “artificial” and its “second biggest mistake” after using initially a purely French name: see Entelis 1974, p. 61, FN 3. He thereby largely symbolizes the Phalanges’ first generation.
right wing of the Lebanese political spectrum, former president Camille Chamoun, frankly ascribed his first election to parliament in 1934 to what he called “the recollection of my father”:

“... the foremost [factor] was the recollection of my father, who succeeded in leaving friends and obliged ones everywhere: the population of our mountains was conservative, rarely forgetting the services rendered to it.” (Chamoun 1963, p. 85)

Yet he had already, as president, stood for a strong, conservative, pro-Western stance to bolster these material assets. However, as many of these zu’ama’ adopted more strident tones, it was he himself who needed new means to do politics. His party, the National Liberals (NLP), only came into existence after he left office and, at least until the mid-1960s, did not draft a written program (Suleiman 1967a, p. 260). Yet it nevertheless had a recognizable identity on fundamental questions, demonstrated by its members’ role in escalating the civil war in 1975 (Hanf 2015, pp. 190ff.).

Michael Johnson traced the actual outbreak of Lebanon’s civil war in 1975 back to the partial loss of control of the country’s traditional elite, especially the Sunni part: Albeit without a presence in parliament, the Nasserites’ social clubs spread in the predominantly Muslim areas of Beirut, Tripoli, and Sa‘ida (Johnson 1983 and 2001). Men like Ibrahim Qulaylat, a staunch Nasserite since his youth, slipped away from the za‘im ‘Uthman ad-Dana, for whom he had worked until then, to turn his armed gang into the nucleus of al-Murabitun, the main Nasserite militia during the war (Johnson 2001, pp. 53ff.). Even at the polls, only occasionally a source of surprise in Lebanon, some unexpected victories indicated this slipping-away: ‘Abd al-Majid ar-Rafi‘i, a doctor from Tripoli belonging to the pro-Iraqi version of the Arab nationalist Ba‘ath Party, finally managed to upset the Tripolitanian elite in 1972 by taking the first place in the Tripoli constituency from Rashid Karamé, repeatedly acting as Prime Minister. A similar surprise happened in West Beirut. In 1972 the leading Sunni families preferred Nassim Majdalani for the Greek Orthodox seat. Already member of parliament since 1957 and stemming from a well-to-do family running the Bank Majdalani, he lost out against Najjah Wakim, a Nasserist student, barely twenty-six years of age. It would be a euphemism to call the latter’s relationship with Beirut’s Greek Orthodox establishment

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137 In an interview, Theodor Hanf characterized the divide between the Phalanges and the NLP as one between the “common people from the mountain villages, frequently from the most embattled areas” and Chamoun’s men, who were by and large from the upper class, “often carrying their jurisprudence-compendium besides the Kalashnikov”, see “Christen als Kanonenfutter,” Zenith 2012-10-26, available at http://www.zenithonline.de/deutsch/gesellschaft/a/artikel/christen-als-kanonenfutter-003422/, rev. 2015-08-25. (my translations) This might have been a cliché, yet, clichés stem from distinguishable identities.
“strained”: Traditional families and clergymen alike were united in their disapproval of his candidature and threw in their lot with Majdalani (Interview Wakim).\textsuperscript{138} Wakim himself saw himself as this establishment’s contender, and performed during the campaign as a leftist student functionary alien to the zu’ama’ (Interview Wakim). Tellingly, after the election the Greek Orthodox Council officially announced that it did not even consider the victor as its representative in parliament (Aboujaoude 1985, pp. 259f.).

After the war of 1948/49 and the mass Palestinian exodus, the ongoing debate as to how exactly the national pact’s compromise formula of Lebanon’s “Arabic face” should have translated into actual policies remained a simmering legacy. It added some dynamics to the country’s situation. Whereas many Christians tried to stay out of the conflict between the PLO and Israel, most Muslims and also parts of the increasingly left-leaning Christian academic youth expected more Arabism, but the notables could not deliver. That became obvious in 1967 during the Six Day War and afterwards, when the various Palestinian factions shifted their focus from Jordan to Lebanon to stage their war against Israel. Along with this, they offered ideological lessons, arms, weapons training, and money, which fitted well into a growing Muslim dissatisfaction with the Christians’ numerical advantage within the “formula,” while they had already become a demographic minority.\textsuperscript{139}

“Nationhood,” “ethnicity,” or “sect” do not carry the same intensity. Instead, certain situations trigger their use as categories, in what Max Bergholz (2016, pp. 267-296) called “sudden nationhood.” Also in Lebanon, specific situations gave membership of sectarian groups particular significance. Fear seems to be one of these, and the sight of armed Palestinians, standing for a broader region perceived as dangerous, fitted into memories of being a small, vulnerable minority. Thus, in the years between 1968, the Israeli raid on Beirut airport, and the outbreak of the civil war in 1975, a wide variety of “Lebanese nationalist” groups, sticking to conservative, Christian concepts, sprang up and trained up their members. The Phalanges’ rank and file also felt threatened. This anxiety manifested itself in countless books, booklets, pamphlets, and issues of al-ʿAmal newspaper. For example, a former partisan of both al-Kataʾib and the FPM vividly remembered his brother organizing the Phalangist vigilantes to guard his quarter, Sin al-Fil, against what he called the “Islamic revival” (in fact it was Arabist, but mostly supported by Muslims) in 1958. He himself, at only fourteen years old, started his “journey” (masirati) on the “Lebanese Resistance path” by joining these guards.

\textsuperscript{138} In fact, as he acknowledged himself, most his voters were Sunnis who perceived him as a leftist Arab nationalist, whereas most Orthodox did not support him: see ibid.

\textsuperscript{139} Numbers from polls are delivered by D. R. Smock and A. C. Smock 1975, p. 137.
Growing up in a Phalangist family, he joined the Phalanges two years later. Unlike Karim Pakradouni he lacked the distinctive cultural capital to serve the “cause” as an intellectual: he worked in a furniture factory among other places before opening a shop. Nevertheless, the party also consumed his life, involving him in sports and military training within the milieu. As in Pakradouni’s case, he saw this engagement as something beyond a spoiled mercantilism, as a revolt which found an expression in an organization appearing like the simulacrum of the better, democratic, “real” society still to come:

“And on the level of the [common] Christian people, the Phalanges typified the response to the fear for Lebanon [i.e. a possible loss of national sovereignty by unifying with Syria or other countries, C. T.] and those dangers putting Lebanon at risk. That was because the National Bloc [Eddé’s al-Kutlah al-Wataniyyah, C. T.] was an elitist, aristocratic, and spoiled party, which attracted the lawyers, doctors, and engineers. Therefore, we said that if you want to enter the National Bloc, they expect you to be a lawyer and nothing below. Finally, the Bloc was no real party in its structure and its organization, quite in contrast to al-Kata’ib, which constituted an organized party which the worker, the employee, the artisan, the student, and the lawyer are [likewise] in – a party of all social classes and the mainstream of society. …” (‘Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, p. 20)

His life oscillated between the party’s youth organization, its scouts, and the local cell, neatly describing how much the various activities of al-Kata’ib together formed a milieu. This socialization process did not necessarily lead to the impression of being a political activist. The young partisan saw himself rather as a soldier, in an organization explicitly said to be a party but functioning as a “reserve force of the state” (‘Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, pp. 18ff.):

“One could say, I am more a soldier than a politician. I entered al-Kata’ib after the events of 1958, in which I participated. But my entry was not out of social ambitions, for example to become mayor, but out of the patriotic will to defend Lebanon and her independent, endangered character.” (Ibid., p. 20)

Hazim Saghieh (1991, p. 63) assumed that the original antics of paramilitarism in the founding years were more or less reduced to a “military folklore” with a new Phalangist generation after World War II. The rather ill-organized troops in 1975 support these assumptions. Yet the above-mentioned party member shows how the paramilitary tradition continued to hold considerable influence over expectations of how to do politics. This self-
conception as less a politician than a soldier made it much easier to mobilize again beyond the party’s normal political routines. Although the man quoted above acknowledged having had Muslim friends, their relations with him always avoided the political (‘Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, pp. 26f.). The armed Palestinians in their camp at Tell az-Za’tar next door frightened him. Here, the old “shirt partyism” of the founding years was turned against the party leadership: he reproached the party leadership for having supported “the system” and not preparing its men adequately for fighting. Disappointed by the poor training the party organized, relying on karate and sticks instead of on guns, he joined a more militarized group, the Tanzim (organization). There, volunteers were, in cooperation with active and retired officers of the Lebanese army, clandestinely prepared for a possible armed confrontation. The army leadership, being in Christian hands, allegedly knew about these activities. Their local instructor was a former American naval infantryman of Lebanese descent. Often they trained in a monastery, based upon personal, informal contacts between a monk and the officers. In stark contrast to the political parties, these cells were organized along decentralized lines and accepted partisans of all organizations sharing a conservative Christian outlook (‘Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, pp. 28ff.).

Apart from the similarities in expecting a certain kind of organization, a break from traditions and a modern nation based on (unconsciously) sectarian lines, both the biographical sketches of Pakradouni and the latter member show quite a remarkable similarity in their expectations of a party. Both emphasized the way towards the modern nation via a party that did not restrict itself to classic liberal partyism. Rather, they were expected to bring about a new society of modern citizens bound to their state by an umbilical cord.

Yet these parties were committed to the normativity of the people having a say, a normativity forcing them into a reciprocal process of legitimization. The dynamics of an inner logic underneath that idea became clear in the decentralization based upon the rank and file having their own expectations, and organizing, if necessary, their own politics in informal networks. Even Pierre Gemayel’s younger son, Bashir, organized his own informal subgroup inside the party, the Friends of the Kata’ib. It consisted of younger members at odds with forging compromises and was greatly helped by the local section leader at Beirut–Achrafieh, who allowed them to take over the local party cell there (Ménargues 2004, pp. 42f.) in order to attract support among the party youth (Duplan and Raulin 2015, p. 41). These dynamics were

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140 Initially the party youth was trained, starting out in 1969 with 20 teenagers from Beirut, mushrooming up to 450 in a camp near Byblos in 1975: see Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, II, pp. 47ff.
not restricted to expectations of being prepared for a worst-case scenario: they also affected the parties internally. It would be certainly a grave mistake to tell history solely as a sequence of generations, yet the 1960s affected a new generation with an idea of how to do politics. In a way, the above-mentioned Najjah Wakim was a somehow typical representative of a generation: as in Western, and to a lesser extent Eastern countries, the academic youth was in those years more and more inclined to the left. This politization of students on the left did affect the flourishing of parties in general. Not only did the leftists staff the dozens of Marxist-inspired groups, but, comparable to the situation after World War I, by swelling their ranks they also mobilized those who would neither take an “Arabist stance” in the country nor wished for any kind of Marxism. One of these was a young man from a northern family, Samir Geagea, who joined the party in 1968 and rose through its military ranks during the war. In his biography the party, again, stands for the rational, the youthful, the modern, and the democratic, teaching the structured rationality of patriotism to the raw sectarian fanatics. Despite its orbit around Pierre Gemayel’s strong personality, for him it also stood for the “Christian street,” breaking thereby with the old and the parochial. As with others, a rebellious juvenility is emphasized: the young man is not subservient. He rather sublimates a wild, unfocused rebellion to one for a cause by undergoing the disciplining regimen of the party. Yet he acquires agency, since he as an individual shares the will to overcome “tribalism and feudalism.” So far, that is a fairly typical Lebanese account of a socialization process. Yet, we are told, he has been at loggerheads with Pierre Gemayel, about the party and its decision-making process: Gemayel simply brushed his criticism off with the remark that it was he who founded the party, so it would be up to him to decide: “I created the party and I do not accept any kind of mischief and deviation in the party.” (ash-Shartuni 2008, pp. 117ff.) Thus, despite the party acknowledging opposition as each member’s right, it was still very much top-down – the towering personality of Pierre Gemayel reduced tensions between various factions by its sheer weight (ʾIsthiyy 2007b, pp. 54-47). Although the argument between him and Geagea was as late as in 1979, it illustrates the party’s top-heaviness as well as the problems that arose out of it. Whereas we learn that Geagea had respect for Pierre Gemayel, it seems to be legimitatory to him and his partisans to include the story of a revolt against breaking the idea of active reciprocity within the party. This rapid spread of new expectations as to how the leader should perform can also be located in the wider framework of societal reform, climaxing in the Chéhab era (Saghiyyah 1991, p. 63). Not only leftists, but

141 According to Theodor Hanf 2015, p. 126, FN 233, 60% of them supported leftist parties: 7.8% the PSP, 18.6% the SSNP, 12.9% the Communist Party, and 21.4% favored other left-wing groups.
also conservative students like Samir Geagea wished for changes within their organizations. These wishes originated in the very idea of being a “real party”.

We have seen in this chapter how a new organization was founded as a product of genuine social change, and within a situation in which answering the question of what the body politic might be became an urgent necessity within a densifying Lebanese public. We saw their intellectual concepts as vernacularizations of global discourses related to a modern, democratic age. They were focused on bringing about and forming a society of vigorous, self-determined citizens. Their societal roots were likewise to be sought in a change, brought about by a considerable broadening of the base of formulating politics, strongly favored by access to new educational assets. The concepts they elaborated underwent constant change; yet the untouchable resources of how to imagine the Lebanese state remained largely unchanged. And as a legitimatory narrative, they could be even be turned against the party leadership.
CHAPTER IV: THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR

It is not my intention to write the war’s history again. Rather, this panorama emphasizes those points leading to new political actors and the relationship they had with the nation-state and democracy, as related to modernity. I will start with the war’s outbreak, arguing that it was a widespread mobilization, only to be channeled by parties. In the case of the Phalanges, their social and military apparatus may have started out as an impromptu solution, standing in for an eclipsing state, contrary to their discourse being about the expectation of having a state able to live up to a global standard. Never was the “dream of a republic,” as the imagined epitome of overcoming their own weaknesses, as visible than during the war. Finally, as soon as they encountered the only chance they ever had to take over the state, they failed because of their intellectual legacy. When this failure resulted in a further process of fragmentation and exceptionalizing Lebanese Christianity, the war leaders wrestled power from the old party elite’s hands. I will try to shed some light on the most controversial programmatic point of this exceptionalism by briefly discussing the federalism discourse. This controversial topic stood for the most decisive effort to set order during the war by repositioning the conception of what the state and the body politic should be. It resulted in formulating an only superficially Lebanese nationalism into an outright Christian one. Both tendencies - exceptionalizing the Christians even more by proposing more or less a confederation and making use of brute, unchecked power - led directly into the emergence of ‘Aounism as a renewed perspective for a unitarian state. Referring primarily to written and oral testimonies, I will in the last section of the chapter, elaborate on how the legitimate narrative of standing “only” for the state, provided for a broad movement by allegedly offering the utopian vision of affecting the “real” nation.

1. FROM MOBILIZATION TO COORDINATION
Theodor Hanf characterized the war’s outbreak as a “slide into civil war” (Hanf 2015, pp. 206-210). What began as a drive-by-shooting on Pierre Gemayel and his bodyguards soon turned into a chain of events reinforcing each other. The enemy had to be identified; “the Muslims” or “the Christians” stood as identity markers for political positions chosen for attacks. Thus, inherent dynamics of communal violence were set in motion.
Mobilization was done at a local, personalized level. Businessmen and parties alike organized their logistics, church bells were rung to assemble those willing to fight (Salmon 2004 and 2006, pp. 1f., 110-126). The confines of a sectarian identity as well as the local space, also provided the motivation for the fighters who saw themselves as defenders of a tiny, ever endangered community:

“They [his family, C. T.] taught me that we live amongst a sea of Muslims and we have to protect and preserve our existence. They taught me this and (then) they wanted me to watch. I am not a coward. ..) We are a minority ... . If we do not fight to protect our rights, we will be eradicated. It is not only from Muslims that live in Lebanon but also from the Palestinians who came to our country as refugees and were preparing to build their state in Lebanon. We cannot accept that. They had to go back to their country. So, we had no chance but to fight. All these fears grew with me and made me ready to fight.” (quoted in: L. K. Haddad and Monroe 2002, pp. 23, 25)

Similarly, Robert Hatem, a low-ranking former militiaman, comments in his autobiography about the incident at ‘Ain ar-Rummanah, when Pierre Gemayel was shot at, “Rumors were not unfounded. The Palestinians were indeed dead set on slaughtering the Christians!” He just saw the events on television and responded to the al-Kata’ib’s call for mobilization (Hatem n. d., p. 4). Others tell the same localized story. A female fighter of the LF stated, “Why should I have regrets? I know I defended my neighborhood, my family, and myself.” Jocelyne Khoueiry, a well-known LF volunteer, widely advertised as the “poster woman” of the militia, narrates the roots of her engagement as being sparked by “a lot of talk about a Palestinian armed presence and how it is dangerous to have non-security (…) we were defending each other against an enemy that was aiming his guns on us.” (Ibid. and similarly: Duplan and Raulin 2015) In her case, she grew up in a conservative Christian milieu and read the Phalanges journal as a teenager, engaging with the party, where, in 1974, she received her basic training (Duplan and Raulin 2015, pp. 28ff., 34-42). Another former militant of the Lebanese Forces joined the militia due to feeling attacked in a regional environment perceived to be hostile to Christians who feared being annihilated. The dynamics of entire groupings being targeted, was very much a driving force for her decision (Sneifer 2006, pp. 41-63). These dynamics extended to the Palestinians whose first involvements were undertaken by units acting on their own (Sayigh 1997, pp. 364, 374ff.).

142 A LF-fighter in: “Lebanon’s Women Warriors,” TV-documentary by al-Jazeera (first aired in 2010), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5K949L_qs0, rev. 2016-07-05. All the other portrays do not differ in that hindsight.
Neither the Phalangist leadership, as the Palestinian Fatah command, wanted a full-scale war at that time (Cobban 1984, pp. 67f.). Therefore, the official institutions occasionally tried to mediate to no avail, as the dynamics of rapid mobilization unfolded. Despite virtually sliding into war, the parties provided organizational patterns and a narrative. The Phalanges, who had, shortly before the war, reached a membership of around 70,000, doubled in numbers until the early 1980s (Kuderna 1983, p. 108). They attracted a new surge of members, often from their own social environment, who had yet not passed the status of being “registered supporters” (see examples in: Ḥishtiyy 1997b, pp. 60, 59). This signals a wide mobilization connecting to existing symbolisms, conveyed by families and organizations. It related to already existing narratives of being overpowered by Muslims, even when their opponents were not necessarily all devout Muslims, but driven by secular Arab nationalism.

Bashir Gemayel, born in 1947 and soon to become the leader of the “Lebanese Forces,” vowed that Christians would never accept having their identity dissolved and absorbed by Arabism, thus suspecting that Muslims would essentially unify all Arabs in one Muslim state (B. Gemayel 1980, p. 11). Therefore, lumping together Islamic dominance, Arab unity and international Communism, which Pierre Gemayel or Camille Chamoun saw as the roots of the war, was no contradiction to that perspective.\textsuperscript{143} Pointing out many Muslim countries’ such as Egypt, Tunisia or Syria’s stipulations that it was obligatory for the president to be a Muslim, Bashir Gemayel saw Christians reduced to a mere existence and not a part of the body politic. By referring to the pre-modern practice of ordering the subaltern out of the righteous’ paths and by calling them to “go to the left” (ʾIshmil):

“... Lebanon, on whose land are people who are refusing to live as dhimmis, who are refusing to 'yishmil', who are refusing to live on their knees, who are refusing to live as second-class citizens, who only accept to live with full security and with full freedom and with full dignity.” (quoted in: Geha 2010, p. 256)

The topos of the “head held high” (raʾs marfuʿa) is obviously at the center of this discourse. It builds with slogans such as “lan naʾish dhimmi” (we will not live as dhimmis)\textsuperscript{144} relative to the concept of self-determination. It relates further to the idea of

\textsuperscript{143} For Pierre Gemayel see f. e. one of his talks to US diplomats, obviously rather a stern lecture by him than a talk on eye-level, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976STATE215366_b.html. For Chamoun and his idea that “international communism” flamed up the Lebanese conflict of 1958 by shelling both sides to cause a full-scale war: Chamoun 1963, pp. 7f.

\textsuperscript{144} There is also publication titled “we won’t live as dhimmis” authored by Antoine Najm. Amin Naji, [i.e. Antoine Najm], lan naʾish dhimmi (Beirut/Kaslik: n. p. [Lebanese Forces], 1979); I owe deep gratitude to André Sleiman for informing me that Antoine Fattal, who negotiated the Lebanese peace-treaty with Israel in 1983,
being strong and reinvigorated, already encountered at the roots of the Phalanges, since “all what assaults us is all fought off by us ourselves.” (Bashir Gemayel, quoted in: Sanjab 1985, p. 40)

The other topos, so closely related to self-determination is the anxiety of being uprooted, “thrown into the sea.” It existed among the fighters, as seen before, as well as in the official discourse of the LF. It was about Palestinian refugees “taking] control of the country” (quoted in Hanf 2015, p. 383), of being “a people too many” (Interview 17), or in the short and catchy slogan, ”wa nabqiy” - ”yet we stay” – which has been placarded, painted and sprayed countless times since then on the walls of Christian Lebanon.

Picture 4
A poster widely spread of Bashir Gemayel with the “yet we stay”-motif on the right at Furn ash-Shubbak, a Christian dormitory town slightly to the South East of Beirut. Taken by the author in 2012.
Samir Geagea, one of Bashir Gemayel’s successors at the LF’s helm, explained that all he wanted was security for the Christians, since he could not lead “my people” elsewhere (Hanf 2015, p. 432), elaborating:

“... there was the sinister plan born, to grab Lebanon for turning it into a country up for a change, by trying first to reduce the Christian ethnicity opposed to it.” (B. Gemayel 1980, p. 12)

Locating the enemy outside of “the Lebanese” was always one facet of this discourse. To blame the US for the big plan to serve the Palestinians with a state of their own, instead of forcing Israel to cede the occupied territories, is probably the most frequently employed mechanism. Former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, was notably made into a bogeyman for allegedly selling the Lebanese Christians down the river. In fact, the “Kissinger plan” of swapping Palestine for a part of Lebanon is a rather cheap forgery created by a Lebanese journalist (Sleiman 2014b). This conspiracy thinking reads all the more oddly, since Bashir Gemayel did not only ally himself readily with the Israelis, but cooperated closely with the American CIA (Woodward 1987, p. 217).
These fears of being “thrown out,” were not only readily available as representations of some “minority psyche,” they were exaggerated by a likewise determined attitude on the other side; Mu’ammar al-Gadhafi announced an Arab could in principle, be only a Muslim. Therefore, the Lebanese Christians should rather convert to Islam (Hanf 1981, pp. 42, 44). Both the eccentric brutality the “Brother Leader” meted out against dissenters at home and the presence of some of his troops in Lebanon, supporting the “Lebanese National Movement,”145 added a physical dimension to this discourse. Another very vividly remembered146 verbal aggression was the unauthenticated dictum of the way to Jerusalem leading through Jounieh – the biggest Maronite city of the world and the Patriarch’s seat. For many, it stood as an unveiled threat to destroy the cultural heart of their community and thereby their political self-determination, if not existence (cf. Cobban 1984, p. 78).

The logic of war forced both sides to form common command structures to coordinate the locally mobilized fighters. The “Lebanese National Movement” (LNM) tied into existing structures of leftist cooperation. It comprised, among smaller groups, Jumblatt’s socialist PSP, the Communists, the Trotskyist “Organization for Communist Action in Lebanon” (OACL), the SSNP, the pro-Syrian and the pro-Iraqi Ba’ath parties, the “Popular Nasserite Organization” in Sa’ida, another Nasserite group at Tripoli, several versions of the Nasserite “Arab Socialist Union,” the al-Murabitun, organized by Ibrahim Qulaylat, the Trotskyist “Workers’ League,” as well as the Sunni Islamist “Soldiers of God” and a plethora of neighborhood groups (Sayigh 1997, p. 370; Hanf 2015, p. 187).

The Lebanese Forces (LF) on the other side were, technically seen, the armed wing of the “Lebanese Front” (al-Jabhah al-Lubnaniyyah). The latter emerged in January 1976 as a coordination committee of conservative Christian organizations, initially comprising the al-Kata’ib, the National Liberals (NLP), former President Suleiman Frangié, the Maronite Monks147, the Tanzim, the Movement of the Lebanese Youth, a small localized group from

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145 So, for example, in 1976, Iraqi and Libyan troops tried to break through rightist Christian defenses near “Galerie Semaan” to rush to Tell az-Za’atar’s help, see: Hanf 2015, p. 223; Cobban 1984, p. 77. Later on, even a Libyan SAM-battery was deployed to Lebanon: Sayigh 1997, p. 505; Algerian troops were said by the US embassy at Beirut to have debarked at Sa’ida in August 1976, US Embassy 1976-08-13, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976BEIRUT06921_b.html. Sayigh 1997, p. 402 indicates a regular Iraqi commando battalion and somewhat between 1,500 and 5,500 members of the “Popular Army” participated in the initial phase of the war on the side of the “Lebanese National Movement”. Other Arab countries helped as well: besides numerous volunteers hailing from nearly all over the world, Egypt released her PLA-force to Lebanon, ammunition, weapons and non-lethal supplies arrived from countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and South Yemen, cf. Ibid.

146 Several Lebanese Christians, as well informal interlocutors as official interviewees, used it to prove the danger they thought the Christians were in.

147 Whom the American Embassy characterized as being on exactly this active political involvement at odds with their Patriarch, but imbued with “ideological fervor” and blessed a considerable wealth, cf. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976STATE211589_b.html. The official episcopate kept a very low profile
Dikwanah, composed primarily of adherents of Raymond Eddé, the Maronite League, a mostly upper-class conservative circle of Christians, the extremely militant “Guardians of the Cedar” (Hurras al-Arz) and several prominent Christians (cf. Picard 1980; Kuderna 1983, p. 96; Snider 1984, p. 13; Helmick 1988, p. 311).

The “Front” was established in June 1976 to coordinate the Christian militias’ assault on the isolated, but heavily armed, Palestinian camp of Tell az-Za’tar to the East of Beirut (Snider 1984, p. 5). Numbers from June 1976, tell us a lot about who provided the most resources to the LF and who was about to dominate the militia-to-be. Whereas the Phalanges mobilized some 5,000 adherents, only 1,000 -2,000 “Numur” (“Tigers”, the militia of the NLP), several hundred each from the “Guardians of the Cedar”, the Tanzim and from the Maronite Monks, served in a common formation that fielded up to 30,000 fighters over the course of that year (1980, p 32). A further 1,000 to 2,500 fighters served in Major Sa’ad Haddad’s “South Lebanon Army” (SLA), whose rank and file were initially largely composed out of Christians but turned into a more and more Christian-Shiite mercenary force under Israeli command, have to be added. The Lebanese Forces were almost completely Christian. Lewis Snider (1984, p. 13) considered the official percentage of 5-7% Muslims among the Forces’ ranks as obviously too high. The LF-encyclopedia (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, II, p. 9) claims each a small Druze and Shiite organization to have joined the “Front”: However, both had no influence whatsoever on the war. Two other non-Christian allies were the Druze ‘Arslani-family, who had a strong rivalry with the Jumblatts, dominating the Shuf with their PSP and the Shiite lawyer Muhsin Salim, who had served as parliamentarian between 1960 and 1964, (Kuderna 1983, p. 103).

As a general tendency, the military leadership became increasingly unified in the hands of Bashir Gemayel, growing in autonomy from the political leadership. The “Lebanese Front,” instead, turned into “a sort of council of elders,” (Helmick 1988, p. 311) whereby the parties in question were increasingly militarized by their very own military apparatuses’ (al-Khazin 2002, p. 2012, p. 50). Violence, as Max Bergholz (2016) has observed, can be a truly generative force, generating sources of power by the sheer usage of violence. Pierre Gemayel was well informed by his son on the militia’s plans and purposes. Often the risk of being presented with a fait accompli made the party leader a tacit approver (Ménargues 2004, p. 50). The generational shift, already simmering before the war, had finally become evident within during the war, as did most Muslim clerics; cf. Scheffler 1999b. Normally, the Maronite Patriarch desperately tries to refrain from getting actively involved into politics, which could tarnish his authority; he stands for the community as a symbol of spiritual unity only acting as kingmaker in times of vacuum: McCallum 2012.
the al-Kata‘ib. The whole pattern of generating new power centers oscillated between set policies and the opening up of opportunities filled by the fighters themselves.

2. SURROGATE OF THE STATE

When the war broke out, Beirut’s city center was widely destroyed and with it the common economic assets. All those institutions symbolizing communal living in Lebanon sank into ruins; the country was broken up into survival entities (G. Corm 1988; Picard 1999, p. 52). However, despite all common pillaging at the frontlines (Endres 2000, pp. 226f.), a broad tendency could be seen in how the militias behaved during the war; hardly anyone bothered to build such a well-organized institutionalization of a de-facto state as the Lebanese Forces did. The PSP tried at least to partially do something similar in the Shuf (J. Harik 1994) - as did the Palestinians (Sayigh 1997, pp. 447-463, 495-500). All three were groups with an exceptionally well elaborated idea of bringing about a modern society with its strong state, and acquired the necessary resources to do so. I will elaborate here how the Lebanese Forces were indeed influenced by the heritage of blueprint utopianism (here as part of “shirt partyism”) and how that influenced their behavior. To see oneself as the surrogate of the state (exemplarily: Mausuw‘ah al-Quwwat, II, p. 15; Geha 2018, p. 290) 148 constituted an important part of the failure to live up to the aspirations of forming the germ cell of a renewed Lebanon. This self-understanding could be best seen from their own name and by them taking over sovereign tasks of the state, such as issuing birth and death certificates (Baylouny 2014, p. 335), or taking over Lebanese embassies abroad: The LF came up with some key-missions, such as the ones in Washington, Paris, Geneva, and Bonn, transforming them into platforms of their own version of the conflict (Snider 1984, p. 22).

In fact, this surrogate was not about establishing a state but confusing oneself with the state by demarcating one’s own social and political order as the separated entity constituting a state. Starting therefrom, I will try to show how they conceived themselves as “surrogates” of the state, for the better Lebanon to come, how that reached its climax with Bashir Gemayel’s ascension to power and degenerated afterwards into more decentralized forms.

This discussion is extremely relevant. As one FPM functionary stated, most contemporary Lebanese parties are “historical parties”; they refer themselves back to the war (Interview 26).

148 Samir Geagea used the notion of the “surrogate” (literally: replacement state) himself for example in an interview in an-Nahar, 1990-03-08, see: Mausuw‘ah al-Quwwat, XVII, p. 66.
Thus, a good deal of what makes up Lebanese politics today is still influenced by the question where one stood during the war or how one thinks about what happened back then.

Interestingly, despite the pessimism displayed about the abilities to “convert” Muslims to Lebanonism, reflected in the discussion of federalism (see further down), the LF still grasped their sole chance to seize power over the Lebanese state, to shape it along the lines of their conception. It was when Ariel Sharon, Israeli Minister of Defense, early in 1982, visited Lebanon and his Christian allies (Ménargues 2004, pp. 215-223.). On February 9, 1982, after this visit, Bashir Gemayel began his “Gamma Group,” the name allegedly symbolizing “dynamism,” a “Think Tank” of conservative Christian academics to provide a plan for rebuilding the country. On August 23, 1982, in the context of a massive Israeli military intervention in the Lebanese Civil War, Bashir Gemayel was elected President of the Republic, and he produced a program to his compatriots titled “Basic Options for a Governmental Program” under the telling motto “khidmah al-mawatin” (serving the homeland), an open allusion to the Phalangist salute “fi khidmah Lubnan” (serving Lebanon) (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, II, pp. 27-31).

This program did not come out of nothing. As soon as warfare needed some organization, Pierre Gemayel stated laconically, “Bombardment or not, I do not care. My children have to eat.” (Duplan and Raulin 2015, p. 56) The already existing networks of parties, local populations, and the church alike, took over functions of the state. In the Phalangists’ case, local committees collected the waste, provided free schoolbooks, opened up a vocational school, officially registered art dealers, and set up public transportation for its quarter. Before the war, these committees were ideologically intended to “strengthen a sense of responsibility” among the Lebanese (cf. Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, II, pp. 11-18). Simultaneously, they formed a part of the “relational identities,” who are “(...) linked to the widespread lack of faith and trust in the state to deliver protection and critical services.” (Joseph 2011, p. 159) To centralize all that, HELP Lebanon (Humanitarian Endowment for the Lebanese People), with a volunteer staff of around 350 activists, was founded by Bashir Gemayel in 1978 (Numbers of partisans involved in these activities are differing, see: Snider 1984, pp. 20ff.; Rieger 2003, p. 258; Cammett 2014, pp. 167f.). Their coordinator was Georges Freyha, a microbiologist and married to one of Bashir Gemayel’s cousins (Snider 1984, pp. 24f.; J. Harik 1994, pp. 15f.; Salmon 2006, p. 140).

In addition, the LF ran public beaches, a child evacuation program, private lessons, and an emergency line (Baylouny 2014, p. 338). For a program to support local agriculture, the
Forces even prided themselves in having mobilized Italian state money (Saghiyyah 1991, p. 237). Two years after Samir Geagea took over the LF in 1985, another organization sprang to life, the Solidarité Sociale (Mu’assasat at-Tadmun al-Ijtima’iyyah) under Victor Ghurayb. This provided the new leader with his own network to channel resources to his followers. Consequently, the Phalangist “Committees” lost a lot of their formerly held importance (J. Harik 1994, pp. 15f.; Rieger 2003, p. 260; Salmon 2006, p. 103). All in all, in 1989/90 around 22,000 people were directly on the Forces’-payroll, (Salmon 2006, p. 103).

This shows a remarkable tendency during the war: what started out rather spontaneously grew more and more into an organized endeavor. Popular, decentralized mobilization was now replaced by professional fighters, or as Theodor Hanf put it, “The hard core of ‘dad’s army’ of 1975-76 was gradually knocked into shape.” (Hanf 2015, p. 333) However, that shape was to be assumed by brute power.

Under the slogan of “unifying the Christian gun” (tauhid al-bunduqiyah al-masihiyah), a brutal drive to close ranks was unleashed against the various groups constituting the LF in order to fuse them under Bashir Gemayel’s leadership into a more capable fighting force. The “Movement of the Lebanese Youth” gave in after just a few encounters with the Phalangists at Dikwanah (Kuderna 1983, p. 184). The Armenian Dashnak party, who, in 1976, had initially supported the NLP fighters in forcing out the Muslim population of Ras an-Nabā’a, were attacked in 1978-79. Armenians outside of Bourj Hammoud were killed and tortured. In the end, the Dashnak stood its ground, remaining in a neutral until amicable position (Minassian 2002, pp. 47, 54f., 353-356).

The LF’s storm on Ehden in June 1976, which caused the Frangié’s withdrawal from its ranks, was probably the bloodiest of these efforts to create centralized power structures as part and parcel of the logic of war. After quarrels over the control of local resources, escalating in the death of a local Kata’ib functionary, Phalangists stormed the Frangié villa at Ehden in an organized blow against a political rival. It is still a matter of debate if Tony Frangié and his family were intended to be massacred or not. Samir Geagea, the commander of the attack did not participate in the slaughtering, after having been seriously wounded in its initial stages (among others: Ménargues 2004, p. 49; Labévière 2009; Aubin-Boltanski 2002, pp. 62-65; Hanf 2015, pp. 234-237). The massacre resulted in an irreconcilable break between Suleiman Frangié’s Maradah and the Lebanese Forces/Kata’ib.

149 I was not able to verify if that means the same dairy farm, the LF opened in 1991 at Byblos with money from the European Community, cf. J. Harik 1994, p. 36.
After several clashes, the “Numur” were virtually wiped out as an independent organization by a bloody all-out attack on them in July 1980 (Hanf 2015, pp. 247f.; Hatem n.d., pp. 12f.). Since Camille Chamoun had rejected the formation of a Christian-Conservative united party, together with the Phalanges, the most important competitor within the same political camp and a rival for receiving Israeli assistance, needed for taking over the Lebanese state, was eliminated (Ménargues 2004, p. 53). Nevertheless, Chamoun remained at the “Front’s” helm (Hanf 2015, p. 238).

The “Guardians of the Cedar” ceased to be autonomous within the LF too. In 1980, their members continued to play a role inside the LF, especially Étienne Saqr (Kuderna 1983, p. 189).

After this series of bloody clashes, by 1980, the Lebanese Forces were able to absorb their members into centrally organized units, establishing a coherent training regime (Ménargues 2004, p. 55; Salmon 2006, p. 136). It now controlled a relatively powerful force of up to 6,000 professional fighters and 10,000 reserves (Hanf 2015, p. 248). From 1986 onwards, officers were required to have a one to two year university education (Salmon 2006, p. 102). Non-military subjects were included in the curriculum, often given by academics. The ordinary fighters were likewise professionalized, and the first mobilizational wave died out. Thus, the underprivileged from Rmeil and Medwar, rather than the bourgeoisie of Achrafieh, found a place in the Lebanese Forces’ ranks (Saghiyyah 1991, p. 172). Later, in the 1980s, more and more originated from the north, and many were embittered refugees; the locally mobilized fighters mostly assumed the role of a reserve force (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, V, p. 9; Rieger 2003, pp. 263f., also FN 539. Hanf 2015, p. 301). Weapons were mostly smuggled in from abroad, at times unofficially distributed by army personnel, sometimes simply robbed from army barracks, overtaken by militias (For example: ‘Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, p. 33). In the LF’s case, the weapons were bought, ironically up to three fourths, from Ba’athist Iraq, who stood opposed to rivalling Syria’s influence in the region; another fourth was brought from Israel (Picard 1999, p. 61). At least when reselling these weapons, militias kept the

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151 Whereas the military training was mostly done in the morning and during the night, the afternoon was used for physical exercises and political teachings, normally two hours a day, as reported by a participant, Interview 15.

152 Interestingly, Anja Peleikis 2006, p. 138 had observed for Christian refugees from Southern Lebanon that they often professed the most sectarian identities, due to their uprooting from a multi-sectarian surrounding. The “other” is for them only grasped as an anonymous Muslim mass, which is taken out of its historical context.
etiquette of political camps: the PSP sold weapons to leftist Southern American fighters, the LF preferred the rightist Nicaraguan “Contras” (Endres 2004 p. 114).

To finance all this, revenue had to be generated. At around 1980, these incomes had become considerably regularized as “taxes”, which had to be paid for things such as building houses, buying tickets for the movies or a theater, entering a ferry to Cyprus, eating out in a restaurant, refueling one’s car, passing a roadblock etc. (among others: Snider 1984, Ménargues 2004, p. 47; Rieger 2003, p. 265; Endres 2004; pp. 130f.; Hanf 2015, p. 333.)

The problem herein starts at the very core of functioning as a surrogate of the state. All these activities, said to step in for the state, have a Janus face. They were indeed replacing a state whose functions were eroded even more during the war. On the other hand, the surrogates dismantled what they vowed to strengthen. That became nowhere more visible than in the case of the infamous Caisse des Carburantes. The ledgers seem to have disappeared during the war, having been literally emptied by the various participants of the civil war. Until 1986, its money had been used to subsidize the import and re-export of petroleum products. Since the war broke out, militias took over business (Endres 2000 and 2004, p. 139; Picard 1999, p. 63).

What legally constituted “smuggling” turned into a large-scale business; the fifth basin of Beirut Harbor was no longer supervised by the state’s customs service, but by the LF (Hanf 2015, p. 333). In fact, the Lebanese state’s share of custom revenues fell from 60% in 1983 to 10% only three years later (Picard 1999, p. 53). The national tobacco monopolist even struck a bargain with the militias, securing a monopoly for each of their territories. In turn, the fighters had to stop cigarette smuggling, against the small “incentive” of raising the prices by 8% per packet. A surplus that flew into the respective group’s budget (Picard 1999, p. 63).

For the airstrip at Hamat, for which Bashir Gemayel allegedly gave his “go-ahead” with a flourishing gesture (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, II, pp. 42-46), the money came at least partially, from the Lebanese state; more precisely from Gemayel’s archenemy Walid Jumblatt, who in those times served as Minister of Public Works (Picard 1999, p. 73). This Janus faced character of the “surrogate” is what actually makes up a considerable part of all that bitterness surrounding the present day Christian inner conflict between FPM and LF/Kata’ib. The latter

153 Besides, the LF also operated several smaller, un-licensed harbors. Likewise, all other militias also tried to set up their own port facilities. Ten of them were officially legalized during the dying months of the war, cf. Picard 1999, p. 63.

154 The number of ships offloaded in the official ports of Beirut and Tripoli sank in 1986 alone by 24% resp. 18.5%, Endres 2004, p. 127; Between 1976 and September 1979, goods with a total value of around 3 billion USD had allegedly been imported into Lebanon without paying the official tariffs, Ibid., p. 125. The full revenues the LF generated in the end-eighties were published in 1990 by Michel ‘Aoun in a “Livre Noir”, tabularized by: Rieger 2003, p. 266.
two emphasize the underlying dilemma of their “model state”, whereas the FPM focus on the coercive element of taking over society and state. Thus, seizing control over several of Lebanon’s still flourishing banks to “launder” the militia’s money, could be seen either as a necessary step in financing their own fighting, or as a criminal act. That Phalangists assuming important positions in the state’s central bank and the commission to oversee banking activities in 1982 (Moore 1983, p. 15), could be considered as promoting competent new elites to set up the hoped for “Dream of a Republic,” or as a continuation of pre-war patronage practices: the militiaman turning into the new za’im (Picard 1999, p. 56; Rieger 2003, p. 259). Setting up an own economic network could be understood as a necessity to finance a war or as an arrogation of an economic monopoly. All these valuations are less dependable from an objective perspective but whom exactly – General ‘Aoun and his movement or the Lebanese Forces – were considered to be “the state,” standing legitimately for “the people”?

One important point certainly was that not everyone paid voluntarily. Kingston and Zahar (2004, p. 85) speak about an “authoritarian corporativism”. Those who now had the power to enforce payment, at times made ample use of it. Firms, for example, had to put militiamen as “guardsmen” on their official payrolls (Picard 1999, p. 64; Rieger 2003, p. 265). Other forms of generating income were less subtle. Gambling tycoon Roger Tamraz, had to pay the LF 30 million USD every month for enjoying a monopoly over this industry in the “Eastern region” (Rieger 2003, p. 265, FN 545). Tamraz is also an illustrative example of how this coercive power got misused for purely personal profit. Not everything the militias did was ideology driven. Thus, Tamraz himself had no problem with also establishing close commercial ties with the PSP, as well as with Syrian minister of defense, Mustafa Tlass. In 1989, Elie Hobeika, who had broken with the LF in 1985 and switched sides to the Syrians, kidnapped, tortured and released him against a ransom of 5 million USD (Hatem n. d., pp. 62-65).

After 1983, the militias did not only resemble small armies - and the official armed forces more a militia – (Hanf 2015, p. 335) they also progressively tied up with the country’s criminal networks (Picard 1999, p. 65). That already indicates a problem, which cannot be related back to different standpoints towards the war. The arrogation of power to enrich oneself, the breaking of all norms in protracted military daily life, resembled the very same type of state prevalent in the region: the state-class-regime, turning once revolutionary

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155 In fact, the LF was able to control in its area in late 1989 with de facto the fields of transportation, fishing, printing, the import of food and domestic appliances. See for a comprehensive list of their firms: Endres 2004, p. 142. On their control over various banks, cf. N. Hourani 2010.
regimes holding widely uncontested power, into self-privileging networks living off of resource extraction (Elsenhans 1984).

3. “Resistance” and the “Dream of the Republic”
In order to understand why the LF developed into an apparatus that increasingly drove a wedge between the Lebanese Christians themselves, we also need to understand the conceptions of politics that drove them. The Lebanese Forces’ described their own activities with a vocabulary whose meaning reached far beyond these normal mechanisms of mobilizing in wartime. It ties heavily in with all modernist movements imbued by the idea of actually forming society by setting order. Despite its remarkable radicalization during the war, it cannot be separated from pre-war discourses.

In all three parties being considered here, the war has provided for those situations described with a vocabulary of “dream” and “hope.” Thus, the “dream of a republic” is not just a distant mirage: It is a “hope,” bringing about the “promise of change” as a “torch of resurrection” (Abou 1984, p. 46). All these notions contrasted with the “capable state” (daulah qadirah) and its society of citizens to the present state, as the one polity where output and input might make up a society living up to the normativity of a democratic modernity. Be it Michel ʿAoun as standing against contemporary Lebanon being “the provisory, the occasional, the momentous, the daily, that is carried away by the situation” (Interview 25), or Bashir Gemayel with the wistful desire for “a modern society,” “a Second Republic,” no less than “the state of the year 2000,” a “united nation, confident of its identity,” (Abou 1984, p. 49) they are all contrasted with Lebanon as a compromise, a “boutique,” a “broker,” some ambivalent “bridge” (between cultures) (Ibid.), with consociational democracy as a mere “theater” (al-Lahham, Mausuwʿah Hizb al-Kataʿib, VI, p. 121).

All these normativities stand in remarkable contrast to experienced reality. As a LF source complained:

“Why essentially a state, if it does not assist the needy poor and leaves him to his fate and the merchants’ recklessness, the monopolists, and the greedies’ greet? Why essentially a state if it sees the people threatened by death and turns a blind eye on it? Why do they risk their life to become representatives of the people as long as they not calculating and not
caring besides from what affects them every day from terror when they hear the stock-market’s news? (quoted in: Saghiyyah 1991, p. 234, my translation)\(^{156}\)

The “dream” stands as a utopianism for what ought to be there, “resistance” describes “bringing about” the ideal nation, confident of its identity and established in a functioning nation-state. This “resistance” (muqawamah) has to be understood as being holistic. “Resistance” or “Intifada” were related to “tanmiyyah” – development. All these terms are widely used in the Arabophone world. Michel ‘Aflaq, for example, made ample use of “Intifada” in the 1950s to describe the revolt of the “masses” for overcoming the “reactionary forces” (Bengio 2002, pp. 23ff.). Thus, the terminology has to be sought in the field of democratic politics, of a demos acting as a politically conscious and self-determined subject. The purpose of its action is “empowerment” as a collectively sought overcoming of weakness; in every sense, also a mental one.

Thus, the “nation of tomorrow” (Sharaf 1979, p. 79) is also about overcoming a “mercantilist spirit,” transforming a mere “people of speculators” (Geha 2010, p. 356), plagued by an “Ottoman spirit” (Jahel 1983, p. 24) as part of any “development,” through a “revolution of customs” (Abou 1984, p. 39):

“The primary weakness of the national structure in the past was the lack of the moral spirit in ourselves, and the lack of feeling of responsibility in us all. ... The primary problem facing us today ... more than political matters ... and more than military matters ... is the mindset we had in 30 years of mercantilism ...” (Bashir Gemayel in Jounieh 1979-04-12, quoted in: Geha 2010, pp. 66f.)

“Until 13\(^{th}\) April 1975 [the outbreak of the Civil War, C. T.], we considered ourselves a mercantilist people, who buys and sells, and conducts trade, but when the time for sacrifice comes, we cannot offer it.” (Ibid., p. 116.; speech held 1980-04-13)

Accordingly, developing from a mercantile service centered economy into an industrial state (Saghiyyah 1991, p. 237)\(^{157}\) is also a moral matter. It means sovereignty as self-determination, which needs more than the utilitarian mentality of the wheeler-dealer: freedom has to be deserved (Geha 2010, p. 357). Therein, democracy, economic development and a patriotic spirit are forming a whole, deciding over the ability to live democratically at all. Otherwise,


\(^{157}\) Originally Karim Pakradouni in *al-Masirah* 1987-08-22.
death in war as opposed to the frequently used motif of “life,”¹⁵⁸ would extinguish the very own existence:

“Spirit carries it, an identity. I do not mean thereby a current, a party or a sect, but a people resisting death and vanishing, [a people], which tries to push the stone from the tomb for whom it is [already] prepared. I mean a people refusing its fragmentation, embodying its continuity in the truthfulness of its [vocal] expressions and the completion of its patriotic and civilizational role, once this people is threatened by what dashes its being and existence. This is [indeed] a revolution against the occupation, the annihilation and death. We [indeed] embody the will of our people in persistence, and in its stubbornness for the free and dignified existence in its land.” (Sanjab 1985, p. 35)

Those said to face the dangers of annihilation are of course, the Christians. It is their fate that delivers the narrative of a true Lebanese. Therefore, it was not difficult at all to adapt this narrative to situations when “creating Lebanese” was more likely, or to those when the LF-dominated “Eastern region” indeed resembled more or less, a separate Christian polity.

The state itself as being weak, as being “rotten” and “struck by cancer” has to be taken over for a renewal (Mausuw'ah al-Quwwat, II, pp. 15f.) since its dysfunctionality has turned him into no less than an “enemy”:

“We were living in some kind of luxury ... we were living in some kind of nonchalance, ... we were living in some kind of irresponsibility ... It is becoming apparent to us how much we are in need of a fundamental revolt, against all the work ... against all the methods we used to solve our crises. It is becoming apparent to us how much our institutions are infiltrated from the inside ... it is becoming apparent to us how much these institutions are becoming institutions that are an ENEMY to our cause ....” (Geha 2010, pp. 172, 174, capitals in the original text)

“If the illness resists the treatment,” revolution as “the striving for radical change” might become necessary, as an “acceleration of the natural development in all areas and fields ... [as an] acceleration of the universal journey of fate” (Geagea: al-Fikr wa-l-Qadhiyyah):¹⁵⁹

“Oh, you resisters, there is no sovereignty without sweat and blood. There is no system-change without constant fighting, without fierce struggling. Verily, there is no future without revolution. The revolution is a belief and a message in the throat of every single

¹⁵⁸ The notion of a “Resistance for life” (muqawamah li-l-hayyah) was for example used in a speech featuring in a YouTube-video where he called Lebanon the “voice of life” (for Lebanon’s Christians), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzVHf6yrLmM, rev. 2015-05-24.

¹⁵⁹ Quotations from Samir Geagea (the first and last from an interview with the Phalangist newspaper al-'Amal from the 1st of January 1984, the one in between from a speech held 1977 in Bsharri.
one of us. ... The revolution is not a synonym of chaos, violence, destruction, and decay of things. The revolution is no slogan and no coup d'état. The revolution is necessary, necessary for the weak and the poor, the destitute, the punished, the single ones. It is verily necessary without limits and it is an endless movement. It is necessary for Christ. It is necessary for history. Verily, I see in your faces the traits of the true revolution: targeted, calm, conscious, hopeful. ... the revolution is born out of the resistance's womb." (Samir Geagea, quoted in: Mausuw'ah al-Quwwat, XVII, pp. 28f.)

This all-encompassing conception cannot allow for a hinterland. Thus, Bashir Gemayel explained to his audience in the relatively tranquil city of Byblos, that even their small city would not constitute anything but a hotly embattled battlefield, to be “… liberated from all relics from the past, who are still pulling it backwards and who are still pulling it downwards.” (Geha 2010, p. 145)

Even language could suddenly become a part of that “resistance” said to overcome “underdevelopment.” The “concealing” elaborate, literary language used by literature and conventional politicians alike has to be put away, since a “corrupted ethos” of the Lebanese expresses itself in a “corrupted language” (Abou 1984, pp. 97, 336). The “liberation through the truth” (Ibid., p. 41) is objective inasmuch as it strives for a “reviving” of an alleged heritage (Geha 2010, pp. 256, 261f.). Yet, this is not only about language. Rather, it is also about adopting coercive means for actually enforcing it. Thus, around 20 Lebanese (as of 1977, only two Muslims among them) were staffed at the Lebanese Forces’ censorship office in Eastern Beirut. It turned the “truth” into discursive reality by, for example, omitting all notions of a “civil war,” since Lebanon was allegedly only defending itself against a Palestinian “aggression” (Fisk 1990, pp. 97f.).

Often this discourse was embedded in religious narratives. Samir Geagea used reference to the eschatological, linking a Christian self-determined existence in Lebanon to a worldwide pattern of salvation, which he called “the universal journey of fate” (al-masirah al-kauniyyah). This notion is part of a language borrowed from French Catholic philosopher Teilhard de Chardin and from Augustine of Hippo, whose juxtaposition of the earthly kingdom and the “civitate dei” resembles the passage below:

“...The Christians live their Christendom, hence the Christian values, the Christian messiah works on earth according to God’s will; it is ours on earth to take over these our duties

160 He was quite popular among Lebanese Christian academics at that time. Among others, René Habachi, who heavily influenced his student Antoine Najm, who on his part has been Geagea’s spin-doctor, wrote a piece on him: R.Habachi 1955.
Thus, the holistic “resistance” is taking part in the course of the sacred. Foremost, we have to understand this as being pious. How else shall we expect someone with a deep faith to cope with the truly existential situation of war? Its political emphasis is on the mundane; it is about generating an inner-worldly benefit but lacks classic assets of religious fundamentalism (Thuselt 2016). Yet, the sacred language was part of a concept that no longer made a stark contrast to the pre-war versions of Phalangism, a distinction between various fields of political action. Most notably, between the organization and society. Taking into account of war as a certainly illiberal situation of competing for power, the LF did not keep different functions institutionally separated, but fused them together within their framework. As elsewhere, civil society was considered to be imperfect for bringing about the right consciousness as a unifying whole (see: Chatterjee 1993, p. 204). This is exactly what Claude Lefort analyzed as “totalitarian,” the “State and civil society are assumed to have merged …” (C. Lefort 1988, p. 13). Although the LF would heavily reject that (Interview 27).

Thus, a minister provided by the LF, Salim Jahel, reported on him and Bashir Gemayel visiting a LF training for new recruits (1983, p. 7). Gemayel, he recounted, told him while they watched the fighters to be trained that at the time, Jahel, would witness the birth of a nation through forming an army. On another occasion, Gemayel compared his own troops with the official army. Gemayel took this stance as proof that the army was not patriotic, since being patriotic obviously meant supporting what he defined as being Lebanese. Thus, the Lebanese Forces were an army with a cause for a cause. That meant also training men (and some women) “in morale … and morals” in “our battle against ignorance, against hate, against extremism, against nastiness” (Geha 2010, p. 261) for nothing less than a renewal of the whole country and for new citizens (Ibid., pp. 261f, 265f.). Therefore, true Patriots should leave the army and join the Forces (Ibid., p. 175), considered by their commander in chief as providing the nucleus for a new Lebanese army, as he acknowledged freely when conferring with the CIA (Ménargues 2004, p. 188).

161 From a speech held before a delegation of Lebanese expatriates (1987-10-12). In this anthology, a whole section is reserved to various quotations on this topic, pp. 14ff.
162 I elaborate there that the LF did not draft up a fundamentalist scheme. G. Hage 1992, Traboulsi 2007, p. 216, and Abou Khalil 1997, p. 138 suggest otherwise.
Samir Geagea, Gemayel’s most important successor at the LF’s helm, even spoke about a “new man” to be brought about by the experience of war, whose organizational backbone the Lebanese Forces’ were to provide:

“The [LF] are not only a military force but a political institution in every sense, to which the military belongs [as] an instrument. They are an institution instead, working on the construction of a new man, who got educated by the debris of war towards a new spirit, a new behavior, a working ethos, and ground laying work in the building of justice and cooperation.” (quoted in: Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, XVI, p. 69)

Questioning this cannot be anything else than a “… doubting of the whole society [of Lebanon and] of its people, its history, its lord …” (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, XVII, p. 31)

In the end, the radicalized wartime version of Phalangism openly planned the takeover of the state. These plans started out with President Elias Sarkis’ forced complicity by placing persons close to the LF within the state’s security apparatus (Ménargues 2004, pp. 58-68). In stark contrast to early Phalangism, when members subjected themselves voluntarily to strict discipline, the LF in wartime had coercive means at hands. Bashir Gemayel’s slogan “pluralism of the parties and the unification of the gun” (Sneifer 2006, p. 78), let alone Personalism, was simply counteracted by the mere power reality of warfare on the ground. However, the Lefortian understanding of totalitarianism might be suitable to determine if conceptions of totalitarian thinking might exist. With regard to practice, we still need the old Linz’ scheme of factual mobilization, monism, and unitarian ideology (Linz 2000). In fact, the Forces’ organizational capabilities were restricted; the longer the war went on, the greater the personal cost and the forces were torn apart by internal conflicts. In rural areas, where the old family structures were still intact, people did not need more than infrastructure to be provided by the “surrogate” (J. Harik 1994, p. 17). Despite the widely elaborated motif of training society, many Christian families, as well as the official army itself, resisted the first official draft of Christian students in 1980/81 into the Lebanese Forces in the LF held territory. Instead, registers had to be organized to “ask” potential recruits personally, in an officially unofficial way (Salmon 2006, pp. 101f., 136; see also: L. Elias 2009). Their most decisive limitations certainly were that they did not stand the slightest chance of taking over the country by themselves. Their opportunity only arose in 1982 with foreign help.

\[^{163}\text{Up to 65\% of the salaries paid went to the fighters, most supported families seem to have been their relatives, cf. Salmon 2006, p. 103.}\]
4. Taking Over the State

When the war had broken out, a certain pessimism had gained a foothold among Christian intellectuals and politicians regarding the ability to bring about a Lebanese identity. Yet, a power perspective being suddenly within reach, these concerns could still be set aside to grasp that chance in 1982, because their “Lebanonism” has always been a genuinely Christian one; it was all “on behalf of the Christians” (Lubnan balad min ajli-l-masihin, lakin mish li-l-masihin), as a popular formula puts it. Yet, as we will see in this section, this taking over was ill fated. Afterwards, discourses turned even more sectarian as a reaction to the missed chance. I will argue here that the Phalangist taking over of the state in 1982 failed, because during that episode, it became more visible than ever that they, as everyone else, did not stand for anything other than a particular version of a Lebanese identity whom they regarded as being the objective content of what it means to be a citizen within the renewed Lebanese society. Relying upon another foreign intervention, illustrated this better than anything else.

The already mentioned visit, which then Israeli Minister of Defense, Ariel Sharon, paid to his northern neighbor, had a clear intention: solving the problem of Palestinian fighters waging their war against Israel from Lebanese territory and installing a friendly government under Bashir Gemayel at Beirut (K. E. Schulze 1998, pp. 124-130). For the LF leadership, already trained, partially financed and armed by Israel, it meant solving the problems created by the felt danger of Palestinians being naturalized in Lebanon and finding an ally to get rid of the Syrian troops present since 1976, whose hegemonic policies had become clearly visible (cf. Ménargues 2004, p. 148).

The “Palestinian problem” which is twofold is bound to conflicts constitutive for Lebanon and its Christians; it touches the question of how far this state is “theirs,” and it asks how Lebanon’s Christians should locate themselves in the region. The foundation of Israel, the catalyst of a modern Arab identity (Dawisha 2003, pp. 75-106), politicized once again confessional lines (Zubaida 1988, pp. 152ff.). Israel, as a Jewish state made for Jews is, therefore, always the litmus test for all the other minorities in the Middle East. To become associated with her means to fall out of the region as an imagined political identity. A wonderful document based on that idea and how it translates into an inner-Christian divide in

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164 “Lebanon being not a country for Christians, but on behalf of them (Lubnan balad min ajli-l-masihin, lakin mish li-l-masihin).

165 The primary motif behind is “Lebanon on behalf of the Christians”: naturalizing Christian Palestinians, Syrians, or Iraqis always constituted for the Lebanese state less a problem than doing the very same with Muslims. Consequently, around 6% of the Christian middle class suburbs of Furn ash-Shubbak und ʿAin ar-Rummanah were in fact naturalized Palestinians; see: Nasr 1997, pp. 149f.
Lebanon, is what the Protestant historian Kamal Salibi thought about the state he suspected Bashir Gemayel would establish when becoming president:

“The Kata’ib wanted to turn Lebanon into a little Christian banana state .... They wanted a third-rate beach club and skiing resort. But what sort of Lebanon is that? This is not the sort of country that I would care to identify with. A country has to stand for something – for what remains of the Arab conscience.” (quoted in: Fisk 1990, p. 233)

Ghassan Tuéni, for example, the former minister and doyen of Lebanese journalism, added his fears of an aggressive Israeli foreign policy to the fundamental rejection of a “politique communitaire,” he saw as the constituting category of Israeli politics and identity (Tuéni 1985, pp. 155-159). However, this conflict is not about Christians as individuals vs. Christians as a group. Even Salibi above, does evoke a collective idea; one of an “Arab conscience,” i.e. an Arab group identity. Thus, we can easily understand why the Palestinian issue as an inroad into the “khaymah ‘Arabiyyah,” the “Arab surrounding,” was not priceless; it demanded to tie, via the “Palestinian cause,” into discourses of Arab nationalism, what many conservative Christians in Lebanon did not want.

The problem of Palestine/Israel, therefore, is an ever-present dilemma. Exceptionalist Émile Eddé, met Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organization, in 1937 at Paris to discuss a close cooperation between a possible Jewish nation-state in Palestine and a Christian state further to its north (K. E. Schulze 1998, pp. 19-23). Béchara al-Khoury, his opponent, feared any such alliance would destroy the relations between Lebanese Christians and their Muslim neighbors irreparably (Zamir 1997, pp. 221f.). When the independence of Israel became more urgent, a Lebanese committee, organized by the Maronite Archbishop of Beirut Ignace Mubarak, demanded a similar Christian state in Lebanon, even leading to a treaty between Catholic churchmen and Zionist functionaries in 1946 (Eisenberg 1992). In his words, a struggle between civilization and regression was to be fought in the Middle East, in which the Christian and the Jews each represented civilization (Eisenberg 1992, p. 159; Morris 1999, pp. 496f.). The Lebanese army had participated in the 1948/49 war but remained widely restricted by its own weakness, the internal fragmentation of the country and a

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166 For a broad collection of contacts between Zionist and Christian Lebanese Exceptionalists see: Kirsten E. Schulze 1996, pp. 158f., 163-68; Schulze 1998, pp. 18-25. That Archbishop Mubarak did not really feel deep sympathies for Jews as such gets quite clear from his accusation, Patriarch ‘Aridah would act as “the Patriarch of the Jews,” after the latter criticized the German policy towards the Jews during the Hitler-era in a letter, cf. Zamir 1997, p. 139.
somewhat reluctant attitude of many Christians (Hughes 2005; Morris 1008, pp. 283ff.) 167. The Armistice negotiations in 1949 between mostly Christian officers of the Lebanese army and their Israeli counterparts were exceptionally friendly (K. E. Schulze 1998, pp. 27-30; Segev 1998, pp. 9f.). Israeli politicians, especially those totally unfamiliar with the region, proposed on several occasions a coup d’état, waged by a Christian officer in Lebanon to create a friendly, Christian neighbor within a general redrawing of the region’s map. Long-serving Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, known as a “dove,” tried his best to persuade this hawkish faction of Israeli foreign policy that such an encounter would be senseless because hardly anyone could ever be found to put these high-flying ideas into action (Sheffer, 1996, pp. 721, 803; K. E. Schulze 1998, pp. 22f., 30-66; Segev 1998, p. 10, FN; Morris 1999, pp. 498f; Shlaim 2004, p. 548). The al-Kata’ib discussed that themselves in their newspaper al-ʿAmal to deflate its close relationship with Israel during the civil war, concluding the sources would clearly show they themselves, the Phalangists, were never trusted by the Israelis to be willing to execute these plans (al-ʿAmal No. 5/6, March 1977, pp. 70-84).

These remarks on “Israel as a principle,” as many of my interlocutors in Lebanon called it, are necessary to understand the foremost problem associated with the Phalangists’ sole takeover of the Lebanese state. It meant that the most promising grip on the state they ever managed, was overshadowed by fears of actually having a Jacobinist force imposing its will onto the country by relying upon the troops of the one state associated with minority nationalism in the Middle East. It was, therefore, the virtual antithesis to the “Arabization,” inclusion into a common platform with actors from the Muslim side, the Phalangists had gone through during the Chéhab years (Saghiyyah 1991). This is important, since they had always avoided being publically associated with the Israelis (For example: Eisenberg 1992, p. 152; Nordbruch 2009, pp. 125f.; see also: P. Gemayel 1948, p. 196). Yet, in secrecy, Pierre Gemayel had, in 1951, asked for Israeli material help for the election campaign but Sharett rejected it because of his organization’s alleged unreliability and numerical weakness (Sheffer 1996, pp. 574f.; K. E. Schulze 1998, pp. 34ff.; Ménargues 2004, p. 71). Still, Elias Rababi, editor of the party mouthpiece al-ʿAmal, met, as did former President Émile Eddé, with Israeli diplomats, obtaining Israeli money for his paper and discussing a coup d’état at Beirut, thereby aptly illustrating the Phalanges’ twin-track-strategy back then (K. E. Schulze 1998, pp. 31-36). Later on, when Israel had become much more a taboo and the Phalanges turned into reliable coalition partners, the very same Pierre Gemayel several times called (1962, 67, 73) for

Lebanese neutrality in case of a war in the region; with the exception of a conflict with Israel (Barak 2009, p. 23). Also, during the Civil war since 1975, foreseeing a complete rupture with the surrounding Arab states, he proved to be extremely critical about a rapprochement towards Israel (Abou Khalil 1995, p. 51; K. E. Schulze 1998, pp. 86-91; Ménargues 2004, pp. 75, 222; Hanf 2015, p. 232), even if Bashir Gemayel, held a certain admiration for Israel as a state that had created “a miracle” (Abou 1984, p. 349).

Consequently, when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, this full-scale operation soon raised the question of Lebanon becoming a Christian-dominated Israeli vassal state. It hardly helped that the LF, whose troops were far too weak to contribute to any kind of mobile warfare, chose, to the Israelis’ frustration, to remain silent during the subsequent siege of Western Beirut (Fisk 1990, pp. 231f.; K. E. Schulze 1998, pp. 126-131; Ménargues 2004). The actual presidential election was staged under the watchful eyes of Israeli soldiers on 23 August 1982. Most Muslims boycotted the vote; 57 of 62 representatives took part and voted Bashir Gemayel into his new office. Only the votes of the politically marginalized Shiite notables (Norton 1987, pp. 94f.), and the Druze Emir ʾArslan allowed him to be elected by this “Rump” parliament. It is unclear if Gemayel had really, within a few days, won over the hearts of many Muslims in the wake of a “getting out of the war euphoria,” as Theodor Hanf claimed (2015, pp. 267f., FN 140), or if this was something less. Something that did not encompass an idea broader than what Robert Fisk (1990, p. 329) observed as “the Lebanese thought (…) if the PLO left, their problems would be over”. At least officially, Muslim reactions were mostly devastating (see some examples in Abou 1984, pp. 75, 82): The houses of those 11 Western Beirut representatives, who had defied the boycott, were ransacked; a 15-year old boy, mistaken for the son of a parliamentarian, was lynched on the spot (Fisk 1990, p. 339; Ménargues 2004, p. 411; Hanf 2015, p. 267). In Eastern Beirut, instead, joyful manifestations took place similar to those a few years later when the ʿAoun phenomenon created a comparable atmosphere. Yet, despite all the detailed military and political planning published later on by a French journalist (Ménargues 2004, pp. 524-540), the possibilities of actually ruling the country were overoptimistic. Now, LF soldiers, wearing the uniforms of the official Lebanese state, took up positions in the Shuf mountains, where they had not had any units before; the Druze saw that not as a re-emergence of the state, but as an Israeli

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168 In 1958, Pierre Gemayel had asked for Israeli and received it. Yet, he made it clear, Lebanon could not leave the Arab world, cf. K. E. Schulze 1998, p. 62.

169 The Kahane-report, documenting Israel-involvedness into the massacre at Shatila, reported some minor military operations of the LF during the Israeli campaign: establishing a training-base at Bayt ad-Din, storming a building of the Lebanese university.
supported Christian presence (Fisk 1990, p. 237). Likewise, in the south, when LF fighters entered the town of Saʾida, they occasionally killed Palestinians. Consequently, rumors spread among the overwhelming Muslim majority, as soon as the Israelis retreated, that the Christian militia would prey upon the Muslims (Ibid., pp. 538 ff.). Under similar conditions in Beirut, hundreds disappeared when army and LF units took up through the town’s Western quarters (Morris 1999, p. 542; Traboulsi 2007, p. 221). Also inner-Christian opposition, such as the Lebanese envoy to the UN, Ghassan Tuéni, was, according to former LF-minister Salim Jahel expressis verbis threatened with death into subordination (Ménargues 2004, p. 394). However, Bashir Gemayel actually never ruled; his assassination in Beirut on September 14, 1982 by a SSNP member, ended his meteoric career.

The subsequent massacre of Palestinians at Shatila, committed by LF troops under Elie Hobeika,¹⁷⁰ was certainly the most widely received bloodbath of the war. The crime brings us back to the Palestinian question. It does not constitute proof for Phalangist Fascism, but for the racism that was allowed for by the war and the sectarianism present among its ranks, also (see: chapter III.1) evident in other parties and militias. Elie Hobeika started out as Bashir Gemayel’s bodyguard; he was neither punished nor thrown out of the LF. There is nothing in the Phalanges’ official ideology that ever explicitly called for something like this, in contrast to German National Socialism’s outspoken will to exterminate. Rather, we should piece several dimensions together: the drive of the moment (mourning the slain leader); the sectarianism among many Lebanese; the unreflected Christianity in the official discourses that knew no difference between oneself and the nation as such; the teleological, almost messianic character of the language; the unbalanced view Bashir Gemayel held for the dichotomy of a clear “us” as embodied by him and his men on the one, and some foreigners on the other side; the war situation, especially its link to obviously existing existential fears held by oneself and

¹⁷⁰ Hobeika himself denied any responsibility, accusing the Israelis and “their” SLA of having planned the massacre long before but against Bashir Gemayel’s will; see: Charbel 2011, pp. 93ff.; Pakradouni tried, somewhat similarly, to exculpate the LF by seeing Sharon as the one responsible for the massacre. Interview with him, 2012-05-23. However, several sources testified having seen Hobeika’s and his men committing the massacre, Fisk 1990, loc. cit., pp. 374-77, 601; Morris 1999, pp. 542-49; al-Hout 2004, pp. 75, 118, 233ff. Some added the possibility of an additional presence of fighters from the SLA: Fisk 1990, pp. 374-377; al-Hout 2004, p. 75; Traboulsi 2007, p. 218. Hatem (n. d., p. 27) denies that; Ménargues (2004, pp. 473ff., 492ff.) relates these men to just another murder-spree organized by the Israeli military intelligence service before the LF were actually led in. According to him, the LF-leadership used the alleged presence of the SLA during the main-massacre to whitewash their own organization (similar: Morris 1999, pp. 546ff.); Several sources convey how Hobeika had replied to one soldier asking over the radio from the camp what to do with his civilian captives, that this should be the last time to ask him a question like this: Fisk 1990, p. 601; Morris 1999, pp. 543f; Ménargues 2004, p. 480; Hatem in “Harb Lubnan,” Ep. 10 and Hatem, n. d., p. 27; report of the Kahane-commission. Samir Geagea was at that time commander of the Northern front and therefore not involved. The official commander of the LF in general would have been Fadi ’Afram, an old Phalanges-veteran that had married into the Gemayel-family.
the brutalities allowed for in wartime without interference from the top or possibly even committed with its support. Yet, how bearers of authority behave, is crucial in allowing war crimes to happen (Bergholz 2016). That did not only encompass the deliberately sought all out slaughter as such; it also included that kind of opportunistic, situational lower level crime, allowing for a good deal of those brutalized societal landscapes and for the bloodier, the more “uncivilized” acts of violence to go unpunished (see: Baberowski 2012). Phalangist gunmen celebrated the deliberate murder and the opportunistic theft in the Muslim-dominated shantytown of Karantina as a “party” (haflah), and it was their leadership that facilitated a mass appropriation of abandoned and plundered Muslim property in Eastern Beirut (Picard 1999, pp. 55f.), as did their opponents in those areas they overran. Allowing for brutalized societal landscapes also encompassed the, at times, astonishing coldness towards the Palestinians and their plight, repeatedly insisting they had to leave Lebanon and he would not care whatever they did afterwards (cf. Geha 2010, pp. 198-209, here: p. 208). One of the most frequently uploaded soundbites from Bashir Gemayel on YouTube is related to that topic. In a passage from an interview when he answered the question by a British journalist about what to do with the Palestinians in Lebanon, he stated, “You want them in Piccadilly Circus or Mr. Kreisky wants them in Austria or President Carter wants them in plain Georgia or…Don’t be generous, Sir, with the Palestinians at our expenses.” To the interviewer’s objection that they were in fact in Lebanon, and asked about where they should go, he simply replied, “Yeah, it’s a fact, but we’ll have to change the fact, they will have to find another place where they can fix their tents and life as Bedouins, and there is…,” adding they were not of his concern. The problem could not realistically be solved on Lebanese soil, as Bashir Gemayel countless times insinuated; but no one really asked the question directly. The de facto state the PLO established in parts of Lebanon paid little heed to Lebanese sovereignty, yet, it was never said to replace Palestine. At least one could be a little bit more pitiful, and a little less deprecating; they did not live as “Bedouins,” they originally had to live in tents as refugees. The passage was no accident. Interestingly, Regina Sneifer (2006, p. 35), a former militiaman, conceded she held as a youngster the Palestinians responsible for the often appalling conditions they lived in. Allowing for brutalized landscapes also included the “unification of the Christian gun” and the planned forceful expulsion of Palestinians from

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172 Interview with David Hirst, documentary “Harb Lubnan,” episode 4.
173 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h92yK54jpoQ), rev. 2016-06-01, originally an interview with the BBC. After the battle of Tell az-Za’atar with its many civilian casualties Bashir Gemayel nevertheless professed in a press conference to be proud of what the journalists to go to the camp will be able to see there: Cobban 1984, p. 128.
Lebanon. Whereas we lack proof of any centrally planned, large-scale massacre of Palestinians to move them out of the country, it seems as if Bashir Gemayel had in his conversations with Israeli envoys, proposed the destruction of the Palestinian camps and expelling their population (Morris 1999, p. 541; Ménargues 2004, p. 333). Tellingly, in the TV documentary “Massacre,” the former participants testified that the order to enter the camp had been personally given by Hobeika, telling them not to let anyone stay alive, eradicating Shatila since he wanted to have a “public garden” over there (Borgmann et al. 2004). The notion was not uncommon to the LF. Bashir Gemayel himself had allegedly used the notion repeatedly (Morris 1999, p. 541; Ménargues 2004, pp. 333, 387). The reference to the garden (or zoo, the notion hardly differs in Arabic: hadiqah ‘amm or hadiqah hayyawan), repeated by Hobeika, makes it abundantly clear how much this aforementioned rhetorical coldness, and the planning of a violent expulsion, opened up spaces for far more explicit ideas and allowed for not feeling ashamed of translating them into action under specific circumstances. One of these ideas gets exceptionally visible in the TV documentary “Massacre” (Borgmann et al. 2004), when former LF fighters who took part in the massacre of Shatila in 1982, seemingly relish, some of them while getting more and more drunk, what they did in the camp to avenge Bashir Gemayel’s murder.

5. The Succession Question

After Bashir Gemayel’s death in 1982, LF troops also took up position in Western Beirut. Phalangist functionaries were extremely visible in the state’s security apparatus. In an effort to reestablish the state, they began collecting the militias’ weapons. Not theirs, of course, since they represented “the state” according to their own views; they only confiscated those of Muslim and leftist groups. The effects came promptly by way of an armed insurrection. At least many, if not most, Western Beirutis, had considered this unilateral disarmament less an exercise in nation building than a Christian power grab (Fisk 1990, pp. 453ff.). Shatila may not have helped in convincing them that the Lebanese Lebanese Forces might be the germ-cell of their legitimate version of the Lebanese state.

Thus, the reason why the newly elected Amin Gemayel provided for such a weak president was not because he did not follow the “strong politics” his brother had stood for, but was due

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174 The Kahane-report speaks of the LF “resorting to aberrant methods against the Palestinians in Lebanon” which Israeli officers concluded from what they heard from their Lebanese counterparts (loc. cit.)

175 Ménargues relates this to Rehaviah Vardi, a Mossad-officer and Fu’ad Abu Nader, head of the G-3 branch within the LF-staff; Ehud Ya’ari, an Israeli journalist, claims Bashir Gemayel had told him the same: “Harb Lubnan,” Ep. 10.
to the fact that he suffered from the same weaknesses as his brother. The cornerstone of the whole plan to take over power was nothing else than a foreign actor making up for the LF’s limited own capabilities. In reality, the new president, as well as the LF leadership, had to soon recognize that neither an Israeli nor an American option was at hand after the Israelis had to retreat to the south and an American-led multinational force failed under brutal suicide attacks (Hanf 2015, p. 199). When the LF fighters went deeper into the Shuf mountains, they triggered a further tragedy; the subsequent massacres of thousands of Christians first from this area, then from the Southern region of Sa’ida, a flight of further tens of thousands (Hanf 2015, pp. 275-293). Notwithstanding this legacy, Amin Gemayel was indeed much more a man of consensus than his younger brother. The death of Bashir Gemayel, followed subsequently in 1984 by his father’s (peaceful) death, represented a watershed moment in evaluating the Lebanese Civil War among Christians. With no credible perspective of gaining power, no means to bring the “Dream of a Republic” about, several fissures surfaced that led to a deadly mixture of fragmentation, military professionalization, and an increasing pessimism about the possibilities of reestablishing a Lebanese state at all. The rift that surfaced under Amin Gemayel between a great deal of the younger fighters and the Kata’ib leadership, tells us a lot about ambitions narrated within discourses of legitimacy. Apparently, they were located within a war that allowed for articulating them more pointedly. Yet, as many aspects related to the war, this goes beyond these events as such, revealing a lot about what “being a real party” means.

Even habitually, Amin Gemayel personified the differences between the “hard boys” from the LF’s rank and file, and the president that “… looked more like a dandy than a political baron,” as Fisk (1990, p. 397) scornfully depicted him. In fact, he had been groomed as a politician, in contrast to his younger brother, who had in 1976, started to utter open criticism against the al-Kata’ib hierarchy (Traboulsi 2007, p. 200). He already held a seat in parliament, and always established contacts with the Muslim side, even with the Palestinians (Hanf 2015, p. 269). Rather suspicious of the younger members of his party and the militiamen, Pierre Gemayel, once himself a youthful, conformist rebel, had favored his older son Amin at the top of the LF, not the younger “firebrand” Bashir, whom he considered not being mature enough for getting involved in politics (L. Elias 2009; Aubin-Boltanski 2012, p. 65). In turn, one former fighter saw Bashir Gemayel as the standard-bearer of a generational break with the older “submissive generation” (Sneifer 2006, p. 79). Whereas Amin Gemayel stood more for the old pre-war Phalangism of his father, his younger brother was, as Saghieh (1991, p. 172) noted, closer to Chamoun and his very outspoken political Christianity: It was Amin who,
after storming the camp of Tell az-Za’atar in 1976, stopped the mass executions of Palestinians the “Guardians of the Cedar” and the “Tigers” had just committed there (Kuderna 1983, pp. 124f.). He had not expelled the Syrians from Eastern Beirut, as his brother had done in 1978, but negotiated with the responsible Syrian officer in charge, for a kind of a non-belligerent status in his constituency at Matn (Ménargues 2004, pp. 50f.). After the LF’s move into the Shuf, he desperately tried to persuade them to withdraw, seeing the risks their presence there would provoke (Abou Khalil 1995, pp. 250f., 255). However, Amin Gemayel had to abandon his initial effort to build the country as his brother would probably have done, too, and made his submissive inaugural visit to Damascus. All that taken together, triggered a putsch within the Lebanese Forces on March 12, 1985. Samir Geagea and Elie Hobeika took over control. Amin Gemayel remained restricted to small parts of the (Christian) “Eastern Region,” where his tiny, armed support, the “Brigade 75,” simply dispersed in 1988 (Sneifer 1995, pp. 51, 73; Hanf 2015, p. 300).

The dissenters of the LF themselves emphasized this coup as being a reaction to a gradual rapprochement of the president towards Syria and the USSR, and as something inspired by their ability to represent the demos and form it into an articulated body politic, bringing about a legitimate version of the state (cf. Mausuw‘ah al-Quwwat, V, p. 11).

The LF’s encyclopedia claims that during that time of the war, Geagea “discovered” that there was no kind of political thinking among the country’s traditional political elite and that he became virtually disgusted by them; their only interest allegedly being their private fortunes, not the Christians’ fate (Mausuw‘ah al-Quwwat, V, pp. 22f.). He claimed that the LF’s militia (under his leadership: Sneifer, 1995, p. 88; Hanf 2015, pp. 275-286, 298-302) had not lost the battle in the Shuf for military reasons, but for the political weakness of President Amin Gemayel and his followers within the LF, Fu‘ad Abu Nadir and Fadi ‘Afram, for not being united, in stark contrast to the Druze. From then on, he allegedly developed the idea of shifting the LF’s priority to the political field to build a strong and unified community (Mausuw‘ah al-Quwwat, V, pp. 23f.). The meaning was elaborated on by Samir Geagea in a speech to students: “the majority” of the sha‘ab had to be included into the political process. Heredity and serenity, in contrast, were undemocratic, feudal concepts (Ibid., pp. 14ff.). On another occasion, he concluded that the old Phalangist idea of fighting “feudalism” should be extended to the party since Amin Gemayel lacked the personal quality and the commitment to

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176 Allegedly, the NLP-fighters were also acting against the will of Camille Chamoun. Amin Gemayel was said to cooperate closely in this situation with the Arab League, cf. US Embassy 1976-08-13, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1976BEIRUT06921_b.html.
“the cause”. Instead, he is said to belong to “everything traditional” one used to fight as a young Phalangist (Mausuw‘ah al-Quwwat, XVI, p. 103.). The topoi of generation, rebellion and change, once employed by the Phalangist founder generation, are here used against it by a self-ascribed new generation of members (ash-Shartuni 2008, pp. 118f., 127ff.). Amin Gemayel is accused of having betrayed “the cause” by simply being a member of his family providing something adequate in return; the accusation of standing for the wrong things. In contrast to Amine Gemayel, standing for “the concept of heredity” (fikrah al-waratham: Mausuw‘ah al-Quwwat, V, p 10.), the Lebanese Forces’ historiography portrays Samir Geagea as having been recognized as “capable” (qadir), as an enforcer of the “Dream of a Republic,” by no one else than Bashir Gemayel himself, on the occasion of having visited Bashir Gemayel at his house after the violent death of the latter’s daughter Maya in 1981. Still in a state of shock facing the death of the 18 months old girl, he allegedly considered Geagea as the only one capable (qadir) of being his direct successor (Mausuw‘ah al-Quwwat, V, p. 11). In contrast to these qualities recognized by an already proven sha abiyy leader, conflating Max Weber’s (1978, p. 1123) thoughts on the charismatic succession with the concept of democratic representation, Geagea accused Amin Gemayel of having reduced the party and its armed men to a mere “submissive” instrument, a “burnt offering.” He would not allow reducing the party and its militia to a mere appendix of the presidency. Being at the side of the state is here explicitly rejected (ash-Shartuni 2008, pp. 119ff.). Of course, not because Geagea had suddenly turned into an anarchist, but because the state as it was back then, did not stand for the right order. Tellingly, from an ordinary fighter’s perspective, Robert Hatem (n. d., p. 33), the former bodyguard of Elie Hobeika, considered the new president as being opposed to the LF as “the shield of Lebanon, its pride and strength”, thereby indicating a “patriotic” mission for them, whereas Amin Gemayel was “… a leading candidate in pro-Syrian Moslem eyes”. Thus, the version of Lebanon he held made up for a legitimate state, anything else could not be patriotic. The alleged “feudalism” personified by Amin Gemayel was presented in a similar way as in the “resistance” motif; to overcome it meant nothing less than aiming for total change. The country, according to Geagea, needed a political apparatus - the LF - and a “mental apparatus,” to ensure sovereign self-determination (Mausuw‘ah al-Quwwat, V, pp. 17-19).

177 TV-Interview with LBC, 1989-01-17.
178 Note that “generation” was more or less always used as a legitimatory, self-affirmative argument with a strong tendency to see oneself as a pars pro toto, cf. Wohl 1980.
179 In reality, the relationship between Bashir Gemayel and Samir Geagea has not always been free from frictions, cf. Labévière 2009, p. 159.
It is completely unimportant if the coup, waged by the “troika,” was really motivated by this narrative. Personal ambitions as a motive for political action might be considered everywhere an important element in politics. What counts is that all these justifications obviously stood a chance of providing for legitimation, indicating that family bonds alone cannot do so. Instead, this encounter leading to the first break between the LF and Phalanges, had aptly demonstrated the frailty of genealogy in establishing a stabilizing narrative, since it counteracts the concept of a democratic modernity.

6. FEDERALIZATION
With regard to the materiality of the demos, a certain change occurred within the conservative Christian camp during the war.

Antoine Najm is a good example of this turn. He described his own role in the Phalanges as that of an academic who tried to “create a Lebanese political thinking, which coincides with the tendency of the Lebanese Christians.” He stated that “I believed that one could, by a certain evolution, by a certain pressurizing, … if everyone is willing, create some cohesion between Christians and Muslims.” He had studied and been heavily influenced by René Habachi (Interview Najm, 2012-07-20), whose lifelong interest lay in that monotheist “Mediterranean thinking” (R. Habchi 1956), which brought the ideas of Personalism to Lebanon. Now, Najm, who had considered himself a proponent on avid nationalism, inspired by European examples, “ruling” and “enforcing” its vision (Najm 2007b, p. 13), complained these ideas would now look like “some kind of disorder, confusion and contradiction, up till anti-realism.” (Ibid., p. 16) “I believed, I was wrong,” he laconically summed up his ex-post reasoning (Interview Najm).

He was no exception. A lot of conservative Christian intellectuals, who started out as defenders of Lebanese nationalism as a means to overcome the very uncertain option of a retreat into a Christian “Petit Liban”, similarly changed. All of them, Charles Malik,\textsuperscript{180} Antoine Fattal,\textsuperscript{181} Antoine Najm,\textsuperscript{182} Moussa Prince,\textsuperscript{183} Jawwad Boulos, Paul Salem and Fu’ad ‘Afram al-Bustani,\textsuperscript{184} had tried to render an involuntarily Christian version of Lebanese nationalism as an alternative to retreating into “the mountains.” The war marked for them a

\textsuperscript{180} As ambassador and minister, and as philosopher who had been heavily influenced by Heidegger.
\textsuperscript{181} As academic and a high-ranking official in the foreign ministry, since 1977 he served as ambassador.
\textsuperscript{182} As a leading Kata’ib ideologue.
\textsuperscript{183} As a poet and party-functionary (first in the Phalanges, then in Chamoun’s NLP).
\textsuperscript{184} as academics – the latter probably being due to his closeness to the controversial bishop Ignace Mubarak (cf. Phares 1995, pp. 95f.) the least Lebanonist of all of them.
remarkable failure. Typically, the very same young “dreamer” who wanted “to do something” for the country apparently still existing in singular back then (Prince n. d., p. 13, see chapter III.2), Moussa Prince, now suddenly contemplated about Lebanon being untenable as a unitary state\(^\text{185}\) which could not constitute anything but a “lie” (quoted in: Qabbani 1981, p. 552).

Originally, the Lebanese Forces had no coherent program in mind. In January 1977, the Lebanese Front adopted its charter in a session at Saiyydah al-B ʾ ir monastery. It proposed the decentralization, even a federation\(^\text{186}\) of a Christian and a Muslim canton. Partition was rejected as well as the permanent settling of Palestinians. This document stood in a way, for a typical tune inside the conservative Christian specter during the war. In light of the Muslims alleged unwillingness to have a non-Muslim holding sway over them, “true community” was said to be impossible in Lebanon. Consequently, the country as such, should not be given up, but the idea of having one Lebanese culture. Instead, the “old formula” should be replaced by a new, decentralized state of two culturally defined communities, seemingly allowing for the nation as one and indivisible.\(^\text{187}\) The Front’s texts are awash with an objectivism of culture and origin that had already allowed for “Lebanonism”:

“The population of Lebanon is, roughly, formed by two range of ethnicities. The first one is composed out of Christian religious sects who were there by majority before the Arab invasion of the 7th century and the domination of Islam. These sects are not Arabized, except by language. They are kept together by religious adherence and their non-Islamic civilization, based upon the primacy of the person. … The second range of ethnicities is composed out of the religious Islamic sects of mostly Arab, and sometimes Persian or Turkish origin, which arrived in Lebanon consecutively after the Arab invasion of the 7th century. These ethnicities are related to the populations of Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Palestine by language, religion, and civilization based upon the primacy of the ʾummah, or the corpus of Islam, which is not distinguished in anything or in hardly anything from the latter. This second kind of ethnicities has … thanks to [its] power, always - unsuccessfully - tried, conforming to the principles of Islamic public law, to assure its political domination


\(^{186}\) A federation could be defined as follows: “Within the broad genus of federal political systems, ‘federations’ represent a particular species in which neither the federal nor the constituent units of government are constitutionally subordinate to the other, i.e. each has sovereign powers derived from the constitution rather than from another level of government (…).” cf. Watts 2008, p. 9.

over the first kind of ethnicities”.

The notion of federalism is mostly explained by a general mistrust of all discourses being upheld by a Muslim majority without regard to their exact content. An alleged eternal, if not totalitarian character of Islam, which could never settle with a secular order, is thereby constructed (for example: Najm 1983). According to this version, Lebanon did not fail until 1975 because the proportional formula no longer reflected the actual composition of society, but out of Islam’s unbroken will to conquer Lebanon (Ibid.), seeking out for a “maximal solution” (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, XVII, pp. 47f.). Arab nationalism is among the Christian Right, primarily a continuation of Islamic dominance, as Najm (2007, pp. 9f.) put it, running contrary to his will not to live as a dhimmi any longer, in what colors the principle ever might appear (Ibid., p. 13). The problem therein, lay in the association of the minorities’ emancipation in the 19th century with foreign imperialism. It rendered, especially for Christians, any such thing as a “confessional identity” related to political self-articulation a sacrilege, but justified “Islamization” as a return to authenticity (ta’assul) in many forms of Arab nationalism (Hanf 1981, pp. 398ff.). Thus, even a personally pious, but politically secular man as Jamal ‘Abd an-Nasser, could use the “confessionalism reproach” to delegitimize the Christian Ba’athi thinker Michel ‘Aflaq, by calling him a “Roman Emperor” and a “Cypriot Christian” (Seale 1982, p. 82), thereby insinuating the Greek Orthodox ‘Aflaq could probably not be a real Arab. Additionally, ordinary Muslims did not always keep clearly separated ideationally different approaches. In his highly original study on Tripoli’s Bab at-Tibbanah quarter, Michel Seurat (1989, pp. 110-170) had once shown how far the city’s poor had mixed leftism, being against the “others” (the more powerful, the “infidels,” the privileged), “being Arab,” and Islam. Therefore, they perceived their dramatic transformation from being staunch supporters of secular Nasserist and Ba’athist candidates into militant Sunni Islamists, not as the drastic change it seemed to be for outside observers.

The LF intellectuals largely referred themselves back to the state that prevailed during the times of their own academic socialization, peppered with their experiences of political failure documented, as they saw it, by the war’s outbreak. But this experience is situated into a

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189 The issue, one of the most radical examples of this claim, is a translation of a speech held by Najm in France.

190 Interestingly, in a survey conducted by the Kaslik-University among Christian elites during the war, the support of a federalist solution came primarily from those who did not see any change in Islam over times nor had any hopes for experiencing it. These was especially the case among Maronites and Armenians, two groups with a quite distinct self-conception, cf. Aouad et al. 1984, pp. 61-70.
worldwide context; Fattal, Malik, Najm, Salem, Na’aman, among others, were widely touring the world, delivering lectures, participating in congresses. Walid Phares might currently be the most well-known example. He had run ideological instructions for LF fighters (Sneifer 2006, pp. 92f.), acting as their spokesperson in 1986/87 and wrote books and articles on Islamism. Since the early 1990s, he has published in English, linking up with an international “Islam critique,” that provides him with jobs at US universities closely related to Neo-Conservativism which resulted in him being promoted to Donald Trump’s advisor on the Middle East.¹⁹¹ His audience is a global one, as are his enemies, and so is his polemic. The “Wahabi lobby and their academic friends,” whose “Islamist watchdogs,” crazed by “Jihadophilia” (Phares 2007, pp. 236ff.),¹⁹² are responsible for barring his perspective’s access to the libraries.

Nurtured by this blend of local experience and international discourses, a benign view on Christian history is proposed. Contrasting society and religion as not constituting an expectation of an encompassing just moral order, is a modern self-interpretation, which gets almost automatically associated with the notion of “religion” as such (R. Schulze 2015). However, there is an unhealthy tendency to locate this juxtaposition of society and religion back into times where it had hardly any place, if at all. Thus, religion before society, regulating life, was as morally encompassing in pre-modern Christianity as it was in Islam. Walter Ullmann has rightfully remarked that the one overriding question of medieval political thought - who basically stood on top of the one body, Pope or Emperor? – only made any sense at all, if not two but one body existed at all (Ullmann 1975, p. 41). In Islamic, as in Christian political practice, many details were left open to the state, as long as they did not run counter to the broader concepts of the just life; the ruler might have been a hunter and a horseman because hunting or horsemanship were useful and ancestral royal activities and not because they were derived from the scriptures (al-Azmeh 1997; R. Schulze 2010 and Idem. 2015, p. 559). Moreover, an idea of some specific “Islamic state” had never existed before modern-day Islamism (Hartmann 2004; similarly: Asad 1961).

¹⁹¹ Who interestingly considered him at first to be a Muslim, thereby leaving serious doubts about casting at least a glance on his future-advisors’ biographies: Tim Murphy, “Does Donald Trump Think His Top Foreign Policy Adviser Is Muslim?” Mother Jones, 2016-03-22, http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2016/03/donald-trump-walid-phares-fox-news, 2016-05-31.

¹⁹² The whole work demonstrates a breathtaking inability to think in more than binary terms, based upon a negligible, small part of literature. For him, all “antidemocratic isms” (Phares 2007, p. 21) have now come together to fight a monolithic concept of democracy whose content the author uses indeed like a synonym for his respective own preferences.
Instead, theoreticians of federalism in Lebanon insist upon Islam appearing as the absolute convergence of the temporal and the spiritual, in theory as in practice (Interview Najm, 2012-07-20). As indicators of that assumption, things at times, get taken out of their contexts. Musa Sadr’s or Hussein al-Quwatli’s (Director of the Sunni Dar al-Fatwa in Beirut) refusal of “Laicization” were seen as proof of Islamic totalitarianism, although both had to be understood as the will to preserve religious civil law; a point well supported by the current Maronite Patriarch (see: Sleiman 2014a, pp. 89ff.). When the Grand Mufti of the Republic blessed the PLO as a “Muslim army,” that stirred up deep anxieties in Antoine Najm (2007b, p. 14), who had spent his childhood in Tripoli, a city dominated by Muslims. Politics for him was about Christians, summarized in the formula of being either a dhimmi or not. “Dhimmi” meant for him, the experience of living under conditions denying him an equal worth as a self-determined citizen. He designated the old practice among many Muslim families in Southern Lebanon, of throwing the dishes away after a Christian had eaten from them, as a symbolism of being unworthy (Interview with him, 2012).193 Samir Geagea on the other side, exclaiming that victory for the Lebanese Forces was assured in the name of God (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, XVII, pp. 7f.), or using the passage “Your will be done on earth as in heaven” from the Prayer of Prayers in direct association with the Lebanese Forces (Thuselt 2016, pp. 208-211), obviously did not bother him, although the claim of representing a cause with a divine blessing is in all cases the same.

It is impossible to understand this deepened interest in some “original core” of Islam and Christianity alike, beyond the context of a time that saw a profound radicalization of various kinds of political Islam. In Tripoli, the Sunni fundamentalists of the “ Tauhid” emerged and ran the town before Syrian troops and their Lebanese allies subdued them (Hanf 2015, pp. 294f., 305f.). After the Iranian Revolution of 1979, in June 1982, the first “Revolutionary Guards” of the newborn “Islamic Republic” popped up in the Beqaa valley, tearing down the Lebanese cedar flag in exchange for a green Islamic one (Ibid., p. 280). Training and supplying Hezbollah fighters, they left their mark on the Christians of Lebanon. When announcing their first comprehensive manifesto in 1985, Hezbollah subsumed the Phalangists under the category of imperialism. They were perceived to be a part of oppression by expressing “bigotry” and “sectarian privileges.” Instead of citizenship, they were offered “just” rule and “due right” as dhimmis, whereas the insistence of Phalangism to get more than these reinventions of medieval traditions, is said to constitute nothing but “hateful

193 Musa Sadr, interestingly, publically broke the taboo of eating what a Christian made by buying ostentatiously ice from a Christian vendor at Tyre; cf. F. Ajami 1986, p. 133.

Consequently, the idea of two cultures that cannot live together was proposed. Neither families nor regions would constitute the basic cleavage but Islamic and non-Islamic (Geagea, al-Fikr wal-l-Qadhiyyah). Because of this fundamental difference, the nation could not be simply taught, one could not merely assemble Lebanese from various regions, “throwing them together like potatoes” to bring about national unity (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, XVII, p. 42.). For example, Fu’ad ‘Afram al-Bustani, the former dean of the state’s Lebanese University at Beirut, saw “their” culture, i.e. the Muslims’ culture and “ours” as incompatible, since

“... as to my mind, it is impossible to reach a single Lebanese culture. Culture is not teachable, it originates from heritage. Our heritage and their heritage, too, is spiritual, but our spirituality is not their spirituality; therefore, we lived in a lie from 1943 till today and we want to finish this lie.” (al-Bustani n. d.)

In quite a similar way, Samir Geagea claimed an inner, spiritual difference to be between the Lebanese:

“The metaphysical world of each individual is determined by the religious philosophy that he adopts. Every religion has material exteriorizations on earth that the individual uses to determine, ..., the features of his metaphysical world .... From these features, then, we can determine the metaphysical worlds of the Christian and the Muslim individuals. ... They are almost totally different. We can conclude from what I said that to realize his metaphysical dimension, the Christian individual needs to be in a material environment completely different from any other environment on earth. .... The commitment to man necessitates securing for him, the necessary material environment that suits him to realize the specific features of his metaphysical world. If we take things from the opposite perspective, we can argue that man, whether he likes it or not, is a material biological entity. This material entity is part of the material environment in which it exists .... Consequently, it is impossible to realize the metaphysical dimension of the Christian individual if we put him in a Muslim society ....” (quoted in: G. Hage 1992, p. 43)

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What seems quite typical for Samir Geagea, to come in a language borrowed from philosophy, very much resembling the existentialist roots of Personalism, is far from being a subtle intellectual approach. Instead, Geagea wields an axe and a flamethrower. What he insinuates indirectly is to keep the two identities neatly separated to the benefit of both of them. A benefit formulated in holistic terms. That is truly pushing the envelope of still having some common state.

However, an open call for a Christian state would be as much a taboo as a difficult matter. When the war broke out, 37% of all Lebanese Maronites lived in Beirut, 38% in Mount Lebanon, and 15% were scattered over the territories with a clear Muslim majority (Picard 1980, p. 19). Many Muslims lived in enclaves among Christians. Thus, most proposals by the Lebanese Front for federalizing Lebanon were about a sovereign Christian entity within a loose common Lebanese framework. Exemplarily, Samir Geagea first piously pretended, when questioned by a journalist from the *an-Nahar* newspaper, that he had not understood the question of whether he sought a separate Christian state. He ironized the answer by jokingly calling the possible entity-to-be “a state named Marunistan” in which he would not believe and for whom he had no plan (*an-Nahar* 1988-02-01).

Occasionally, exceptionalists insinuated the option for partition explicitly, such as Walid Phares. He openly reintroduced the “Petit Liban” to be dusted down and fitted out again as a valuable tradition. Politically, a territorial solution could follow the examples of India and Pakistan, whose separation is said by Phares to have brought about not a solution, but a reduction of tensions (Phares 1995, p. 187). In fact, the partition of colonial India resulted in a rivalry between India and Pakistan sharply accentuated on ethno-religious terms, often referring back to the partition as a founding act (Talbot and Gurhaharpal 2009, pp. 127-153). Moreover, the problem was that communal rioting changed dramatically during the partition. Whereas formerly, people mostly clashed to renegotiate the public space violently, over questions of whose procession, holy place, etc. shall be where, now the whole population, as bearers of political aspirations of setting order became a scandal, and were uprooted from its private places. During the partition, the old state broke down and new political apparatuses used communal violence as a means to get away with the opposing claim to a territory defined by its people (Talbot and Gurhaharpal 2009, pp. 60-89).

195 Reproduced in: al-Fikr wa-l-Qadhiyyah.

196 For Phares this is obviously of no importance, he claimed (1995, p. 186) Mount Lebanon to be a homogenous territory, which it only became because of the war. The problems of those Christians living outside of it remain...
“sectarian cleansing” was prevalent, yet, some villages and even cities with Christians and Muslims, remained on the other side. When linked to political aspirations, the same happened as on the Indian Subcontinent. Consequently, the very moment the LF were introduced into the area around Saʿida and into the Shuf, a more limited violence against individual Christians turned into a massacre of a collective whole (Hanf 2015, p. 285). This point is, of course, a weak spot in any kind of federalization. The official line was, therefore, to avoid a partitioning by keeping the country together, albeit in different political entities. Samir Geagea, for example, explicitly referred to the Christian enclaves outside of his militias’ territories when rejecting two independent states. Others were less reluctant. An anonymous paper (authored by some “Peter Pan”) could be found well into the 2000s on the LF’s website, calling for homogeneity to be brought about by assuming a gradual shift of populations and a “swapping of houses” would automatically occur. It remains untold what ought to be done, if the quota could not be met in the proposed seemingly orderly way:

“It is my belief that a certain quota/percentage should be set to protect the hegemony of each state, a state can negotiate/enforce a shift of population once this quota is reached. Failure to do so will result in another religious confrontation in years to come.” (“P. Pan”)

Others were, in wartime, talking less by innuendo but by an anonymously suggested forceful eviction. An “influential intellectual” hoped for

“Then perhaps, the Lebanese Druze will leave Lebanon, as has happened before in history. When two Druze clans fight, the looser flees to the Jabal Druze [in Southern Syria, C. T.]. History has shown that it is very easy to get the Druze to leave. It’s more difficult with the Shiʿis, because there’s no common border with Iraq. But it’s not impossible. The Sunnis are less a problem.” (quoted in: Hanf 2015, p. 429)

unresolved. Interestingly, on just another occasion, Geagea, whose speaker Phares had been in 1986/87, once refuted partition in 1989 with reference to the Indian example: Mausuwʾah al-Quwwat, XVII, p. 39.

Among others: Samir Geagea, “Hadhihi hiyya Mabadʾi allati nuʾamin biha wa nunadhil min ajliha” [These are the Principles we are believing in and Whom we are Fighting for], originally in al-Masirah 1987; whereby I could not figure out the exact number of the issue it was in, since the page has been nowhere archived; it was online available at: http://www.lebaneseforces.org/media/articles/massira/principles.htm, rev. 2007-03-04 (in 2018 no longer online). Similarly among many others in: an-Nahar, 1986-09-08; “nahna akthar man yarfidh ataʾqsim” [We are refuting partition most], originally in various Lebanese newspapers (an-Nahar, as-Safir, al-Wakalat) 1988-10-18 reproduced in: Mausuwʾah al-Quwwat, XVI, pp. 70ff., or “hunak mushkilah dahiliyyah wa-l-hall bi-l-fidiraliyyah” [There are internal problems and the solution is through federalism] published 1990 in various Lebanese newspapers (an-Nahar, al-Wakalat, ad-Diyyar) 1990-01-05, originally a talk-to-the-press in late 1989, reproduced in: Mausuwʾah al-Quwwat, XVII, pp. 36-50.


Interestingly, decision-makers in India underestimated the violent eruption that actually happened in quite the same way: everything was planned to be done much more orderly, Talbot and Gurharpal 2009, p. 90.
Another one simply threatened to reverse the majority-minority scheme:

“If it’s a question of majorities, well, we’ll just have to be the majority. We’ll start a massive program to bring back the emigrants. ... And then, when they threaten us with majorities, we know that new majorities were made in a few days in Damour and the Shuf\(^{200}\). If we have to, we can do it too.” (quoted in: Hanf 2015, p. 429)

The “nation-building” is here shifted from claiming an objective all-Lebanese identity to one of “ethnicity building”. Yet, this ethnicity resembles a nation in everything but name. Thus, institutionally seen, the central government would have had been reduced to a body, manned proportionally along sectarian lines to balance communal relations somewhat (Qabbani 1981, pp. 521f.); cultural issues, justice, foreign, security, relations and so on were, according to the Saiyydatina al-B’ir Declaration, to be done decentrally (\textit{al-’Amal}, No. 7, September 1977, p. 83). Bashir Gemayel especially wanted defense to be decentralized, due to the ability of coercion bound to it. (Hanf 2015, p. 430)\(^{201}\) These solutions are basically about two states: Those issues still rendered to the central institutions in federations most commonly are defense, foreign relations, currency and debts as a kind of a “minimal federal power” to sustain a common state altogether (2008, pp. 177f.). This also marked a divide within the Lebanese Front. Pierre and Amin Gemayel especially tried to read federalism as a form of decentralization, as a principle of some pragmatic “good governance” (cf. Qabbani 1981, pp. 539-543; A. Gemayel 1986 and Idem. 1992, esp. pp. 21ff.). Chamoun and Bashir Gemayel were clearly more essentialist. Both dimensions – good governance and essentialism - continuously existed during wartime and thereafter. Khaled Qabbani (1981, pp. 525ff.) saw the will to impose federalism unilaterally as a key criterion to differ between the two versions: The Lebanese Monks (Ibid., pp. 528-539), Chamoun’s NLP (Ibid., pp. 543-547) and Moussa Prince (Ibid., pp. 549-559) were proponents of unilaterally declared confederations who hardly asked about any other territoriality than the one for the Christians.\(^{202}\) Pierre Gemayel, on the other hand excluded that version (Qabbani 1981, p. 539; al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, VI, p. 119).

\(^{200}\) That alludes to the massacres at Damour, South of Beirut, and the Shuf-mountains.


\(^{202}\) Prince’s confederalist version, for example, would have effectively seized around roughly 60% of the whole of Lebanon for them, encompassing large numbers of Muslims (esp. in parts of the North, the Beqaa, and around Marj `Uyun; in none of his plans Prince ever considered the Druze as sovereign in the very same sense: there was no Druze territory allowed for as a separate entity independent from the Christian de facto-statelet), leaving the Muslims with only two truncated territories without any territorial link between them, cf. Qabbani 1981, p. 560.
In any case, federalism functioned as the core motif of a Christian exceptionalist war discourse, aggravated since the failure to take over the Lebanese state in 1982. It suggested the shift from the community defined by the will to live up to the paradigm of modernity as a Lebanese one, to the Christians taking over this role of a body politic. Thereby, it became important for the LF’s opponents to take up the very same issues as indicators that things among the Christians were, according to them, alarmingly running in the wrong direction in terms of their conceptions of how state and nation should look.

7. THE ‘AOUN-MOVEMENT

In the late 1980s, widespread apathy had emerged as a result of the ongoing radicalization of discourses and the country’s fragmentation (see: Hanf 2015, pp. 490-550). With the ongoing professionalization and criminalization of militias, a growing group had been virtually eclipsed since it held no command over any militia. As pre-war politics had incentivized those not having a party, to found their own, the war forced people to adapt to its conditions. That opportunity arose in the late 1980s when army chief General Michel ʿAoun virtually offered himself as the visible symbolism for a wide array of embitterment waiting to explode with anger.

Michel ʿAoun originated from a modest background from the Southern Beirut suburb of Haret Hreik, still a rural village back then, with a mixed Christian-Shiite population, where his father worked as a butcher and farmer. He maintained relations with Shiites from this area for his entire army career (Interview 22). His alleged socializing key experience as an officer was the Six Days War in 1967, when he felt Lebanon’s sovereignty could not be protected any more by her tiny army; a humiliation only to be aggravated one year later when the Lebanese army was unable to do anything against an Israeli commando raid on Beirut airport (Charbel 2011, p. 339). Politically, he was influenced by the Chéhab era (Ibid., pp. 347ff.) and is said to have been close to, even befriending, Raymond Édédé (Interview 21; ‘Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, p. 71). Yet, at least for some time, he had also admired Camille Chamoun (‘Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, p. 71), who was in many aspects quite the opposite of Chéhab and Édédé. This ambiguity is typical of some aspects of his wartime career. Immediately before the war, he was counted among the hardliners within the army, opposing the Palestinian armed presence and blaming the country’s politicians for not protecting what he considered the Lebanese state (Charbel 2011, pp. 343f.). In 1976, he had coordinated the

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assault on the Palestinian camp Tell az-Zaʿatar in Eastern Beirut, together with ten to twelve regular military officers with the army leadership apparently giving their consent (ʿAbi Samra and Shararah 2009, pp. 32f.; without mentioning the consent: Hanf 2015, p. 592). For a considerable time during the war, he commanded the army’s eighth brigade, a unit whose soldiers were considered loyal to the presidency, but did coordinate their missions with the Lebanese Forces: Karim Pakradouni once indicated that the LF had an unofficial agreement with the army-leadership, which placed 60% of the frontline around the Christian core-area under the army’s control, 40% under the one of the LF. But the latter had to engage in around 80% of the “security missions,” and 50% of the risky reconnaissance-operations (Saghiyyah 1991, p. 235). In general, army and militia had only clashed on limited occasions in the “Eastern zone” during these years. Moreover, it was ʿAoun who planned the military aspects of Bashir Gemayel’s takeover of the state as early as in 1980 (Ménargues 2004). Having been a secret member of the LF strategic planning council and a close friend of Najm, he was by no means far from the Gemayels. Yet, ʿAoun and Najm, who judged him as an opportunist, have fallen out since then (Interview Najm 2012-07-20). It seems, at least, as if the latter never supported the federalization of Lebanon as an option (Ménargues 2004, pp. 14f.). In 1982, he had apparently declined to let the army into Shatila, thereby refusing to participate in the subsequent massacre (Harb Lubnan, episode 10). Yet, ʿAoun was so close to the Lebanese Forces, leaving simmering doubts over his closeness to Eddé, as the members of his party like to communicate so willingly. Eddé, who had once opposed the Cairo Agreement of 1969 that legalized an armed Palestinian presence in the country, was seeking refuge in Paris during the “unification of the Christian gun,” instead of planning to overtake the state; about 30 of his adherents were murdered around Byblos in 1976 (Aulas 1985, p. 27, FN 33). The need to convey an alleged continuous closeness to Raymond Eddé seems to be part of a repositioning of the FPM after 2005. Furthermore, in contrast to his political rivals, there is no biography covering his whole life. Everything available has a striking tendency to start with

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205 In 1979 after Elie Hobeika had been arrested by the army, several of the latter’s personal were taken hostages by the LF. Further, a brigade-commander had been assassinated in 1986 after two officers of the LF, stemming from Bsharri, were killed in a clash between the army and the Lebanese Forces: Sneifer 1995, p. 131; Ménargues 2004, p. 62.

206 The author used anonymous sources from inside the LF, who provided him with a good deal if not all of their material. Probably, it was, as André Sleiman speculated, provided to him by Fadi ʿAfram, former military commander of the Forces during that time and since then fallen out with at least parts of the organization, cf. https://sleimans.wordpress.com/2012/12/03/les-secrets-des-secrets-de-la-guerre-du-liban-dalain-menargues-tome-ii/, rev. 2017-08-19.

207 Whereas Barak 2009, pp. 133f. considers him to have been neutral.
the ʿAoun Movement in the late 1980s, “etatizing” his career considerably. How much ʿAoun actually underwent a change in his own convictions cannot be clarified; at least there are considerable changes in his rhetoric. Additionally, ʿAoun is a man with extraordinary self-confidence and ambition, of whom a fellow officer conveyed he had once been shown a suit that the ambitious back-then officer ʿAoun wanted to wear when being sworn in as president (ʿAbi Samra and Shararah 2009, p 72). As we will see, he appealed to a wide range of, mostly Christian, sympathizers as the proponent of the “legal state” against the “militias” and the “foreigners,” as he repeatedly formulated.

This narrative depended on his role as army commander. The armed forces did not fall completely apart and consistently tried to hang on to a narrative of Lebanon as covering all its territory. It remained the sole fighting force that permanently could count on a more or less multiconfessional base (Barak 2009). However, it was deeply affected by the war. Consequently, in ʿAoun’s discourse, the army needed to be whitewashed as an “institution,” instead of acknowledging it to have always been “political” and permeated by all kinds of very particular convictions. That was especially true for its leaders. Neither ʿAoun nor Johnny Abdo, until the early 1980s head of the military intelligence, conceded any involvement in Bashir and Amin Gemayel’s planning (for example in: Harb Lubnan ep. 10 and 11). As typical for ʿAounism, in this version of standing over the parties, the army is seen as being solely concerned with the unity of the nation. It is not particular; by not being “an instrument against anyone [within Lebanon, C. T.]” (quoted in: al-Lahham, Mausuwʿah Hizb al-Kataʿib, XI, p. 127); “[it] cannot be plunged right into sharp sectarian or partisan differences.” (quoted in: Charbel 2011, p. 337) That does not mean the army is imagined as being apolitical, but the political is simply seen as self-evident. Its leadership and the conceptions of Lebanon associated to it, are thereby the untouchable resources. We may find the very same line of argumentation in a highly poetized eulogy on the army on a ʿAounist website, obviously written by a FPM partisan:

“My army has never abandoned a national cause, or practiced any kind of favoritism with its people. My army chants with pride Lebanon’s national anthem that says ‘we are all for Lebanon,’ and practices exactly what it chants. It is a national shield and an umbrella for all the people of Lebanon. It courageously protects their constitution, democracy, freedoms, security and safeguards the country's stability and future.”

Similarly to the Lebanese Forces in Bashir Gemayel’s discourse, the army is staged as the core of the “legal state,” conveying the impression of the security forces existing as a separate entity, virtually personalizing the state. Yet, it is referred back to a demos, imagined as being there as it is not – united:

“If freedom is to be personified one day in Lebanon, it is definitely going to be manifested in a soldier’s costume. My army is my family, affiliation, pride, commitment, strength and all guarantees required for a decent life. It embraces among its ranks, every Lebanese family, religion, village, city and region.”

This version is, of course, no description; it is an expectation, heavily charged with utopianism. It is probably telling that an American survey hinted some years ago, that only two states in the region showed a stronger support for the army to rule the country than Lebanon: Libya and Pakistan. Although far less as in Geagea’s case, this utopianism is occasionally enhanced with profanized religious vocabulary such as “al-masirah at-tahrir” (the journey for liberation) or “ʾardna muqadasah” (our holy land) (Mausuw’ah Michel ’Aoun, I, pp. 84f.).

Within the historical context, this insistence on the legal state meant that any kind of sectarian cantonization stood for the persistence of sectarianism, thereby undermining the normativity of the modern nation-state. Therefore, ’Aoun asked rhetorically, “Do we want the legal, strong and capable state or the emaciated, sectarian, and ideological one?” (Mausuw’ah Michel ’Aoun, I, p. 69). Promising he stood for the “legal” and the return to all its territory, he explicitly refused any kind of federalism exceeding a mere administrative decentralization. Anything beyond that is seen by him and his partisans as a first step towards partition; he put it in the formula of “dawaylah aw dawayylat”, a “miniature state” or (even) two miniature states” that would be the only alternative to him (Ibid.). Thus, as in the case of Bashir Gemayel, his charisma stems from being associated with the “real state.”

The specific reason for ’Aoun to enter the political arena was provided by the necessity to elect a new president when Amin Gemayel’s term approached its end in September 1988. Candidates were discussed and vetoed by warring factions and foreign powers alike. On September 15, 1988, the Americans and Syrians surprisingly announced Mikhail Daher as a

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209 Ibid.
210 In the last panel of the “World Value Survey” (from 2010 until 2014), http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOonline.jsp, rev. 2015-05-08.
211 Both taken randomly from a speech held on Armed Forces Day in 1989.
man they could support. Being close to Damascus, but without a power base of his own, he constituted the ideal compromise. ʿAoun openly opposed the new candidate. In that situation, ʿAoun and Geagea met, approached the president and, by threatening to treat him as a traitor, forced Gemayel to dismiss the government and appoint a new one; all done a quarter of an hour before the outgoing president would have had to leave his office at midnight September 22, 1988 (Hanf 2015, pp. 567-570). Gemayel, who had, after leaving office, to flee the country, since the Lebanese Forces even surrounded the private villa, complied and appointed ʿAoun as Prime Minister of a provisory government. The step meant the first successful break with the consensus of sharing power between Muslims and Christians. ʿAoun, trying to draw back on plans from 1982 designed for Bashir Gemayel (Ménargues 2004, p. 379, FN 1), took a Maronite seat in an office reserved for Sunni Muslims and appointed a few generals as ministers; not keeping to the power-sharing formula but still choosing candidates from various sects.212 Defying this emergency government, Sunni Prime Minister Salim al-Huss did not accept his dismissal, simply acting in Syrian-controlled territory with his old cabinet but with only one of his three Christian ministers remaining, whereas the three Muslim officers, earmarked for a post in ʿAoun’s government, did not assume their offices. Every appointment done by the general was countered by al-Huss. Civil servants received contradicting instructions, institutions split, officers were thrown out (Barak 2009, pp. 153ff.; Hanf 2015, pp. 570ff.). ʿAoun could not muster the support of more than the core of all Lebanese soldiers; the headquarters at Yarzé and the most professional, but overwhelmingly Christian units, stationed in the “Eastern region” (Barak 2009, p. 155). His last Muslim soldiers largely deserted him, often fearing Syrian repression (Interview 22). Still, they fought only symbolically and let the Syrians do the dirty work, at times even leaking information to their former comrades (Barak 2009, pp. 158f.). The new movement gained some sympathy, but only limited open support from Muslims, especially since a respectable authority like the Mufti of the Republic had been blown up by a car bomb in Western Beirut after meeting the general (Hanf 2015, p. 578).

ʿAoun argued that two things would be needed from a new president; the foreign influences were to be curbed to preserve the country’s territorial integrity and the new incumbent should be “the son of the Lebaneses’ will” (Mausuwʿah Michel ʿAoun, I, pp. 47f., 61-67). Said otherwise, Syria, Israel, and all the other foreign states were not, nor were the militias, to decide when and whom the Lebanese parliamentarians had to elect (al-Lahham, Mausuwʿah ʿAoun, I, pp. 45f.).

212 A cabinet-list could be obtained from: Mausuwʿah Michel ʿAoun, I, pp. 45f.
Hizb al-Kata’ib, XI, pp. 125ff.). Anything else would constitute an “internal and regional heresy against Lebanon” (Ibid., pp. 128f.). Thus, the principle of democracy in the form of the nation-state, was once again at the very core of discourse. It is set apart from any kind of “foreign interference” (no matter how realistic that was), from “federalism” and from “feudalism.” The first is almost self-explanatory. The two other motifs were, again, couched in the language of yet another “Resistance,” but lacking the enforcing means of a coercive apparatus, and as far as I could establish it, also the will to enforce. Once again, a certain conception of the nation is linked to its very existence; no patriotic spirit could emerge from the wrong political conditions. To bring them about is something that needs a clear break with the past. In fact, Michel ‘Aoun was no less disdainful when talking about the old families than the other sha’abiyy-politicians, accusing the zu’ama’ of having “established a farm instead of establishing a state” (quoted in: Charbel 2011, p. 344).

‘Aoun’s problem was not just that he did not hold any authority over Muslim areas; within the Christian sector, the LF still controlled many of the resources, keeping their shrunken “surrogate of the state” alive. Therefore, ‘Aoun had to establish control, to gather resources for his rump army and to live up to his own discourse of standing for the authority of the state. He called for the LF to hand over their part of the Beirut harbor, to allow him to control their media and to dismantle their financial network (his demands in: Mausuw’ah Michel ‘Aoun, I, p. 69). Fighting broke out in February 1989 with an army-attack directed against the “Bayt al-Mustaqbal,” in which the LF stored its cash register and a LF-barracks at ‘Ain ar-Rummanah (’Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, p. 54), resulting in one of the most disastrous episodes of the war, widely devastating the Christian enclave. What has been called by ‘Aoun, in a remarkable rhetorical reminiscent of Bashir Gemayel, as “the unification of the legitimate and free zone’s gun” was perceived by the other side as a “war of extinction” (Ibid., pp. 54f.). Although, ‘Aoun had initially sent out friendly signals to them (Barak 2009, pp. 157f.), the Syrians were shelling indiscriminately from above, the PSP and Palestinian troops attacked towards the presidential palace, whereas Iraq armed both Christian factions to weaken her neighbor Syria (Hanf 2015, pp. 572-575). In short, it was a bloody mess. But it was not as much a Don Quixote tilting at windmills as it might sound at first glance. The risky strategy was, as in 1982, to internationalize the conflict to bring about external support (Sneifer 1995, p. 148). ‘Aoun’s military campaign to dislodge the LF from their positions failed because he had underestimated their military strength, as well as their support within Christian Lebanon, and also inside his own army (Ibid., p. 155; Hanf 2015, p. 600).
To understand the situation is also key to an understanding of why 'Aoun could muster a sudden wave of mobilization therein. Whereas from the outside, declaring an “Intifada” against militias and Syrians alike on March 14, 1989 (Mausuw’ah Michel 'Aoun, I, pp. 70-75)213 verged on the grotesque, it hit the nerves of many of those who felt threatened by armed foreigners and the increasingly rapacious militia-politics alike. One of the first 'Aounists I met was a Christian in his forties, who joined the emotional demonstrations developing around the newborn movement in a situation when the Syrian artillery bombed the “Eastern sector” on a nearly daily basis. Simultaneously, marauding Christian militiamen shot his unarmed brother (Interview 1). In such a situation, Michel 'Aoun expressed his feelings with sentences like, “We are a people who wants to live. We fight for life.” (Mausuw’ah Michel 'Aoun, I, p. 74) He simply met his situation by calling to resist the “will of death” in Lebanon (Ibid., pp. 79f.), and addressed his hopes with the battle cry to take back control (Ibid., pp. 47f.). These slogans appealed to those who did not see any way out of the war, whereas for the ears of a saturated Westerner, they would sound as an overdosed rhetoric. 'Aoun’s style is a very harsh one. He uses almost incessantly strong dichotomies, by frequently recurring on military metaphors. Only when dealing with what Lebanon is or should be, he works himself up into very poetical language. Even the international situation provided for an emotional background. With the background of the collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the demonstrators could locate their rhetoric in an international context. They called the LF soldiers “Securitate,” alluding to the secret police of the just recently toppled Romanian dictator Niculae Ceaucescu (Hanf 2015, p. 601), or chanted “From Prague to Beirut, one single struggle: freedom” (Bourre 1990, p. 22). Simultaneously, the topos of the “life,” the “Resistance” was said to preserve and was used to function as a mainstay of Bashir Gemayel’s rhetoric, allowing for transferring memories of the sudden mobilization in 1976 to the manifestations of 1989; at least among those who shared the principal intentions held by those mobilized back then.

For those participating, it was a dramatic event. Whole families descended on the presidential palace at Ba‘abda, slightly to the East of Beirut, and the nearby compound of the Lebanese army’s command, setting up tents there. All kinds of artists were entertaining the crowds. At times, lengthy queues of demonstrators lined up on the winding road to the palace. The longer the events lasted, the more they were organized. We could hardly speak of a solidly organized

party here. Rather, a thinly organized movement party of the late 20th/21st century would be appropriate (see the categories in: Gunther and Diamond 2003). However, the skeleton of the very party that was to be founded around fifteen years later, became clearly visible during the mass rallies. Thus, the structure of the “halah,” the organized milieu and the functionaries’ apparatus, were set up no sooner than when it became necessary to perpetuate mobilization.

At first, a coordination committee emerged (B. Lefort 2012, p. 226, FN 11; Hanf 2015, p. 596). Then, the “Squadron of Supporters of the Lebanese Army” (Katibah ‘Ansar al-Jaysh al-Lubnaniyy) functioned to bind the supporters closer together by providing some dependability and to ensure them the necessary logistics. They, too, were seemingly only “patriotic,” but not “partisan”. The “Central Office for National Coordination” (al-Maktab al-Markaziyy li-Tansiq al-Wataniyy), on the other hand, planned the campaign as such. It was comprised of around fifteen persons, all of whom allegedly came out of the Tanzim, the one Christian militia largely set up by at least parts of the Lebanese army. Above them, a “High Committee” was set up, directly beneath ‘Aoun. Nearly all of its members had already acquired some political experience, but no one had continuously been a member in either party or militia, except the Tanzim (’Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, pp. 42f.). At least two members of this council (Najib Zouein, Rawjih ‘Azzam) also took a seat in the “New Lebanese Front,” a conservative Christian umbrella organization set up by Dany Chamoun, son of Camille Chamoun, intended to revive the old “Lebanese Front” as it had been established in January 1976 (Ibid., pp. 44f.).

One of the most peculiar things about ‘Aoun is that he held meaning for quite an array of mostly, Christian Lebanese, and, it seems, for many of them it was a different one. One strand is composed of former members of the LF themselves. Lyna Elias, for example, stands for that part of the FPM that originally came from the Phalanges; she worked with Bashir Gemayel. For her, Samir Geagea is the one who sold “the cause” to Syria, weakening the Christians, whereas Bashir Gemayel is not free from fault – attributed to his youth – but the one paradigmatic Christian hero. He stood for the fatherland undivided. Amin stood for himself, Geagea for the sectarian militia leader, who does not care at all about an all-Lebanese state but only about the Christians. ‘Aoun, by contrast, is “a true statesman, formed at the noble school of patriotism, of responsibility and duty.” (L. Elias 2009) That the Lebanese Forces’ Lebanese nationalism has always been a strongly Christian one, is of no interest for her. Partitioning the country is what she basically rejected in the LF under Geagea. It is hard

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214 Shortly afterwards, he was assassinated, together with his wife and his two little sons. Samir Geagea was sentenced under controversial circumstances in 1995 for having instigated the murder. He denied that.
to miss the degree of frustration and how much the ideological disenchantment of the LF adopting federalism mixes up with personal issues related to various infightings. Elias is much more sectarian than she perceives herself to be. In 2007, she wrote a piece denouncing an alleged Saudi conspiracy to finish off a Christian presence in Lebanon (L. Elias 2007).

The already mentioned Najib Zouein, member of the High Committee, exemplifies this current of disenchanted Christian conservatives. We have already encountered him. This is the man that left the Kata‘ib in whose Vorfeld he got socialized, when he felt abandoned by what he considered the party’s conciliatory politics before the war, and trained with the Tanzim (see chapter III.7). Despite having started with them, he served in an elite unit of the NLP when the LF units “unified” “the Christian gun” in 1980. After the Lebanese Forces crushed his unit, he refused to join the victors, only to remain under the protection of the army. Already impressed by ‘Aoun having coordinated the assault on Tell az-Za‘tar-camp, he also appreciated that this promising officer, at times, cooperated quite closely with Bashir Gemayel. Obviously, there were links to the very same concepts and organization that Zouein was once politically socialized into when growing up in the Phalangist milieu. The idea of “standing over the parties” took its toll. He saw ‘Aoun as a part of the “Lebanese resistance,” since this notion would not merely designate “only” a party, but “a state of the people” doing something allegedly non-particularistic; defending an independent Lebanon (‘Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, pp. 32-36). Thus, for him the new movement was

“trickling out … of the heart of the legitimate military institution, … embodying a promising dream for those people agreeing with the state and domination of the legitimate … He was the leader and promised savior … he was the prudent fortune teller, for whom especially the Christians, [but also] the Lebanese in general were yearning.” (Ibid., p. 39)

Actually, Zouein stands for many members of the Tanzim who found their way into the ‘Aounist camp, since the organization was originally set up by active or retired Lebanese army officers, who often had a close personal relationship with ‘Aoun (Interview 21).

Even hardliners from the Lebanese Forces felt at home in a movement in whom they tried to read their own version of Lebanon. The Abbot Na‘aman, for example, whose idea of Islam was one of a global, totalitarian movement (Naaman 2005, pp. 249-260), saw in ‘Aoun the “incarnation of collective will” (see: Bourre 1990, p. 181). Sa‘id ‘Aql, radical laicist

215 In her case, Pierre and Amin Gemayel (again!) used her Syrian origin to discredit her for having been too close to Bashir Gemayel whom his father and brother mistrusted.

216 The original word “qari” also means the reciter of a holy text, mostly, of course, the Quran.
nationalist poet and co-founder of the infamous “Guardians of the Cedar,”\footnote{Their military leader Étienne Saqr explicitly expressed his joy about every Israeli bomb hitting a Palestinian camp, coining the ill-famous slogan “Every Lebanese has to kill a Palestinian,” occasionally sprayed on Eastern Beirut’s walls (Kuderna 1983, pp. 187f.) and consoling Christian fighters they should not feel too much compassion for Palestinian women: “If you feel compassion for the Palestinian women and children, remember they are communists and will bear new communists” (Fisk 1990, pp. 85f.). Bashir Gemayel had to distance himself from these paroles after he took officially over the newly created LF’s leadership (Kuderna 1983, p. 188.)}\footnote{It was he who tried to replace the Arab alphabet by a Latin one with some additional signs and letters, see the document in: Kuderna 1983, pp. 387f.} opposed to everything Arabic\footnote{The video could be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_VW31A8qDe, rev. 2016-08-24. Later on, he lauded ʿAoun on TV as a “noble man” whom he wished to come back to Lebanon to rule there, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvNPf5h39t0.} interpreted ʿAoun as the man to bring about a strong and unified, laic Phoenician Lebanon without foreigners; the Lebanon he dreamt about. He, too, showed up at the Baʿabda manifestations, delivering a kind of a classic recitation on the “great general” who brought about the Lebanese as “one unified army” (Boure 1990, p. 165).\footnote{See also for a brief reference to the “Consciousness Movement”: al-Khazin 2002, pp. 36f.} His armed men under Étienne Saqr allied with the new movement, before their remnants switched to the south to ally themselves with Israel and her SLA (Sneifer 1995, pp. 42f.). Naʿaman and ʿAql, were primarily concerned with losing the perspective of a unified Lebanon, no matter how “Christian” their conception of the common state was.

Next to veterans of exceptionalist parties and organizations, were those who were got socialized in universities and several smaller parties and groups, frequently with a liberal perspective. I will mention one as an exemplary case. He came out of a local bourgeois family from Byblos that had already provided a member of parliament in the 1960s for Eddé’s party; other members of the family were actively involved in local politics (Interview 22). Therefore, he understood his socializing process as something virtually automatic, as an “atmosphere,” in which he grew up. Entering university in the early 1970s, he underwent a typical process of that time, becoming acquainted with Marxist writings that were fashionable back then, feeling deep sympathy for the Palestinian cause and getting drawn into the Communists’ orbit. Other liberal ʿAounists whom I interviewed, had similarly been active in student groups. One, having befriended Raymond Eddé personally, engaged directly with the latter’s “National Bloc” (Interview 21). The other went through the ranks of the “Consciousness Movement,” a student group, neither affiliated to the traditional left, although with leftist sympathies, nor with the right, e.g. the NLP or the Phalanges (Interview 25).\footnote{However, let us return to the example discussed above. The students’ turning point proved to be, once more, the war’s outbreak in 1975, when he felt that leftism had grown into promoting a Muslim sectarian}
Therefore, his estrangement from his original positions came when the Lebanese left could no longer reach out to most of the countries’ Christians and failed to undo the effects of the sectarian identity as an important filter of political perception. In that case, in contrast to those who remained inside the radical left, an originally bourgeois background and a still strong religiosity rendered it impossible to identify with that movement whose (involuntary) sectarian identity became strikingly visible when the war broke out. Those two interviewees close to a Chéhabist position (No. 21 and 22) were, so to say, converts to a leftist much informed by the failure of the post-Chéhab years to sustain a strong state. On the other side, the Lebanese Forces stood, in his mind, for exactly the same line, but inverted. He suspected their “surrogate of the state” to be more than a temporary situation (Interview 22). He felt his freedoms considerably limited by their coercive power, which he encountered at the Lebanese University. The state, as the institutionalized setting of dealing with the question of minority-majority, was what he associated with that “right to choose” which he missed. The drive for bringing about the modern state breaking with the old, was in a reading embodied by the likes of the “contextualist” theologian Yuakim Mubarak and General ʿAoun. Although, as a former leftist, due to his experiences with the military intelligence, he used to be rather distanced from the Lebanese Armed Forces before ʿAoun fulfilled all his expectations of a Christian liberal offering an alternative to the Lebanese Forces:

“And since he had risen to speak, from the first day on, the first things, the first steps of taking over, I said to myself: this is the man. This is the man, because … after 15 wasted years he opened up, he finally gave us finally an option to choose between the chronic process of cartelizing the country, of making up closed-up, warring confessional cantons, or to say no to this decay and to do what was necessary to get back to the country as well as the state and its institutions. … [Originally] I was very suspicious of everything the army did. But when finally seeing general ʿAoun taking up position, I said to myself: oh no, this is the man, finally this is him, this is the man whom I waited for, this is liberator, this is the savior.” (Interview 22)

Therefore, he joined the demonstrators, offering academic advice to the planning group that soon evolved, without having met or talked to the general in person (Ibid.).

A special case among this wide span of different ʿAounists, is the sole Muslim interviewee I encountered within these largely Christian parties. A high-ranking member of the current FPM, he described his political affiliation as being centered on an independent Lebanon. He did not grasp the movement to be Christian at all, except by accident. Despite, like everyone
else, claiming to not having chosen political standpoints because of his parents, (“We discussed politics at home only in a very general way”), he nevertheless became preconditioned by them. Belonging to one of the most influential Shiite bourgeois families outside of the Hezbollah/ʾAmal camp, he described their political orientation as “Chamounist,” i.e. conservative and pro-Western, although not involved in organizational terms. As in many other cases, that might have also been influenced in terms of personal relations and the respective social surroundings and not only due to purely ideological terms, as the functionary preferred to convey it; the family stemmed from ʿAin ar-Rummanah, a formerly staunch Chamounist area (cf. Ménargues 2004, p. 56) right to the south of Beirut. He participated in the mass demonstrations for the first time in 1988, later joining the ʿAounist student network where he remained highly active during the 1990s, willing to provide for an alternative to the dominant Hezbollah-ʾAmal duo. Before the background of the ongoing sectarianization process during the war, “not privileging any group” in the country, within the framework of a laic state, was most important to him. In that context, he especially cherished that ʿAoun stood, according to him, for the “legal state” and not for the militias and their parties whom he related foremost with sectarian politics (Interview 23).

Others who attended the manifestations at Baʿabda were newly politicized youngsters, some rather liberal to conservative in their social outlooks, some leftists. One is Nicolas Sehnaoui, a FPM member who served as minister between 2011 and 2014. In 2011, he published a booklet trying to sharpen his position as a candidate for the upcoming (but delayed) elections. The text, written in French, likewise addresses foreigners as well as the Christian Lebanese bourgeoisie,221 to whom Sehnaoui belongs. He is the son of a manager and banker whose position he describes as “laic by conviction”. His father was not a member of a party, yet briefly served as a minister in 2005/06. His mother, belonging to the Tuéni family, participated as an author in the “Cénacles” platform to provide for a Lebanese national identity. Lebanese nationalism, the Tanzim militia, the Cénacles, the nationalist poetry of Saʿid ʿAql, seems to have been a topic in his family. All of that stood for a state-centered Lebanese national identity out of an unreflected Christian background. One of his uncles had participated in the Tanzim, an organization; another one ran in elections (Sehanoui 2011, pp. 16-19). His stance, once again, is said not to be partisan but “Madhabi Lubnan,” “sectarian Lebanese,” assuming to hold a position not particular but truly patriotic as a tenet for all (Ibid., p. 28), and directed against “the prevailing and natural racism that ruled the Christian

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221 Most of its content is too specific on Lebanon to make oneself understood among a foreign audience not at all acquainted with Lebanon.
regions, alimented and supported by the ideology of the al-Kata‘ib and the Lebanese Forces” (Ibid., p. 18) - an allusion to the sectarianism associated with the taboo of partitioning the country. How far he really was from them cannot be evaluated, given the advertising nature of a biographical sketch, locating the candidate within the confrontation between LF and FPM after 2005. His sympathies for the Tanzim and ‘Aql suggest that he, too, belongs to those disenchanted by the loss of a perspective in forming the whole of Lebanon. He portrays his activities of supporting the mass actions around the Ba‘abda from abroad as akin to breaking out of the conditions of giving and taking as a reciprocity (Ibid. p. 18) deemed to be a very basic mercantilism. That is not untypical. As we saw in the Phalangist discourse, the ills of tit-for-tat-businesses’ are contrasted with one’s own dedication as a sacrifice. Thus, other FPM members contrasted the “degeneration” of the “militias” as a “lack of values” to the protestors around the Ba‘abda that were “all voluntaries; no one was paid for working.” (Interview 26) The self-determined society of the demos, assumed in a country living up to the normativity of the modern nation-state, is to be brought about by a society discovering itself as acting without being reduced to a mere monetary outcome.

Yet, that had not only to do with the normativity of how to live, for many of those demonstrating there, the new movement constituted a relief, a breaking out of one’s own house and the narrowness of the local (B. Lefort 2012, pp. 226f.) . This was important before the background of a patriarchal society, but even more since the war had forced the Lebanese to live much more fixed to the local than ever before: public life had become decentralized and fragmented over the war (Haugbolle 2010, pp. 57-61). Indeed, former participants still praise the event. When watching old videos of it - ‘Aounist YouTube accounts and the party’s TV channel tend to be full of them222 - one could well understand why. What the war and its trench experience are for the LF, the Ba‘abda rallies constitute for the present-day FPM. Both events postponed ambivalence, suggested an emotionally felt unity and promised empowerment as a people, by simply conveying to those participating, the impression of acting directly as a demos. People cheered aloud whenever ‘Aoun called them “the great people of Lebanon” – and he did so repeatedly to replay the emotional moment - or when they were singing the national anthem together with ‘Aoun, whose raucous voice could be well heard through a loudspeaker. These demonstrators stand against the outside as an in-group that was at times, even designated as a family (‘ahluna at-tayyibin), assembling at home,

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reclaiming the agency of actually taking decision themselves, as Pierre Raffoul, one of ʿAoun’s advisors, portrayed it in a fiery speech.\textsuperscript{223} The events also conveyed a feeling of a new beginning, often associated with the terms “thaurah” or “tamarrud,” revolution and revolt as indicators of agency and progress. As the Phalangists and the LF before, the ʿAounist demonstrators indulged into “revolt” as a desirable normativity to do politics, calling themselves “the revolting milieu” (halah at-tamarrud) (al-Khazin 2002, p. 56). Once again, the phenomenon was a rather youthful one, with teenagers and students making up a considerable part of the crowds (Hanf 2015, p. 596).

Yet, the international scene was not favorable to them. The next president, René Muʿawad, was blown up and his successor, Elias Hrawi, was said to be under Syrian control (Hanf 2015, pp. 590-598). Whereas Geagea announced in April 1990, his support for Taʾif to position himself as the new heavyweight of the Lebanese Christians as soon as the war would be over (el-Husseini 2012, p. 32), ʿAoun, who rejected the treaty, was blockaded and increasingly isolated from support outside of his popular base. Consequently, he also came under increasing pressure from within the army (Hanf 2015, p. 610). As a result, only a severely diminished rump-army of some 3,000 to 5,000 men, remained under his command (Barak 2009, p. 176). The personally devout ʿAoun also fell out with the episcopacies, especially with the Maronite, after his followers stormed the patriarchal palace at Bkerké after the election of René Muʿawad in November 1989, insulted the Patriarch and forced him to kiss ʿAoun’s photograph (Hanf 2015, p. 593).\textsuperscript{224}

Finally, in 1990, a strange alliance prepared for a final assault on the presidential palace. Syrians, their usual Lebanese allies, but also the LF, took revenge on ʿAoun for the infighting in 1989 (Hanf 2015, pp. 598-601). Grim battles between army soldiers and LF fighters afflicted the area around Eastern Beirut. That was not only military action. ʿAoun’s adherents, gathering in huge demonstrations, tried to show that the general indeed spoke for them. The generally rural recruits of the LF’s core units, attacked them directly. As Theodor Hanf (2015, pp. 600f.) observed, at times they fought in Eastern Beirut like in a foreign land, even targeting women and schoolchildren, occasionally taking families of soldiers’ hostage and executing prisoners, whereas the army apparently tried to minimize civilian losses.\textsuperscript{225}

\textsuperscript{223} For example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkWG79tRWe, 2016-08-19.
\textsuperscript{224} Michel ʿAoun designated himself in an interview in 2007 as the “Patriarch of the street,” B. Lefort 2012, pp. 237f.
\textsuperscript{225} The ʿAounists published a pamphlet to denounce the various abuses and transgression they accused the LF with: Union des Jeunes Européens 1990.
The final assault on 'Aoun came on October 13, 1990, when Syrian forces, Muslim Lebanese soldiers and units of the LF, took the presidential palace and the nearby ministry of defense at Ba'abda under the cover of the Gulf War, which provided them with US support and stripped 'Aoun from his Iraqi supplies (Sneifer 1995, pp. 158-161; Hanf 2015, pp. 608-613). 'Aoun left Lebanon under French protection for exile in Paris; 400 Syrian soldiers fell; about 100 Lebanese ones were executed after the battle (Hanf 2015, p. 611).

8. RETURNING TO PARTY-POLITICS
As we have seen in this chapter, all wartime discourses evoked the normativity of modernity and democracy with the important exception of the rising Islamist scene. Political identities were formulated and reformulated in constant interaction, within the country as well as with an international audience. Yet, their core point was always about the one version of an order said to be the state. That became nowhere more evident than within the 'Aoun movement which assembled a wide array of supporters, some of whom were as much exceptionalist as the LF leadership but determined to cling to a unified nation-state, imagined as being non-sectarian. All these discourses shared the same tendency to grasp their own movement as a literal “halah,” a milieu, as the state or at least its germ cell, said to bring about the “dream of a republic” through a broader societal change.

Interestingly, those moments defining the parties that developed out of them - the Phalanges’ founding, the war in 1958, the war’s outbreak in 1975/76, Bashir Gemayel’s ascendancy to power and the manifestations around the Ba'abda-palace - were characterized by the same combination of factors, related to this normativity of modernity. Being actively involved as an individual, recognizing the own “cause” in a person functioning as a visible symbolism and a strong communitarization affect caused by the felt ability to finally bring about that one acting, articulated demos.

Yet, despite all plausibility of political identities referring constantly to each other, the party as such, did not quite stand in the middle of Lebanese politics during the war, although most armed groups were related to parties or were later about setting up their own organizational adaptations to structural conditions beyond their reach. The return to party politics came as soon as these organizations, as carriers of aspirations, ambitions, identities, and commercial reward, were facing the prospects of settling into a renewed Lebanese political landscape, situated in liberal politics and a “Weltzeit” that supported, now perhaps more than ever, the
idea of forming parties according to a liberal model. How to translate the wartime organizations into parties obviously already mattered during the last war years. Thus, the Algerian foreign minister and special envoy of the Arab League to Lebanon (later on also among others to Syria), Lakhdar Brahimi, formulated in an interview with a Beirut based daily, his suspicion that precisely this translation had indeed played an important role for prolonging and complicating his shuttle diplomacy:

“I met all militia-leaders of importance … every one of them had a roadblock and talked about his situation, his [future] prospects and their urgency for today, and not as late as tomorrow. … They were profiteers of the state of war … I felt during my meetings with the militia-leaders as if some of them asked me: You are heading with us into the great unknown called peace; what will be my place therein? You tell me: participate in elections; but that is a great uncertainty ….” (Originally in al-Mustaqbal, 1999-01-16, quoted in: al-Khazin 2002, p. 57; my translation).
CHAPTER V: THE CHRISTIAN FRUSTRATION

We have already encountered the emergence of Lebanese parties around the First World War, the origins and transformation of the Phalanges and encounters with the modern idea of representing a demos within a country organized along the lines of the modern administrative state. Both demos and country were expected to be inextricably linked together by some “spirit” that, in turn, had to allow for feeling as one. Since that unity had always been perturbed by several rifts, different imaginations of how close the country shall be to others and socio-economic differences, the “pedagogical” side of the representation (Bhabha 2007, pp. 297ff.) stood very much in the foreground of finally bringing about that oneness. During the war, we witnessed the apogee of these discourses in forming the “real nation.” Its outright failure within the LF/Kata’ib gave rise to another movement dealing with the very same normativity. Yet, all these movements lived primarily out of this normativity when it could be contrasted to an obvious enemy. In principle, the state and the nation it should form, was conflated with each respective movement. After the war, all three relevant Christian Lebanese parties lost a credible grip on the state. When the legal pressures on them disappeared in 2005, that changed only partially but the renewed competition made it necessary to define anew the untouchable resources, providing for an understanding of how a certain social and political order is maintained. In other words, they had to become more precise than during their years of either marginalization or mobilizational inflation. I argue, that the two parties associated with the “14th of March” could indeed be seen as exceptionalist, whereas the FPM was gauged more and more into a contextualized position. Both are setting lines demarcating a part of social order not to be negotiated, hence making up a state. We will see how these positions, derived from what I discussed in the last three chapters, translate into identities triggered by a local experience and couched in internationalized concepts, are translated into a habitus, making the conception of the right order visible down to everyday behavior. Finally, we will see through the example of the elections of 2009, how that affected their potential for popular mobilization.

1. VICTORS AND VANQUISHED
The official formula of the Ta’if agreement strengthened the Sunni Prime Minister at the expense of the Christian President, and provided for an equal share among Muslims and
Christians in all institutions (see: Baaklini et al. 1999, pp. 95ff.), and bore the slogan of “no victor and no vanquished.” For all three Christian parties discussed in this study, coping with the loss of the first real and later, only “symbolic [Christian] hegemony” (Hanf 2015, p. 96), constituted the prevalent theme. Ta’if gave special rights to the Syrians in Lebanon, stipulated by a treaty of “brotherhood,” leaving no doubt, who the elder brother was (Ibid., pp. 617f.). The country served, as Volker Perthes put it fittingly, as the “Syrian Hong Kong” (Perthes 1998, p. 115), allowing for all those capitalist activities severely restricted inside of Syria and as an outlet for the rapidly growing Syrian workforce, absorbed by the Lebanese market (Picard 1997, pp. 62f.; Perthes 1998, p. 115). Pro-Syrian actors dominated the scene. Those who were not close to the new “protecting power” were soon to discover that there were indeed victors and vanquished.

The winners were mostly Muslims. The two powerful Shiite parties, Harakah ‘Amal and Hezbollah, usually had a good relationship with Damascus. In fact, their troops were guaranteed their weapons as a “National Resistance” to liberate the still Israeli-occupied areas in the south. Rich external help from Syria and Iran, plus their increasingly professional military apparatuses, provided them with compensation for their institutional underrepresentation: the Shiite Speaker of Parliament remained the weakest of the “three Presidents.” The old Shiite notables were politically either sidelined or integrated into the two parties and their milieus. The Sunnis found themselves in a more delicate position. Since the mid-1980s, they no longer had a meaningful militia of their own. Thus, their notables did profit after the war from a lack of parties to be transformed out of the militias. Yet, a new haute bourgeoisie that had come to riches at the Gulf superimposed itself, especially the Hariri and the Miqati families. Rafiq al-Hariri, who had started an impressive network of investment and philanthropy during the war, soon emerged as the dominating political figure among the Lebanese (Baumann 2012a and b; Gervais 2012). The most powerful Druze parties (PSP, LDP) also arranged themselves with the Syrians. The ‘Alawites, for their part, were the first time, provided with parliamentary representation of their own.

Syria soon introduced her own practices into its now dependent neighbor, often employing practices of electoral fraud (among others: Scheffler 1996; Perthes 1997 and 1999; Salloukh 2006; Kerr 2012; e-Husseini 2012). Farid al-Khazin, later on himself a parliamentarian for the FPM, dubbed that fittingly as an “authoritarianism by diffusion” (al-Khazin 2003b) that

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226 Although at times, they were at odds: originally ‘Amal had been the Syrians’ favorite and Syrian troops massacred more than 20 fighters of the Hezbollah 1987 in Beirut; see: Sakmani 2016, pp. 162f.
brought about a considerable regress of the formation of parties (al-Khazin 2002, pp. 90ff.; 2003a, pp. 612f./618-624):

“A pattern of inaction can be discerned: elections are intended to produce parliaments with a uniform political coloring; parliaments in turn have legitimized these non-competitive elections and the prevailing status quo; and members of parliament, both party and non-party based, engage in all issues except those that have a bearing on the Syrian backed structure of power in the country and the decision-making process. This has produced an unprecedented phenomenon: the dismemberment of the political process since the electoral process has been largely detached from the making of power structure in the political system ... In other words, real power in present-day Lebanon is not generated by the outcome of the electoral process. In fact, elections have performed functions that are largely similar to those performed by authoritarian regimes to support the system and to make people comply and adjust to the anomalies of the political process.” (al-Khazin 2003b, pp. 71f.)

Yet, all these problems were especially relevant for the Christians. Those parties among them, who were most likely to play an important role in postwar Lebanon, had all had their problems with Syria: the al-Kata’ib, the Lebanese Forces, and the ‘Aounists. That determined a good deal of Christian politics after Ta’if. Those years have been called “the Christian frustration” (al-‘Ihbat al-Masihiyy), indicating that Christians especially, often felt as though they were vanquished.

The Phalanges/LF camp was still marked by wartime schisms. Even after the war, army units had to separate Phalangist and LF troops willing to solve conflicts by taking up arms (Sneifer 1995, pp. 165ff.). Neither Elie Karamé (chairman 1984-86), Georges Sa’adeh (1986-1998), Munir al-Hajj (1999-2001) nor Karim Pakradouni (2001-07), were powerful enough to function as an integrator within the disintegrated al-Kata’ib. Due to infighting during the war, the party leadership amnestied all those that had left its ranks since 1975, among them Samir Geagea. The latter had been temporarily suspended from membership in 1985 due to his conflict with Amin Gemayel. After returning, he tried to unify Kata’ib and LF in his hands. After having failed in 1989, without officially throwing his own hat in, to prevent Georges Sa’adeh from becoming chairman of the Phalanges, he waged another attempt in June 1992 but failed due to the many enemies he had made during the war (Sneifer 1995, p. 170). In Geagea’s biography the confrontation in 1989 is more or less portrayed as a struggle between the “traditionalist” al-Kata’ib and the “reformers” (ash-Shartuni 2008, pp. 137-167).
Sa’adeh’s official short biographical sketch hardly deals with it at all: it only tells us the party had not been in its best shape, indicating the other side had been a relevant faction, rather socialized by the war than by the party (al-Lahham, Ru’ass’a Hizb-l-Kata’ib, III, pp. 13-23). During that confrontation, the party-leadership widely used its prerogative to appoint functionaries that in turn, staffed the same body to elect the party-chairman. This was a remnant of the Phalanges being a shirt-party that gave the leader a free hand in choosing top functionaries after “consultations.” Geagea demanded the party base elect a new chairman. His rival Sa’adeh objected to the proposition for reasons aptly illustrating the state of the party as it was not even clear who actually still belonged to the party at all (ash-Shartuni 2008, pp. 138-147). Thus, the party’s politburo decided, in December 1992, to renew the membership cards. The numbers who renewed their cards are unclear. Régina Sneifer (1995, p. 175) indicates that around 24,000 did so in 1987/88 when those close to Geagea tried to re-enter the party. Shawkat Ishtiyy (1997b, p. 156, FN 104) gives an even lower number for the Sa’adeh campaign’s count of their own rank and file in 1993. He estimates only 6,400 renewed their cards, with a recognizable focus on Matn, where former President Amin Gemayel had his power base. Given a membership that might have well exceeded the number of 60,000 in the early 1970s (see chapter III.6), this truly resembles a significant bloodletting. It also meant a process of growing older, since the average age was said to have risen dramatically at the expense of the LF who had attracted a far larger share of the younger Phalangists and those from lower social strata (Interview Pakradouni, 2012-05-23). Although exact numbers have been missing since 1990, the active membership of the party allegedly shrank to a mere 500 in 1995 (‘Ishtiyy 1997b, p. 57). That sudden decline was also attributed to the final split of the “Kata’ib al-Quwwat” when Geagea failed to win the elections against Sa’adeh (ash-Shartuni 2008, pp. 127-142).²²² In September 1991, even before losing the election in June 1992, Geagea had already obtained an official registration for a new party, the “Party of the Lebanese Forces” (Hizb al-Quwwat al-Lubnaniyyah), and an internal structure was decided upon in early 1992 (Ibid., pp. 404f., 427f.). Securing this fallback position illustrated anew the very rough patterns of formal partyism provided by the Lebanese law. The new Lebanese Forces, by comparison, estimated their active membership to be at around 10,000 in 2012 with between 50,000 and 60,000 registered sympathizers (Interviews 15 and 17). In addition, their opponents register that the LF grew at the expense of the Phalangists

²²² However, the decision was one based upon a slim majority. In the first turn, Sa’adeh received 57 votes of an electoral body composed of all formerly important officeholders within the party - one short of the necessary majority, Geagea 55. In the second round, Sa’adeh obtained 60, Geagea 53 votes, three ballots were void, cf. ash-Shartuni 2008, p. 151.
(Interview 28) who claim to have, as of 2012, around 20,000 members with a noticeable generation gap for those who grew up in the 1990s.\(^{228}\) The students section alone estimated its membership to be at 3,200, almost exclusively composed of Christians.\(^{229}\) An important cornerstone for recruiting new members suffered. Lacking experience in mobilization, the party relied heavily on what Shawkat Ṭishtiyy has called “biological reproduction,” since partisanship was more or less passed down from fathers to their sons and daughters (Ṭishtiyy 2006, pp. 92f.); a model severely endangered with members leaving the party. The whole scheme fitted into a time marked by a general tendency of simply shying away from parties. Immediately after the war, the rate of dissatisfaction was highest, as highlighted by a poll conducted in 1995, which reported a low of only 10% of the respondents being engaged in parties, organizations or trade unions, whereas 62% rejected the very concept of a party. Of those polled, 61% saw parties as a factor aggravating society’s problems and 51% doubted their abilities to strengthen democracy and solidarity in the country (al-Khazin 2002, pp.61f.).\(^{230}\) This fits well into a time when those who did not believe that they, themselves, could change anything in Lebanon rose from 66 to 80% (Hanf 2003, p. 199). Moreover, Christian parties had decided to boycott the first post-war elections due to fears of Syrian discrimination (among others: Perthes 1994, p. 51; Mausuw’ah Michel ṬAoun, I, p. 109; ash-Shartuni 2008, p. 439; el-Husseini 2012, p. 32). Not surprisingly, in 1992, only 30% of all eligible voters bothered to participate at all. In Christian dominated constituencies, the quota stood at a meagre 6.52% (Perthes 1994, p. 64; Baaklini 1999, pp. 98f.). Christian electoral boycotts did not persist unabated for the entire time span between 1992 and 2005. All three parties, or parties-to-be, lessenened their refusal of taking part, yet, most Christian members of parliament stemmed from notables-families, parties literally eclipsed in one important field of their usual activities.

That regress also affected the internal structure of the Kata’ib-party. Members, currently assuming official functions inside the party, mostly claim of not having been in the party officially before 2005-2007. Yet, they still feel as having been “Phalangist” but outside the party. As an example, a businessman, now in his forties, who started out as a student back then because the party “looks like me,” representing a Lebanon without Syrian interference, and providing for a “vital role” and “good existence” for the Christians in the region.

\(^{228}\) However, as the manager in charge assured me this is only a wild guess, cf. Interview in May 2012.

\(^{229}\) Interview with a youth-functionary in summer 2012.

\(^{230}\) Shawkat Ṭishtiyy (1997b, p. 85) quotes similar but slightly differing, he indicates those considering the country’s parties to contribute to their problems rather than solving them at 69%. It seems both authors referred to the very same statistics.
Ironically, it was not exactly the party that looked like him, or at least not the official one. What he considered as being the party, was an opposition-network organized by the Gemayels that remained outside of the official structures. The official leadership was for him only “leading a sign which read ‘Kataʾib-party’ but nothing else” and to whom he felt no “emotional or intellectual” attachment. The knowledge about what he expected the party to represent, was, as he openly acknowledged, one that had been “to a large extent,” passed down upon him by his family, who was already a part of the Phalangist milieu; relatives had held positions inside the al-Kataʾib and volunteered for its militia during the civil war but had become inactive over the years (Interview 10).

He was no exception. Karim Pakradouni was especially disliked for his pragmatic stance towards the Syrians which he felt to be necessary since Lebanon could not live against her bigger neighbor (Interview with him 2012). Quite tellingly, he places that decision in the typical language of contextualism, describing himself as having tried to “Arabize” the party and polemically referring to his rivals as an “Israeli current,” thereby alluding to their exceptionalism. Despite his, at first glance, smooth party-career, Pakradouni held little influence inside the party, which he attributed to lacking the credentials of being a Maronite or stemming from a better known family (Ibid.). Many blamed him for clinging to Syria (see for example: ʾIshtiyy 1997b, pp. 46, 40f.). The estrangement went as far as leading to a fractured split of the party. Pakradouni controlled little more than the party headquarters at Saifi close to the Beirut seashore, whereas the Gemayel family, primarily Amin and his oldest son Pierre Amin Gemayel, established an unofficial “al-Qaʿidah al-Kataʾib,” a “Phalanges Party Base”. As during the last years before the civil war, it became clear that representing a demos required a considerable degree of reciprocity. Consequently, functionaries heading the local branches, still officially appointed by the centralized leadership, had little hold over their organizations, where members organized an unofficial parallel structure (Interview 10). Some branches, such as the youth organizations for students and pupils, did not organize any elections for all these years (Interview 16). Amin Gemayel’s younger son Samy and Bashir Gemayel’s son Nadim started to gather Christian students around them at high school and during their university years, thereby assembling the nucleus of the current group of functionaries who have taken over the party leadership in 2007. Their platform was “Loubnanouna”, “Our Lebanon”, a loosely established group officially described as a civic think tank, focusing on federalism (NOW Lebanon, 2011-11-22). Its attractiveness was, again, rooted in a Christian perspective: to decentralize the assets of the state should give the
Christians a chance of getting their share from a state many of them saw as becoming more and more a Muslim controlled one.

During the “Syrian years,” the rift within became most visible on two occasions, associated with legitimacy by mobilization. First, in 2000, when Munir al-Hajj ran for a parliamentary seat as an “independent” on the slate of pro-Syrian minister Michel al-Murr and not as a Kata’ib man. Amin’s eldest son, Pierre Amin, decided to declare himself a candidate in the very same (Matn) district, running against the party chairman, whom he defeated (NOW Lebanon, 2011-11-22). Many from the “al-Qa’idah al-Kata’ib” participated in this electoral campaign, which they considered as a contest on who might be rightfully representing “Phalangism” (Interview 10). The very same contest was made visible three years later on occasion of the “Martyr Mass” for Bashir Gemayel, a yearly memorial mass held at Achrafieh. It serves as a kind of conservative Christian show of force, where the milieu manifests itself (Haugbolle 2013). In 2002, the Gemayels addressed this community directly on the occasion of the annual mass, circumventing the party leadership, which led to street fighting between various factions that year (Moubayed n. d.).

As for the Lebanese Forces, after failing to challenge Georges Sa’adeh, Samir Geagea decided to transform the former militia into a party in its own right. Two things are remarkable therein. In stark contrast to Pierre Gemayel or, with restrictions, to Michel ’Aoun, we do not see too many objections against the notion of the party. Not that the LF do not consider themselves being more than a party, once again they are a “halah,” a milieu, or that their leader would have been less sha’abiyy in his antics. Rather, when the Phalanges were founded, international zeitgeist proved to be very skeptical about having “only” some party. Since then, international discourse has dramatically changed. A party has become something providing for legitimacy. The latter effect is restricted in a country quite torn apart by the many “dreams” of a republic. Whereas ’Aounists had their problems constituting nothing but a party, the LF had it easier. They did not stem from the phenomenon of the “social movement” emanating from “civil society”, something grown in popularity since the 1980s, but from an armed group for whose organizational form there could no longer be a place in Syrian dominated post war Lebanon. As in the ’Aounist case, reservations were still upheld against joining the ranks of those indulging in ordinary politics; the “project” had to transform a bit, to change its form since the “reason” for choosing the armed surrogate of a state –

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war - had ceased to exist (ash-Shartuni 2008, p. 403). However, the new form did not last for long as Samir Geagea was jailed in 1994.\textsuperscript{232} Whereas all war crimes were to be granted amnesty by the Ta’if-agreement, he was sentenced, in a highly controversial process, to lifelong imprisonment, having been held responsible for the bombing of a church in February 1994. Other members were imprisoned too, some after having been tortured.\textsuperscript{233} The party was simply banned altogether. Its social cash register was dissolved, but most of the fortunes had already been officially transferred to the Maronite church (Rieger 2003, p. 261). While the now illegal LF were officially represented by Geagea’s wife Satrida, the numerous petitions, declarations or manifestations organized by its members for their leader’s release, provided a major motivation for their clandestine party activities. Allegedly, they held considerable influence over union activities in the 1990s (Perthes 1994, p. 113).

The ‘Aounists had, at first, difficulties in maintaining their apparatus at all, since their leader had taken refuge in the French embassy. Only after he finally made it to Paris, communication improved (‘Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, p. 62).\textsuperscript{234} On the organizational level, within Lebanon, Syrian repression resulted in the practical necessity to keep hierarchies flat and groups decentralized (Interview 28). In 1994, they organized a first “Lebanese National Conference” in Paris, followed on two years later by a second one. These congresses tried to replace the manifestations at the Ba’abda by providing some organizational continuum. In 1996, at another congress, the “‘Aounist Movement” was renamed the “Free Patriotic Movement”. It became clear that some of the participants had understood the necessity to form a party, whereas the other wing inside the loosely knitted network wanted to keep it solely as an umbrella for a social movement. The first group was mostly constituted of those who had been primarily socialized into ‘Aounism during the Ba’abda manifestations; the latter were rather those who originally came out of other groups, remaining somewhat reluctant to see ‘Aounism as a replacement of their former organizational identities (‘Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, pp. 64f.).

\textsuperscript{232} His attorney, by the way, was Jean-François Wallerand de Saint-Just, a functionary of the French “Front National,” who also defended Jean-Marie Le Pen on various occasions and several Serbian suspects before the International Tribunal on war crimes in former Yugoslavia. He belongs to the traditionalist right wing of the FN, cf. \textit{Libération}, 2013-09-04.


\textsuperscript{234} A small group around the music-producer Michel Elefteriades even tried to establish an underground-cell for armed “resistance.”
This marginalization only changed with the so-called “Cedar Revolution” in 2005. It erupted after Rafiq al-Hariri was blown up on February 14, 2005 in downtown Beirut. Whereas we officially still do not know who killed him, suspicion was soon cast on Syria and Hezbollah. Hariri was part of a longer cascade of political murders rocking Lebanon; most victims had publically voiced their criticism of the Syrian regime. As a building contractor, he had accumulated considerable wealth and lived with the Syrians in an uneasy relationship. He was closer to the Saudis than to them. His reconstruction politics focused on growth cores, in other words, on Beirut and not on the periphery, on the financial sector and not on industry, and on infrastructure not that much on human capital (Denoeux and Springborg 1998; Labaki 2003; Nasr 2003), and with a strong tendency to “see the state as a version of himself writ large,” but at least he “wouldn’t crack your knees for disagreeing with him” (Young 2010, p. 24). On the other hand, the Syrians tried to position their own, more subservient allies, against him. The security apparatus was their most important asset, represented by army chief Émile Lahoud, who was elected President in 1998 (Perthes 1999). This uneasy relationship continued until 2005. When it came to prolonging the mandate of President Lahoud, Syria and Hariri clashed once again, and not only with him. Walid Jumblatt and many Christians, even some Shiites, distrusted Syria’s role in the country (Salloukh 2006). After Hariri’s death in 2005, a revolt broke out and after weeks of demonstrations on Martyr Square in central Beirut, the Syrians had to leave under considerable international pressure. The uprising had not been planned in advance and did not rely upon party apparatuses. “Independent” intellectuals from various backgrounds infused fresh human resources with those who would normally not have participated in more regularized political debates. They were able to bridge gaps between the more entrenched parties (Haugbolle 2010, pp. 203-206; Arsan 2018, pp. 27-59) by talking sense to their versions of a Lebanese nationalism tied to democratic ideas of participation and a self-determined people. Yet, what seemed to be a “national mobilization” in the name of democratic normativities did not bring about a single reading. Hasan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah general secretary, did not join in but thanked Syria publically for her support against foreign influences from Israel and the US (Haugbolle 2010, pp. 206-224).

The divide resulting thereof has characterized Lebanon ever since. On the one hand, Hariri’s son, Sa’ad ad-Din Rafiq al-Hariri, took over his father’s Mustaqbal (Future) bloc that towered well over all other Sunni alternatives. “Independents” and Muslim Brethren joined in on his

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235 A UN-commission authored a disputed report (http://www.un.org/News/dh/docs/mehlisreport/) and called for a Special Tribunal that has not materialized yet. Neither Syria nor Hezbollah and her allies accept it and refuse to hand over anyone suspected to have been involved into the assassination.
electoral lists. The Druze-Socialist PSP allied until it left in August 2011. The al-Kata’ib and the Lebanese Forces became integral parts of the “14th of March” alliance.

On the other hand, the “8th of March” was constituted as an alliance between Hezbollah, ’Amal, and several smaller parties as junior partners, especially the SSNP, the Communists, and the al-Ba’ath. The ’Aounists formed no part back then but participated, as well as the other two parties dealt with in this study, in masses held at Martyr Square. Since then, the ’Aounists have moved to the “8th of March” camp. We will deal with that in the following passages.

2. AFTER 2005: EXCEPTIONALISM VS. CONTEXTUALISM

Ever since the war, one thing became abundantly clear; a minimal consensus on a Lebanese identity within the contemporary state exists (Salibi 1988, pp. 221f.; Hanf 2015, passim). Perhaps after 2005, for the first time ever in Lebanese history, no powerful political actor has tried to abolish the very existence of the Lebanese state, or as Michael Kerr put it, Lebanon is more Lebanese than ever (Kerr 2012, p. 31). Still, what is actually understood as being Lebanese is hotly contested. The main line of these conflicts is surely not that kind of classification of Lebanese political camps that Fabrice Balanche (2012) has proposed. He saw the main Lebanese divide after 2005 in a conflict between the proponents of a strong state and the neoliberals, of “state-builders” vs. “state-profiteers,” reflected on a regional level by the confrontation between the US and Iran. The problem with that dichotomization might, for instance, be the person of Najib Miqati, presiding over the “8th of March” based government between 2011 and 2014. He and many of his ministers were as “neoliberal” as Hariri is (see Baumann 2012a). He surely does not stand for the “supporters of a strong state that provides protection against the consequences of a global economy” (Balanche 2012, p. 160). To accredit the call for a “just and lawful government” (Ibid., p. 158) to the “8th of March” demonstrators is without academic distance. To see the “8th of March” as “people from all communities and from rather modest backgrounds” (Ibid.), is, at least, when it comes to the Christians, largely flawed. The FPM itself acknowledges its bourgeois background as opposed to the rather proletarian to lower middle-class identity of many LF adherents. Tellingly, a

236 Interviews 22 and 26. Likewise the LF describe their membership as mostly from poorer strata, cf. Interview 27. As for the two Shiite-parties that has become more and more a cliché: As well in the South as in Southern Beirut comfortable houses, trumpeting their owners’ fortunes, have mushroomed over the last two decades. The first time I ever encountered a Hezbollah-demonstration was in 2010, when Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited Lebanon and was greeted by jubilant Shiites. I ran into their demonstration when suddenly
FPM functionary, an economist, whom I asked if economic programs would mark a difference between the Christian parties, answered with a forgiving smile that those were not the relevant issues in Lebanon; at least the Christian parties would not differ much therein (Interview 26).

Thus, the Phalangist electoral program of 2009, too, was about the strong state (Hizb al-Kata’ib 2009). On its front page, it asked “Aren’t you tired by carelessness?”, contrasted with a dripping tap as the visual epitome of the state that does not work. Moreover, the electoral program gave another hint one might ignore at first sight. It hinted at “identity politics” by calling the “Islamic Resistance” a problem, whose “illegal weapons” undid a “capable state” (daulah qadirah) (Ibid., 1.c.p. 4). Of course, this “resistance” hardly calls itself “Islamic”. The focus here is different from the FPM’s official reading. Whereas the latter emphasizes the national character of this “resistance,” here, the Islamist ideology of Hezbollah is emphasized as something potentially threatening a “capable state” and thereby, Lebanon’s Christians.

The LF program was less detailed but also heavily suggestive of a strong state to provide its citizens with the necessary outputs, peppered with a certain dose of federalism (al-Quwwat al-Lubnaniyyah 2009). “I want a state,” was the first sentence a LF member gave as an answer to the question on what his party would do when being able to run the country according to its will:

“First, I want a country. We are not living in a country, now. We are living on a farm. Now, unfortunately, we do not have a country. What is a country? First, you have to have borders. ... ALL the countries in the world have borders. We do not have borders. For example, now, all the terrorists, all the weapons, all the rockets come to our country over the borders with Syria. ... Second, we need a state. When you say you need a state it means: ONE army, ONE state, ONE government ... and ONE law. ... I live in Achrafieh, if the police stop me and it finds a knife in my car, - I go to jail. And if you walk just 20 minutes to the other Beirut and someone from Hezbollah has weapons in his car, if he has a B-7 and a RPG237 in his car, police cannot stop him. This is not a country.” (Interview 4)

In my interviews, the party’s functionaries hammered home the message of “sovereignty” as much as the ‘Aounists did. In the example above, the very same idea, having a strong state, is

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237 RPG is a rocket-propelled grenade launcher of Soviet origin; “B 7” is an often-used local name for the very same kind of weapon.
simply narrated against Hezbollah. Here, the latter is understood as violating Lebanese sovereignty by securing itself a sovereign realm within the state.

Consequently, since everyone in Lebanon emphasizes the “daulah qadirah,” at least formally, there is no conflict with “supporters of a weak state run by feudal forces” (Balanche 2012, p. 160). Beyond strategic alliances, there is no all-encompassing conflict line in Lebanon. Rather, all conflicts are about different versions of being Lebanese, translated into different versions of the state.

A otherwise rather talkative LF functionary who acted very much in his official capacity as a speaker with narratives obviously often tried and tested, got into difficulties when trying to define the difference between his own party and the Phalanges as being one of “different culture[s]”. He described the difference as “… hard to define but when you live it you know it.” (Interview 15) I asked a Phalangist functionary to clarify why that LF respondent quoted above spoke about a “different culture” between the two parties. Tellingly, the Phalangist explained it by referring to the open revolt against Amin Gemayel during the 1980s succession crisis as the actual content of this cultural difference (Interview 16). What is described here as “culture” is the result of history. Recognizing each other is mostly done by referring to a role played by the respective opponent during the war from 1975 to 1990. I argue this local experience has, since 2005, become increasingly translated into an international nomenclature (liberalism vs. conservativism) and into a habitus. Habitus means the system of stable and transferable dispositions conditioning, not determining, one’s cognition. It is acquired through a lifelong process of socialization and experience (Bourdieu 1984). Members of these parties reflect the experience once acquired into everyday behavior, which became especially clear when they tried to explain their party identities to me as a stranger in practical terms, often by making up comparisons to the respective other side. The whole scheme of local experience, international nomenclature and behavior currently answers the exceptionalism-contextualism divide. Thus, the core difference inside the Christian camp after 2005 is how to position yourself towards the “surrounding.” The two Christian parties of the “14th of May” resemble a stronger emphasis on a Christian particularity, the FPM comes closer to embedding a Christian demos into a “surrounding.” Hezbollah largely functions as the one indicator of this divide.
A. Resurgence After 2005: Al-Kata’ib and Lebanese Forces

In their electoral program for 2009, the LF evoked a Christian group-identity. By claiming their political primary concern might be an “effective,” not only an “apathetic, periphery, marginalized existence” of Christians in Lebanon as a community rooted in its church’s teachings, as well as in international human laws (al-Quwwat al-Lubnaniyyah 2009, p. 1). At least one of the functionaries I spoke to was very proud of his party being, as he claimed, the one party closest to the church, to have exactly “the same values” (Interview 4). Here, Political Christianity spans a wide range. It might reach from a still professed religiosity, as most Christian partisans I talked to did, to mere nominalism, resembling quite closely that kind of growth in the number of self-confessed “Christians” in Britain without giving visible rise to church attendance. As some “possessive plural”, this cultural identity is imagined through “possessing”: a country or a culture, not necessarily through a “truth statement” (Day 2011, quotations pp. 51f.). Often, “secularism” or “enlightenment” are claimed to stand at the center of these claimed “possessions”.

Foremost, a high degree of affinity to the “West” and indifference to “a Middle East, which does not always tolerate cultural differences, which is a bit totalitarian” (Interview 24) stood at the center of all these “possessive” discourses:

“When we say ‘Christian presence’ it is more about culture, it is more about the past, the history, the way of living, MORE than about religion in itself. Being Christian is: you have your way of living, you have your traditions. It is folklore; it is education; it is about being in a way close to the West, being in a way very affiliated to Europe.” (Interview 9)

“And what we want to keep is our lifestyle which is our culture, which is our universities, our teachers, the way that leads you as a German, as a European to come here to Lebanon and to find something from your home right here.” (Interview 16)

In this narrative, Hezbollah is usually referred to as an “Iranian party”; in other words, it is unpatriotic in a sense of not being committed to nation and state. Being close to the West, contrastingly, is understood here as a matter of constituting identity as a truly exceptionalist version of being a Christian in the Middle East, insisting on the right to be “different”:

“Look, why do we feel uncomfortable when we travel? Because, we have a duality in our hearts. We learn from Western books. We have read your stories, your history, we eat your food, we wear your jeans, we have your shirts. I have Lacoste, I put fashionable perfume
on, I wear shoes form London... but when you come and when you live alone, you live with Eastern people on the ground. So, once I travel abroad, I go outside of Lebanon, I feel that I belong to France sometimes more than I belong to here. When I go to Tripoli, for example or when I go deeper into Sa´ida or when I visit some parts of the South or especially when I go deep into the Beqaa valley. There, I don't feel that this is where I belong to.” (Interview 16)

This self-location relates to reproducing oneself by various forms of culture production – consumerism and history alike – to the normativity of modern democracy. The latter means being “patriotic,” in a sense of not being politically close to another country, but also accepting the idea of the demos as a base for politics. It does so by juxtaposing this self-determined cultural reproduction as being specific to the Middle East, to the deeply feared dangers of being “crushed once and for all” by Salafism, “and a Shia that is dreaming of an Islamic Republic” in “this part of the world, that are mainly dictatorships, and theocratic regimes.” The paradox in it is, that like all the other partisans, this youth functionary spoke primarily about the Christians having lost their share in 1990, which led him to be a “soldier for federalism” (Interview 16). Nevertheless, he narrated this “being Christian” as something virtually forced upon him, not only by the juridical reality of his country, but as a result of having failed to “Lebanonize” a good deal of the country by implementing those untouchable resources he considers as those making up for a Lebanese identity:

“I am secular, because I don’t have a phobia, ... but when I talk politics, I need to talk confessionalism ... since half of the Lebanese preferred in 1975 to fight with Palestinians ... for someone, for a stranger, ... But one thing is sure: we were killed because we were Christians, we were killed because we had these few powers, because we had the presidency. ... So, we defended ourselves as Lebanese and as Christians. We were attacked as Christians, but we fought back as Lebanese.” (Interview 16)

This aptly reflects the ambivalences of a country that is full of nationalists vowing to abolish confessionalism, yet, cannot do so because they themselves permanently live identities they would never diagnose as being “confessional” when it comes to themselves, since confessionalism is seen as a kind of mental disarray, as not living up to modern standards. The retreat into federalism, set up by communities defined as sects, is here proposed as “secular” (read: de-confessionalized), since it allegedly allows for a modern political entity without these constraints.
Therefore, both Christian parties of the “14th of March” promote federalism as their best practice for Lebanon, resulting from a strong will not to lose out on cultural difference seen as the core of the very own identity. The LF’s first program as a political party (drafted in 1992), illustrated the significant alterations therein from the old Phalangist conception of “organizing, communitarizing, instructing” the nation. Whereas the “communities” (jama’at) are essentialized as something being there, due to historical reasons, the state is reinterpreted as a necessity to regulate their conflicts, based upon mutual consent by finding “a balance between their (i.e. the sects’, C. T.) own interests and the common good” (Najm 1992, pp. 11ff.). The state, therefore, cannot stand above its society, in that case, the sects. If it fails to serve, defend and guarantee them, it would simply become obsolete (Ibid., p. 15). That shows an intellectual transformation. The LF proposed a notably conservative vision, but one not interchangeable with the al-Kata’ib of the founding years and their will to train the nation and teach her history. Now they no longer stand a chance of teaching themselves, as a history book, imposed by the ministry of education is rejected as “not being my history” (Interview 16). Despite having been noticed as hovering around the question of carving some Christian entity or entities out of Greater Lebanon, this thinking was more complex, as André Sleiman has remarked; it seemed to belong to a global tendency to question the possibility of the “big solution” by asking if political and institutional guaranties for the “dissenters” could be offered at all in Jacobinist projects (Sleiman 2014a, p. 97).

On the first hand, that sounds as if the nation-state was no longer at the core of this thinking. Antoine Najm, the foremost theoretician of that shift, indeed argued that Western nationalism would not be suitable for the Middle East. Yet, at second glance, this federalism discourse is about how the state could be made to deliver the right outputs. Having experienced, be it by personal encounter or via the media, countries more stable than Lebanon, was one of the most frequently quoted reasons for engaging in politics at all. A Phalangist functionary simply called these states other than Lebanon “95% of what this party represents and what is its program for the future of Lebanon” (Interview 10).

Historically, Najm and the “Lebanese Front” assumed to openly embrace a community-based identity, as replacing the idea of “constructing a country starting from giving it a spirit,” of “creating man” (suna’a-l-’insan) or “forging” (sahr) him as a citizen beyond those sectarian identities, that were now considered to be social conditions one could not transgress (Najm 2007a). The point herein simply, is that skipping the idea of “forming” did not encompass

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238 In fact, this is done by equating French centralism with nationalism as such; Interview with him 2012-07-20.
skipping the concept of exercising considerable power altogether. The aforementioned insights into the impossibility of “forging” citizens came out of a document drafted in 1977. Shortly afterwards, the very same author did not hesitate to assume an important role in Bashir Gemayel’s advisor group that planned the taking over of power at Beirut (Ménargues 2004). Thus, it is about rearranging Lebanon as a federation of several nations narrated in the language of late 20th century regionalism. It is not a goodbye to the normativity of the nation imagined as one, but a re-positioning of what its underlying demos might be, after “forming” the whole country failed. We will see in the next chapter that this re-positioning may even encompass the utopian will to “create man.” To have a Christian territorial entity is officially mostly referred to as only having been an option during the war (Interviews 4 and 15). Yet, also all options of post-war federalism have to rely on some territoriarity with a visible sectarian grid, no matter if that is done by a sharply cut Muslim-Christian duality or in an assemblage of decentralized districts. As an option to evocate the wartime experience and to react to the “Christian Frustration,” the Phalangists simply saw their chance in bringing federalism back, promoting it heavily by making use of their experience with “Loubnanouna” (Interview 9). Although the idea is less radical than during the war, this time the “minimal federal powers” (Watts 2008, pp. 177f.) (financial affairs, army, foreign affairs) were still attributed to the central state (Interview 9, a former participants of these meetings).

When talking with a Lebanese-born, Palestinian academic about the LF and their leader, she laughed a grim laughter and stated that “Many call him ‘the virgin’. He is so innocent and that pious!” The “virgin” is indeed a pretty telling nickname for Geagea. It reflects several facets of his post-war personality. First, the necessity to leave his wartime image behind. He largely did so by stressing his ostensible piety. Second, the “virgin” is a bit depreciating as it insinuated he was too pious for this rather secular Palestinian. Third, it is, of course, about him feeling as a victim that suffered after the war for unjust reasons, whereas the Palestinian academic obviously thought more about those Palestinians who had suffered at the LF’s hands during the war. For all these ambivalences, the “virgin” stands.

Whereas Bashir Gemayel is often seen quite leniently, Samir Geagea became the Christian symbol for everything that went wrong with the “surrogate of the state” (see: Aubin-Boltanski 2012, pp. 61f.). He tried to change his image by joining all those who interpreted the “no victors, no vanquished” as a call to leave the war in the past. “I call all citizens to forget. (…)

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239 See for example the decentralization proposed by the LF for a post-war Lebanon in 1990: Najm 2007a, pp. 185-215.
240 Informal conversation, August 2012 in Beirut.
History continues, Lebanon continues” (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, XVII, pp. 82-86), he stated as though offering his excuses for the “excesses” (La Croix, 2006-12-12).

Whereas Geagea never denied Lebanon to have an at least Arabized culture, he now started to talk about approaching the region, of having an independent Lebanon with a peculiar culture but not as strictly marked against the other Arab states around it in the way the LF had often delimited a Christian Lebanese culture against the sphere of Islam before (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, XVIII, pp. 7-23). So, the Lebanese Forces’ Christian discourse had to be dimmed down. The most remarkable topoi to be sacrificed were the ones of a unilaterally declared federalism and of “revolution” with their open allusions of “taking over” the country, or just a part of it. Not everyone among the party’s rank and file cherishes that (Interview 27). Thus, when a high-ranking member tried to deflate the federalism issue several years ago, he encountered an outcry in one of their communication-platforms. In the very same interview in which Geagea also spoke about Arabness, we could find – quite prominently – a passage, which is indeed very peculiar. The “Hakim” elaborates that mankind would not use all its resources properly, squandering all the worthy potentials we could probably benefit from if we lived consciously. Usually, we get told in a kind of reflective version of the already familiar training motif, that man uses no more than 10% of his mental capacities; 99% would not even know how to breathe properly. Finding peace of mind would allow doing so (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, XVIII, pp. 10-14). After re-entering the political stage in 2005, Geagea described himself as a person that went from eternal wandering to inner peace behind his prison walls (Rizk 2006, p. 105). This kind of a performance mysticism is indeed typical of Geagea, even establishing his own personal trademark. That is why he was known during wartime, as a mixture of a monk and a warrior. Since then, the warrior has lost his weapons. Besides Geagea’s long-standing interest in Teilhard de Chardin’s inner mundane Christian philosophy of an internal self-perfection (see. ash-Shartuni 2009, pp. 110f.; especially important: de Chardin 1957), the insistence on holistic, full living sounds remarkably unpolitical today; it lost its “hardware” of territorializing a Christian identity in Lebanon and the “surrogate of the state”. Syncretizing the mystical experience might even help to build bridges with the Muslims. The Lebanese Forces have, since 2005, constituted an integral part of the “14th of March” alliance and Geagea’s mythical thinking, which expressed itself during

241 Originally a talk to the press, October 1990.
243 https://tinyurl.com/yd8tu7s, rev. 2010-10-02.
the war in speculations about irreconcilable substances of Christians and Muslims, now turned consociational.

A really interesting document of this strategy is the widely distributed TV coverage “al-hakim fi zinzanah,” “the doctor in a cell”. It resembles a lengthy interview with Geagea, interrupted by simulated scenes about his time in prison, acted by the “hakim” himself and his wife Satrida. The interviewer is Gisèlle Khoury, the widow of the assassinated leftist journalist Samir Qassir, one of the founders of the “Democratic Left,” a platform of those former Communists who had fallen out of the traditional leftist discourses (cf. Sing 2015, pp. 161f.) and via that became also a part of the “14th of March”. The Channel producing this “advertisement,” was not the old LF network of LBC, but al-ʿArabiyyah, a Saudi-financed station with unveiled sympathies for the “14th of March.” In this documentary, Geagea speaks calmly, without enthusing about an Islamic-Christian divide but with a heavy dose of narrating himself as a deeply spiritual person. The interview is by no means a solitary piece; it stands as part of a larger campaign. Under the title “The new Samir Geagea: wise and spiritual,” the Arabic daily, ash-Sharq al-ʿAusat, reported about the first meeting its journalists had after Geagea was freed from prison. Geagea presented himself explicitly as someone who had been through change, “physically, mentally, privately, spiritually,” insisted the journalists would first get to know him and afterwards, one could still talk about politics. He spoke about his penchant for mysticism, stating he would like to introduce a deeper “spirit” into politics, since he reconciled with himself; a condition he could only wish for everyone else in Lebanon. His party also needed to be “reborn,” ordering its very soul anew (Mausuwʿah al-Quwwat, XVIII, pp. 54-57). While that is religious, it is also seeking a sliver of common ground, since Muslims could share therein too. He recounted how he passed the monotone time in prison by reading philosophical or psychological literature and, indeed, the Quran (Ibid., p. 56.). Moreover, his prison experience is not only narrated in terms of a religiously inspired personal development, it turns Geagea into a kind of spiritual teacher of a renewed Lebanese nation:

“The prison is turned into a hermitage, because the hakim [the sage or doctor, i.e. Geagea, C. T.] grows in maturity and depth till the point of spiritual clarity, he described it as being

\[\text{\footnotesize\[\text{244 Can be seen in 35 parts: https://tinyurl.com/ydbagldj, rev. 2016-08-25.}\] \text{\footnotesize\[\text{245 Reprinted version of: “Samir Jaʿjaʿ ‘al-Jadid’: Hakim wa Ruhaniyy”}. Here, too, as in the case of al-ʿArabiyyah, the medium is no accident. The paper, offering him a new start, might be London-based and liberal, yet it is financed by a Saudi prince; criticism of Saudi-Arabia or its allies is not welcome there as a former employee indicated about 10 years ago: Mona Eltahawy in: \textit{New York Times}, 2006-06-19.}\] \text{\footnotesize}\]

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enlightened, and his prison becomes a destination for a huge number of politicians seeking inspiration from his thoughts and wisdom." (G. Harik 2007, p. 18)

Yet, even within this dimmed down version of their wartime discourses, the focus of the two exceptionalist parties clearly is on the “communities,” subsuming the Christian sects in one politically constitutive group. That does not mean they reduce everything to them. The approach here is to combine communal (in principle even national) and state identities but the latter is derived from the first. The communities are explicitly involved in processes of decision-making. The difference between the present state and this vision is said to lay in the selection of those questions when they should step in; all sects should make only “strategic decisions” in consociational unity, the rest should be left to them in autonomy (Interview 15). It remains open when exactly we could speak about “strategic decisions.” It was explained to me as those touching the resources of “sovereignty, pluralism, and democracy.” (Ibid.) This is not really precise and the total blockade of Lebanon until 2016 suggests a wide array of “strategic decisions” to be at stake. The sense is clear: no community shall be overruled. That is directed against pure numerical democracy. The latter would serve the Muslim communities, especially the Shiites who have grown far more numerous than the Christian ones. Here, an important difference to the FPM steps in: the latter wants to put some trust into Muslim numerical superiority by believing they can “Lebanonize” them. The other side shows a far more pessimistic attitude by holding a deep distrust of what that might mean to them.

The idea of secular thinking being originally derived from Christian thinking, functions as a leitmotif of this distrust, often combined with the allusion that Islam could not bring about the same, at least with reference to the many Islamist practices denying secularity (Interview 24). The scale therein could reach from acknowledging the existence of secular Islamic thinking to its outright denial. The first option was expressed by a teacher who refused to reduce Islam to al-Qa’idah, explicitly acknowledging a “liberal Islam” (Interviews 17 and 24), while others hinted they were not that sure (Interviews Najm and No. 3). Only occasionally, primarily among the LF, partisans left the paths of only hinting. One of them referred casually to Muslims as “garbage”, as bringing all that junk along by running a former respectable Christian country down to terrorism, dirt, and dilapidation. He would, therefore, avoid Muslim areas altogether. A LF Counterstrike group gained some notoriety, since, after killing the enemy, a logo popped up, containing the Forces’ sharpened cross in a telling combination
with the slogan “Free Lebanon from Islamic Evil”. The logo could then be downloaded from the official party-website\(^{246}\) (picture 6 below).

A highly interesting study on their youth socialization, showed recently that the clear-cut “we against them” mentality is one of the most alluring topics the Forces could offer (Mazaeff 2012). However, my study was not designed to measure how “racist” a party might be, let alone in quantitative terms. I have to leave that to others. That they are on the right wing of the political specter is uncontested by them. However, I did not have the impression that those LF members who I talked to, all thought of Muslims as being intrinsically inferior to Christians. But they were suspicious of their *khaymah*. Therefore, the central point for me was that they constantly talked about “dangers” and being “prepared.” Their fascination with strength, the fight for survival, everything military, their constant readiness to be on the spot to defend “the Christians,” the impression of them living in a mental state of siege, was what seemed to me so typical of their identities. This is what we shall understand. It was all about Islam overpowering them demographically (Interview 4), making strategic decisions with a cool head to preserve the community (Interview 24). They referred to books on the war as their favorite literature (Interview 4), general books on conflicts or warfare (Interview 3), or enthused about World War II (Interview 17). This focus on strength is related to the

predominant role the community plays in their minds to grasp what constitutes the core of their identities.

Probably, the most frequently employed notion thereby is “existence”; an existence said to be a permanent “struggle for freedom.” One for Lebanon, but only as the Christians need her. Whereas both the al-Kata’ib and the Lebanese Forces cooperate with the Sunni Muslim Mustaqbal block - and they are proud of it - Hezbollah stands not only for itself but as a prototype for the political version of Islam; an Islam said to be essentially, or at least historically (empirically), prone to establishing a certain political system and within it the ancient juridical statute of the dhimmi. Hezbollah’s weapons are seen here as a means to finally Islamize Lebanon by force (Interview 17).

“Hezbollah is not just a danger here in Lebanon; it is in the whole region here. Because, if you look into the program of Hezbollah … it is not just a party. They want to change, to change the face of the globe. … They want to…, for example, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Hamas, they want to create their own Persian [sic!] country [out of them].” (Interview 4)

“… every Lebanese community has a personality in itself, in its ideologies, in its history, in its way of doing things, in its transcendental dimensions, because some are too much theocratic. That means if you do not understand what Hezbollah does, if you don’t understand the ideological dimension of the party and every of that kind of ideologies that arose that powerfully after the Iranian Revolution with the Imam Ayatollah Khomeini, then it is very banal to follow actual politics. …” (Interview 24)

The Iranian Revolution, therefore, stands for a universal aspiration of Islamic dominance, depriving them of their status as citizens.

In many cases, this feared dominance was couched in an internationalized language. Thus, one functionary openly referred to Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” (2003), locating his own engagement right inside this scheme, as part of a global story of cultural conflict:

“Some people think, when we are talking about the clash of civilizations, they think that we are [only] very religious …. We were talking about this issue from 200 years on and Europe and the US and all the Western countries were laughing when we were talking about a clash of civilizations. Now, it you are going to Europe, you see that you have a clash of civilizations in every country in Europe [knocks emphatically on the table]. So, you have the experience, we [already] had before. We lived with other communities and we were fighting
all alone … and this should get a little respect from the West for what we are doing in the Middle East.” (Interview 4)

In fact, what he does is what other LF functionaries did during the civil war years; he embeds his own fear of being expelled from the region or stripped of his civil rights into a narrative reaching beyond the confines of a Lebanese Christianity. He is haunted by fears of demographic change that happened, for several reasons, in Lebanon, which should be understood before the background of the remote area he stems from:

“They tried to take our lands and to make changes in the demography, but we are very strong and very united. So, for that reason, when you talk about the defenders, when you talk about the people who NEVER leave their lands: it’s us.” (Interview 4)

These fears were related by him to Europe in the language of contemporary “Islamophobia”:

“And now in Europe, you can see how far we have become between the rising Islam-community in Europe and the Christian community. And this is [only] the beginning. In my opinion, you will have a lot of clashes. Because sometimes, … sometimes when you hear the people who speak in the mosque, they say: ‘we don’t have to invade Europe by weapons, … we have the demographic weapon and with this demographic weapon from now till twenty years we can change EVERYTHING in Europe because the European people are very idiotic persons, they think just about freedom and democracy and they don’t know anything about our real, ugh, influence.” (Interview 4)

The interesting thing about this passage is of course, that the functionary did not work out as the party training probably expected him to do; towards the end, he became more and more reluctant, his sentences were less secure, he seemed to be bursting with less strength than when he spoke about “normal” party issues, the official party program, Samir Geagea or the membership. Instead, he inquired cautiously if I saw the matter similarly or not, indicating he lapsed into a field that was not intended to be covered. When the microphone was turned off, he spoke even more negatively about Muslims, equating them with cultural inferiority.

He was not alone in his interest in Huntington. Another LF man, a young man in his mid-twenties, who had just completed his studies, named Samuel Huntington and Walid Phares as the two authors that inspired him most. Yet, when I asked him directly if he thought Islam to be dangerous or not, he meandered a bit, indicating the topic might be too sensitive to talk about. He finally settled into the formula of Islam could not be a problem as such, but its
political version – Islamism – being one. He too, located himself readily as a “Right-wing Christian Conservative” (Interview 3), turning out to be enthusiastic about Chinese books on warfare, American hip-hop and the “Tea Party” movement inside the American Republican Party. Here, the local experience was also embedded in a global context, but the local preceded it. We see that in another example that I quoted above. When I asked the partisan to tell me a little more about the area he came from, he offered, without hesitation, a brief historical sketch, remaining totally focused on the idea of being a bulwark against another that was much more numerous, considerably more powerful and often endangering; the Ottoman massacres during World War I, the harsh battles of the civil war and the kidnapping of anti-Syrian Christians by Syrian troops into Syria proper were mentioned by him (Interview 4). That was, of course, not only a personal encounter but also a collective memory passed down as a mentality that rendered him receptive for an exceptionalist discourse. This mentality also allowed him to encompass those ancestors, some of whom stood for elections in the pre-war era, into his own modern party identity, as if they had indeed been forerunners. He did the same with the whole area as such. Thereby, the local, as an imagined political topos, turns into an epitome of a particular contemporary political stance that is said to stand for the community as such, as it was passed down in local knowledge:

“Me: What was their political orientation before?

He: It was always a Christian Right orientation. So, for example, they were against the Turkish Empire, they were against the Palestinians, they were against the Muslims in 1975, they were against the Syrian regime … and now we have a tough support for the LF in that area. … Because it is a believers’ community; they are very religious as I told you.”

(Interview 4)

The politically active older family members, despite having made their runs on mixed notables lists and not as party members, are praised for their morals but also for heavily contributing to the village’s defense during the civil war, against “all the people who came to invade us.” These indicators of a conservative habitus bear remarkable similarities to how he characterized both the Lebanese Forces and Samir Geagea. In his mind, the conservative morals, the family-relatedness of the mountains, were simply described as an embodiment of a “spirit” clinging to the soil by virtue of staying loyal to the church, community, and family as something the LF stood for (Interview 4). Thus, he projected his own present-day political stance back into history, encompassing those who had no formal relation whatsoever to his
party and associating it simultaneously with one’s own community as a whole. That describes nothing than a habitus, conditioning his behavior.

The remarkable thing therein, is of course, that all that has only a superficial relation to the officialized discourses, such as Geagea’s “reborn” mysticism. Thus, those concepts held dear, the untouchable resources of not getting too deep into the *khaymah* are no longer strongly attached to the state as they used to be before the war. That shift reflects the perceived inability, subsumed under the slogan of the “Christian frustration,” of still holding a considerable influence on this entity. We will see in the next section, how the other relevant Christian party, the FPM reacted to it.

**B. Resurgence after 2005: The FPM**

The FPM itself captions the time between 1990 and 2005 as “the ’Aounist suffering” (Mausuw’ah Michel ’Aoun, I, pp. 148-157). In their publications, the ’Aounists rallied for a “resistance” against foreign occupation, usurpation and a government being a mere “transmission” of Damascus; a “resistance” of the weak against the strong, men against the apparatus (Ibid, pp. 148f.). When Syria completed her pullout in April 2005, on May 7, 2005 ’Aoun returned from his exile in France. For a “realization of the ’Aounist dream,” the former general announced the formation of a party. When doing so, ’Aoun, tackled the issue of a legal framework quite directly. He explained that he did not object to the concept of a party as such, but considered it as being “too narrow” to grasp a “movement” like his. Additionally, it would be too associated with those parties already in existence. To come to “knowledge and ink” - in other words, legal recognition - the “halah sha’abiyyah,” the popular milieu, would be transformed into an organization called Hizb al-Harakah at-Tayyar al-Wataniyy al-Hurr. Yet, he insisted that “we are a new project, much larger than a party” (Mausuw’ah Michel ’Aoun, II, p. 23). Whereas the license is issued on an “al-Hizb,” what actually runs in elections is purposefully not called a “party,” although both are basically one and the same (Interview 28).

The party-to-be profited in its beginnings very much from the “Christian frustration,” simply functioning like a dragnet trawler netting primarily among the Christians. Even before, during the years of the “’Aounist suffering,” the FPM’s predecessor had been, besides the Hezbollah, one of the few political forces in Lebanon to attract, in considerable numbers, young Lebanese from those families not yet integrated into a party milieu (al-Khazin 2002, p. 60).
Consequently, they abstained from the solemn but (for them), antiquated antics of shirt partyism, alluding to a new zeitgeist based upon the assumptions of a self-confident bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, bringing utopian change about, remains an integral part of doing politics:

“… I believed and I still do that the political system of Lebanon needs a change: a change of mentality, it needs a change of approach, it needs new people. Those old parties, if they become these heavy machines which see only in one direction and it is really hard for you as a person to … make a difference on how the party is approaching things.” (Interview 28)

The first party program showed a staunchly reform-minded liberalism. It emphasized the citizen as an individual, the sect is acknowledged as a relevant factor yet not as a demos of its own rights. Welfare politics were far less emphasized. The core of all its thinking is the abolition of “confessionalism.” It wants, as all its competitors, to restrict the power-sharing formula among the religious groups to the upper echelon of the state and the president should remain a Christian. The difference from the other two Christian parties lies in the still upheld focus on a Lebanese nationalism that did not take part in the shift towards the Christians as a demos of its own rights.

Let us turn to the narration of a FPM functionary, an elegant Maronite economist at around 50 years of age:

“We, compared to the French political system, we are a center-left party. Our positions are center-left positions, put in French terms. We are reformers. We have a plan for reform. We are for change and for reform. And our audience, … they are mainly liberals on a national level and the free Christians, that were not involved, neither in a positive nor in a negative way, in the war - I talk about the one of between 1975 and 1990. The young individual persons formed a lot of the movement, which participated in the events [the Ba’abda manifestations, C. T.], and who are, in a completely different manner [to the militias and the old elite, C. T.], working on a national vision. …” (Interview 26)

The positioning is put in two standards; a Western and a local one. The functionary, who had started in the late 1980s to work in ‘Aoun’s “Central Office for National Coordination,” explained his party first by locating it in an international setting. Of course, he did that for me, then he moved to the primary field of his political activity, Lebanon. The “reform” is, in that example, something that could only be understood through the local. It seems at first to be self-explanatory. However, if we consider the ubiquitous call for reforms in Lebanon, it is no
more. He couches the local reading “reformer” immediately in terms that are first global (liberals) and second, but foremost, local, since the liberal is referring to those Christians not having been involved in the war. The national level functions as a normativity for these reforms, allowing for a young individual beyond his sectarian identity. This sectarianism is alluding to the idea of establishing a Christian state or quasi-state in Lebanon. “Liberal” means, in this case, that the respondent was very positive in the beginning about the Phalanges, whom he considered to have been “progressive.” He, himself, never participated in the fighting but contributed to the party’s social network. He was, in stark contrast to the leftists I interviewed, rather suspicious about the Palestinians whom he suspected of having intended to swap Palestine for Lebanon in the early 1970s. That was indeed a quite conventionalist (and sectarian) Christian narrative back then. Yet, he considered himself a liberal. “Liberal” is about being primarily dedicated to what he considers “progressive”: a nation-state with a citizenship identity that is opposed to everything considered “feudal” as it gets clear from his elaboration on what he did when the war broke out:

“Personally, I have been like my parents: anti-bourgeois, anti-notable, … But I passed that at the beginning of the war and played my role as a young intellectual who wanted to change the whole world, who was not content in being beaten by the machinery. I took a vow … to organize, to launch projects to organize citizenship, mainly among the cadres of Lebanese Christians, often protected by the Kata’ib, done by those friends who were not convinced of military exercises, who believed in politics, [who believed] that the resistance is not only about the gun, but about organizing society …” (Interview 26)

Whereas the national identity gets much of its emotional strength from the locally assumed dichotomy of the progressive citizens against the sectarian feudalists, the idea has its global background. The nation-state as “the great disembedding” (Taylor 2007, p. 158) is a very liberal concept but in a contemporary Western context, it is seldom elaborated (Canovan 1998). There, liberalism is most likely conceived as being about protecting the individual from the state. But, where neither the existence nor the continuity of the nation-state can be taken for granted, the focus is rather on the alleged missing of the “disembedding” as a precondition for the individual as a citizen:

“Obviously, one cannot imagine that a citizen emancipates himself from everything until he emerges as acting like a political citizen when already in his family someone tells him, you cannot marry a girl from just the other religious shore.” (Interview 22)
The most important thing, the rather conservative liberal quoted just above, who started out in the wider Vorfeld of the Phalangists, had in common with a former Communist inside the FPM whom I also interviewed, was exactly that disembodiment:

They [the Lebanese Forces] consider themselves solely as Christians; they keep to this segmentation difference. We realize that we belong to this sociological cultural Christian mass .... But they consider it to be possible to transform this religious-cultural identity in a way that one could erect a state on it without the others.” (Interview 22)

Here, a Christian liberal interpretation of Lebanon is proposed. It comprises very Christian standpoints (independence, no naturalization of Palestinians), with an economic outlook that sets it apart from other forms of contextualisms, such as Marxists would insist on. Finally, it is about the nation-state. Thus, the FPM readily accepts the label of a “nationalist party” that is

“... foremost, a nationalist gathering for the sovereignty of the country and for the establishment of a more or less [sic!] laic state. A country like all the other contemporary countries, a country as after the formation of the nation-state in Europe since the end of the 18th century.” (Interview 25)

So, why, if the FPM truly were a liberal party, is there the alliance with Hezbollah? Philippe Abirached has argued the agreement between ‘Aoun and Hezbollah in 2006 would not constitute anything but a deliberate effort to bring the charisma’s routinization to an at least temporal stop by reinventing it (Abirached 2012, pp. 47f.). For me, this seems to be an over-dramatization. The party and its adherents do make sense out of this coalition.

The core idea was simmering for a while behind the scenes. It did so basically because ‘Aoun served as a projection screen for many hopes. During the election campaign in 2005, he functioned primarily as a hope to counter the three heavyweights; Sa’ad ad-Din Rafiq al-Hariri, Hezbollah general secretary Hasan Nasrallah, the speaker of parliament Nabih Berri, and Walid Jumblatt. Despite being ostensibly excluded from the agreement between the big blocks for not challenging each other’s areas of domination, ‘Aoun came out as an unchallenged leader among the Christian voters. His campaign was largely focused upon the idea of reconstructing Lebanon through a wide range of reforms and the hope of bringing the Christians back in (among others: J. Ajami 2005; Choucair 2005). But that perception of him being the “qa’id-l-masihin”, the “leader of the Christians” did not hold for long.
Back in Paris, despite having been quite critical of the organization, ‘Aoun started to argue that for him, Hezbollah was an internationally linked organization as well as a Lebanese one. Lebanon would never become a “real state” without disarming the organization. Therefore, one could not see it solely as a “terror-group,” but as a Lebanese party who had to be integrated into a common Lebanese scheme to allow for handing over the arms to the Lebanese state (Mausuw’ah Michel ‘Aoun, II, p. 40). The idea primarily is about “Lebanonizing” Hezbollah; turning them into loyal citizens and disarming them and their allies in consensus. In fact, currently disarming Hezbollah by force would inevitably result in a war with the strongest paramilitary group in the country, a confrontation the Lebanese army could never win. There had been evidence for this understanding of Hezbollah’s role earlier on. In 1991, one of ‘Aoun’s key-advisors, Bassam Hachem, a professor of sociology, had published an anonymized article in al-Watan al-‘Arabiyy, arguing that Hezbollah should be considered as the “patriotic Shia of Lebanon,” since it was them who fought the Israeli troops in Southern Lebanon. Although the party distributed around 50,000 copies of the “memorandum,” signed in 2006 with Hezbollah among its partisan (as-Safir 2006-04-22, reproduced in: Mausuw’ah Michel ‘Aoun, II, p. 114), notably since then, those members who originally joined from the Lebanese Forces and seeing ‘Aoun as nothing but the re-incarnation of Bashir Gemayel, left in considerable numbers (Interview 22). How many exactly closed the chapter of adhering to the party could not be verified; one functionary estimated the numbers of dissenters to be at around 5% -10% (Interview 26).

Others, instead, have stepped into the foreground. The memorandum tied well into the chéhabist politics ‘Aoun had been into before, and had also been orchestrated by his advisors. A considerable number of them originally stem, as the Lebanese daily as-Safir noted, from intellectual circles that already had considered this step earlier on. Members of this group were often very critical of the LF, some were dissidents from within their ranks, a considerable number had joined from the Eddé movement. They described their plans as fitting into similar ideas of Raymond Eddé during the Civil war to bring about “civil society” by rapprochement towards the region as a political and cultural surrounding (as-Safir 2006-04-22, reproduced in: Mausuw’ah Michel ‘Aoun, II, p. 114-118).

All that does not mean FPM adherents do not fear Hezbollah or political Islam as such. In fact, they do.\textsuperscript{247} But they believe they could “break the wall of fear,” as their leader put it once

\textsuperscript{247} Interestingly, ‘Aoun himself was, towards American diplomatic personal back in 2005, very open about his fears of the militia, although his integration-program is clearly visible: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05PARIS2162_a.html, rev. 2017-03-20.
rather dramatically (‘Aoun and Domont 2008, p. 103), indicating the disarmament could only be done by someone Hezbollah could trust (Ibid., p. 128). They try to allow for something shared, leading to a stronger national identity (Interview 21). This identity is intended to compensate for the effects of reducing the consociational element within the present Lebanese political system; a reduction inevitably favoring the Shiites as the country’s single largest sect. Thus, one of my interviewees, who had started out in 1975/76 in the civic apparatus organized by the Phalanges, was about to read the Quran together with a study group among other academics of the party “to understand what it is about” (Interview 26). In stark contrast to the differences emphasized by the federalism discourse, another FPM man claimed not to see “major differences” between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon (Interview 25). Here, too, the local experience and its international language are translated into an individual behavior. All members of the FPM I met tried to translate their liberalism into their daily lives. Thus, one ‘Aounist, despite having his office adorned with an icon and a Bible quotation, deliberately decided to send his child into a secular school, ironizing how those friends from the neighborhood who had only attended religious Christian schools, did not know anyone else other than Christians:

“All his friends [in the quarter] are from ONE sect, the have one approach to things, they've not EVEN MET people from other sects. And they tell him, how come you have a friend that is Hamad [laughs] …?” (Interview 28)

This openness put on ostensible display, is strongly demarcated from the political opponent, mainly the Lebanese Forces. Thus, the very same FPM man ridiculed his rivals from the LF as “[they are the guys with] the Ray-Ban glasses. So, those are the cool, the strong guys,” who “play differently” (Interview 28) by emphasizing their Christian identities too much for his taste.

Let us consider another case, a young FPM sympathizer around 30, who denied being a partisan and turned out to be an active supporter, contributing to their electoral campaign in the union of engineers and architects. His habitus was liberal, cosmopolitan, but not alternative. He wore branded clothing, drove a SUV, had the kind of wooden cross around his neck, which is currently very popular among young Lebanese Christians. He belonged to a FPM generation that only actively entered the “halah ‘Aouniyyah” after 2005. Furthermore, in his case there existed a lifelong educational imprint; his father served as an officer in the Lebanese Armed Forces, a thing he openly announced by displaying a sizeable army sticker on his car’s windscreen. His narrative, emphasizing the “true and undivided patriotism”
proved to be a rather conventional 'Aounist one; for him the army stood against the militias whom he abhorred for having turned rapacious and to pillaging. He feared Hezbollah and its weaponry, meandering a bit around the topic, visibly feeling uncomfortable about having a second army in the country next to the one his father served in. However, he firmly concluded, there would not be another option to integrate them into the nation. Next to Michel 'Aoun, among the persons he admired, he himself a Greek Catholic, mentioned Grégoire Haddad a left-leaning contextualist theologian. When we talked about basketball, the young 'Aounist “confessed” his deep interest in that sport. His favorite team was “La Sagesse” (or al-Hikmah) an Eastern Beirut based team, one of the most successful ones in Lebanon and Asia, which being partially owned by two FPM functionaries, for a couple of years moved closer to the FPM. The young sympathizer happily welcomed that. He complained that “Sagesse” had before been heavily supported by fans close to the LF, “you could not attend their games for years … with all these racists from the Lebanese Forces there”. The internet is full of videos showing “Sagesse” supporters chanting slogans of the Lebanese Forces and displaying their party salute, hands held high, forefingers and thumbs forming a triangle, waving the LF flag; even the stadium music consists of some of their war songs. The 'Aounist engineer obviously tried to avoid their company on occasions where they could put their understanding of the civil war on show. Thus, the political identity of a liberal feeling, opposed to what he considered as a regretful sectarianism, reaches down into everyday life.

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248 Informal conversation, October 2012.
249 On the very same phenomenon with regard to the country’s football-clubs, see: Lamloum 2011.
250 Conversation 2012-11-12.
251 https://tinyurl.com/yb2q86sm; https://tinyurl.com/y8tmxzn3; https://tinyurl.com/yajk6jhc. all rev. 2016-09-24. Especially during the 1990s and until 2005 the “Beirut derby” between ar-Riyadh and Sagesse is and was often taken as a Muslim-Christian-confrontation, the Sagesse-supporters’ frequently calling their opponents “Mongoleh” (see: Chicago Tribune, 2003-06-17; https://tinyurl.com/yb2abxy4, 2016-09-24). Although the Western Beirut-based ar-Riyadh was founded by Muslims and currently belongs to the vast Hariri-imperium, it features several Christian Lebanese players. In 2013 “La Sagesse” sought again the proximity and support of Samir Geagea, cf. al-’Akhbar, 2013-02-05; Daily Star, 2015-08-22.
Hezbollah’s disarmament, is therefore, in the ‘Aounists’ perspective, a replacement for no longer being able to define the state in a hegemonic way. It is, as ‘Aoun exemplarily pointed out in an interview with the ‘Amal TV station NBN in 2006, a step to bringing the Christians as a group back into a “leading role” by breaking their marginalization. He borrowed therein from the language of Arab nationalism, by using the old formula of an “isolationist” role for Christian exceptionalism. Yet, he strongly appealed to a Christian group consciousness by rejecting “a [slavishly] following role” (Mausuw’ah Michel ‘Aoun, III, pp. 112-127). At the end, these common grounds would allow for enough shared convictions to abolish the confessional formula to bring about a secular, capable state for which “we are spending the night awake in yearning” (Ibid., p. 114).

To summarize at the halfway mark; liberalism here means having stood for the “legal” state during the war, to bother about Christianity but not seeing it as a primary base for doing politics, not to be too suspicious about the mainly Islamic surrounding. However, to imagine that “openness” only as a “chronic sensitivity toward identifying and encountering flows of difference to which the routine response is an attitude of openness” (Skrbiš and Woodward 2013, p. 10) would be short-sighted. In fact, it needs more to allow for an articulated body politic. The “common ground” they seek is not always puppies and kitten. To understand that, let us take one of ‘Aoun’s interviews into consideration. It attracted considerable attention in the Lebanese media when it was aired by Syrian State television on October 11, 2012. It was,
in a way, a quite telling example of what led to the assumption of ‘Aoun being totally changeable and moody. In the presence of the heavily nodding interviewer, ‘Aoun called Syria one of the Arab states “closest to absolute democracy”, allowing for the freedom to practice religion, to be different. Other states in the region - obviously this refers to the Gulf States - would not permit their citizens to choose their own lifestyles, imposing severe provisions on them on how to live, to eat, to drink or to dress. ‘Aoun even insinuated the Syrian rebellion as not being an endogenous societal process, but planned from abroad, reminding the audience of former US Foreign Secretary Condoleezza Rice’s dictum of a “creative chaos.” The main profiteer out of it would be American imperialism and Israel.

We have to locate that into a wider process of estrangement between Middle Eastern Christians and the Syrian opposition in the process of the civil war in Syria (Leonhardt 2016). Sunni Islamists, rising steeply within those fighting the ‘Asad government, have since then led to widely spread fears among Christians in the region. Yet, there is more to it. Samir Geagea, by contrast, still judged the Syrian government to be “essentially terroristic” (L’Orient Le Jour, 2016-09-05) and the whole interview ‘Aoun gave, stands in a broader context. While not all his partisans have shared his view on Syria unanimously; some of those I interviewed the very same year softened but never fully abandoned the idea behind it. Nevertheless, most of the ‘Aounists at least made a stand for Syria and Iran.

There are several factors to understanding this ostensible turn against the USA that had once brought ‘Aoun to the top of the Lebanese army (‘Abi Samra and Shararah 2009, p. 71). First, one functionary put it as having “played out the card of Middle Eastern Christendom” (Interview 26) by taking care of the whole of the region’s Christianity, or better, of having allies to do so. Second, among ‘Aounists a strong feeling prevails that they were betrayed in 1990 by the US when they invoked exactly the same normativities constituting the core of American liberal Republicanism (Huntington 1981; Hartz 1991). The third key for this understanding is Israel, whose support by the US ‘Aoun questioned in the interview above. He did that on various occasions, referring to Israel as a state hostile to the Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians, and Arabs in general (Mausuw’ah Michel ‘Aoun, II, p. 61). As it was with Phalangism and Israel, the southern neighbor once again functioned as the proverbial elephant in the room that made it urgently necessary to position oneself towards the khaymah.

252 Probably he is. It is unimportant how far he really believes in his own discourse. As in all other cases, the most important thing for us is how those with whom he interacts perceive him; it is the role he plays, which turns him into a politician, not what he “really” is.


254 Interview with him originally in: ash-Sharq al-‘Ausat, 2003-11-03.
The Palestinian issue serves, thereby, as one constituting facet of a regional system (Perthes 2000). It allows for tying into a regional discourse, evolving around the universalist dimension of modernity on the one hand, and its restrictions on the other. A visibly excited FPM functionary pointed out the discrepancy between nationalism as “a secular imagination of this world as ultimately meaningful and of consisting of nations, in turn imagined as sovereign communities of fundamentally equal members” (Greenfeld 2004, p. 40) and yet the enforced inability of the Palestinians to get their share:

“The principle of equality, brotherhood, all that, the charter of human rights, it was never applied to us. Unfortunately, the human rights were not applied, the rights of the people to self-determination, it was not at all applied to us! And look what happens in Israel! Israel is about to destroy all that, to kill [down there] at Gaza! Those are innocent people, that is their home, that is their country! The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, hah?! Be it the European community, the Americans, of course, the United States: they do not endorse the right of return, the right of return of the Palestinians. Well, discuss THIS with, with, with these countries, discuss it with these international politics!” (Interview 25)

So, a Lebanese experience could be combined with a Palestinian one to make up for a narrative whose persuasiveness transgresses a purely Christian, group-related perspective, as also the following fiery outburst of the FPM functionary illustrates. Quite tellingly it was an answer to the question what the Lebanese have in common; I did not even ask him expressis verbis about Israel. Israel rather stands for a specific dilemma all regional “minorities” have to face. Having the Christians as a kind of a community under siege would bring them next to the other country considered by hegemonic Arabic discourse as a “sectarian” one; Israel as a Jewish state for Jews that has, as I elaborated above (chapter IV.4), a long history of imagining a “minority-alliance” in the region:

“What is Israel’s alternative? Her alternative is to seek by all means to succeed with her old dream of provoking the partition of the region on the base of religion and sect. … We do not have an enemy except Israel. Israel and Lebanon are irreducible antagonistic. Because Israel is the sectarian, racist state par excellence, Lebanon is the anti-Israel, she is the country of conviviality between religious communities on the base of cultural roots.

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255 Yet, the principles evoked within that universality are contradictory and do not follow any coherent logic, as Holm Sundhaussen (2012) has aptly shown when discussing the nationalist aspirations in former Yugoslavia. The only underlying logic seems to be the one of “what serves my own aspirations best?”

256 This refers to the Israeli operation “Pillar of Defense” in November 2012 during which the interview was recorded.
Lebanon emanates from the belief that one could do, that one could live together, that one could live together in a unity of contraries. Well, Israel is the sectarian state, she is the anti-Lebanon and Lebanon is the anti-Israel.” (Interview 22)

Transforming a Christian identity into one sustaining a specific political entity of its own right would, therefore, designate a different demos with different external borders towards other groups, allowing for a different state, whom the FPM fears as one disintegrating them out of “the region”:

“This state will not have a future. This state would be under the Israelis’ feet, under the Israeli boots.” (Interview 22)

This point of what Israel, as a symbol for sectarianism actually stands for, also reminds us that “contextualism” has its price: obviously not all identities constitute a legitimate part of it. Despite the FPM’s insistence on the nation-state as a non-ethnical state based upon constitutionalism (Interview 25), it is not just a state of an isolated citizenship of the individual. This has a lot to do with “positive liberty” (Taylor 1979): why do we know that we are “free”? It is not self-evident; it needs to be verified by matching some concepts of the “good”. The citizen is, as the individual, always constructed out of societally available modules (Kymlicka 2001, p. 209). Modernity, mystified by itself as the “the great disembedding” (Taylor 2007, p. 158), stripping off all the intermediate identities to allow for the individual as a citizen, is a self-conception. Thus, also in ʿAoun’s rhetoric, the individual has to embark upon a common identity and skip others. Syria’s government whom he lauded in the interview quoted above, is not at all about individualism, at least not about all possible forms of individualism and not about all individuals. What ʿAoun called “closest to absolute democracy” must seem like pure, sadistic mockery to the numerous Syrian political prisoners. Obviously, not everything is as worthy as an identity to be professed in that “democracy.” Worthy is, instead, that Syria and Iran are allegedly providing comparatively better opportunities for a Christian survival in the region than others do. Syria is a secular state, indeed allowing for a comparatively free display of Christian religiosity, and that is precisely what they mean by praising “citizenship” and “democracy” in Syria. Not all members of the FPM supported Aoun’s version in all its overdosed rhetoric. Yet, even a functionary who had to stand military trial during the Syrian years in Lebanon, sided at least with the rough underlying idea after having criticized the lack of free speech in Syria:
“What is the alternative? The Islamist regime? No, this is for example applied in Saudi Arabia. No, we do not accept this kind of regime, because it eliminates the other. It does not really accept the right on difference, as it gets expressed by fundamentalist Muslims. Well, in Syria, for example, there is no clause, no article in the constitution saying that the Muslim religion is the religion of the state. That is not there. There is no more than the President of the Republic has to be a Muslim. But the Syrian state has no religion. That is in the constitution. But in the other Arab states, there is ‘The Islam is the religion of the state’, in the constitution. Between these two, we opt for the Syrian regime.” (Interview 21)

Iran is somewhat puzzling at first. But there are similarities, especially the shared feeling of being existentially threatened by Israel (Interview 22). Of course, this ground is slippery. Conceded, Hezbollah, as I see it, has, at least for the moment, ceded all efforts to establish Khomeini’s totalitarian “Governance of the Jurist” in all of Lebanon. But it still upholds a delicate balancing act to bridge the gap between its various constituents and is currently mostly about preserving its own milieu as a “counter-society” (Le Thomas 2010). Inside this milieu, “Governance of the Jurist” is factually employed. This compromise is, so to say, the extreme version of Lebanese consociationalism, an “armed pillarization.” The idea behind the concept is a blueprint-utopianism, its “resistance” holistic, and caught in an obsession to think in military terms (Sakmani 2016). “Defending the resistance” has thereby become Hezbollah’s nationalist version of takfir, as an effort “to assert a monopoly over the authorized language of the nation” (Yadav 2013, p. 166). To be convinced this societal model might remain restricted to its own in-group without trying to impose itself on others, asks a little more from all others in the country. A supporter of the “14th of March” formulated her anxieties as follows:

“I think as long as you have weapons, so many weapons in the hand of one community, that can decide the state of peace and war for a country, no one can govern. … Their army is stronger than your army, they have a finance system totally out of the finance system of the state, they get electricity but they don’t pay for it, they have billions of money that doesn’t go through any kind of institution, so, they’re a state within a state! And that would not be possible if they not had those weapons. If you and I are going to have negotiations, …, if you had a gun in front of you and I don’t, how can that situation be balanced? I’m

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going to be shit-scared during the entire time of the negotiation, I’m going to give in onto things I made not have given in on had you not had a weapon or had I also had a weapon!” (Interview 20)

The one and only country where “Governance of the Jurist” has been implemented, Iran, grants minority seats to Jews and Christians but bars them effectively, among others, from entering the higher echelons of administration and does not permit them to enter the armed forces. Thus, they are not part of the body politic. My interviewees knew that but tried their best to justify it, usually by contrasting it with Salafism as the worst choice they had:

“The Iranian regime does not constitute a religious danger for the Christians. To the contrary, the Iranian regime recognizes these minorities inside of Iran and its minorities are represented in the Iranian parliament. ... In Saudi Arabia, for example, is there a parliament? There is no parliament.” (Interview 21)

The Salafi version of Islamism, and its Jihadi offshoot, is for the contextualists more dangerous. First, Shiite Islamism, clad in the language of anti-imperialism and due to its status as a regional minority, appears at first glance, less sectarian. Rather, it is formulated in terms, at least partially also used by secular Arabists, seeking for common ground within the khaymah (see: Sadeghi-Boroujerdi 2017, pp. 177f.). Second, whereas Hezbollah is ready to cooperate, albeit not necessarily on an equal footing, Salafism knows no place for them:

“In its writings, it says that democracy is an impious regime - kafir, atheist, more than atheist, impious, and the impious are in Islam and their interpretation, well, they need to be eliminated, physically eliminated.” (Interview 21)

Since it is at least partially related to the Saudi kingdom, the alliance of the “14th of March,” and especially the Hariri family, is widely exploited by “contextualists”. This discourse extends to the dubious figure of Lyna Elias, who directed Christian fears of losing any hold at all in the country, toward Saudi Arabia by insinuating a “Wahhabi conspiracy” set up to terminate a Christian presence in Lebanon. She evokes the old myth of an international plan to settle the Palestinians in Lebanon and to give the country’s south to Israel. Instead, Shiism

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258 Of course, other parties have weapons, too (see further down), but numerically less and usually they cannot establish an army like professionality. Officially, only the “Resistance” is said to bear weapons besides the state.

259 The Iranian constitution stipulates expressis verbis that the army needs to be an Islamic one, its recruits are to have “faith,” and to be “devoted to the cause” of the “Islamic Revolution,” see: Articles 144 and 150, https://tinyurl.com/ybw5bs5b, rev. 2016-08-10. Christians and Jews could at least theoretically get into parts of the administration under these conditions, Non-Shiite ministers are not explicitly not allowed for in Iran, but till now no one has ever been appointed, cf. Saad-Ghorayeb 2002, pp. 44f. This has not changed since 2002.
is said to be more suitable for an Islamic “enlightenment,” as it is said to be about interpreting the Quran whereas Sunnism is not (L. Elias 2007). Of course, Elias’ argument is in its simplicity totally flawed, one just has to think about Khomeini’s unquestioned idea of Islam “being” this or that: Islam was, according to him, not about “expounding,” but “enforcement,” (Khomeini, n. d., pp. 4f.). Yet, her influence cannot be evaluated. Although Bruno Lefort considers her to be of some importance (B. Lefort 2012, p. 244, FN 30), a former functionary from the party’s top-echelon downplayed her role (Interview 22).

Of course, it seems to be puzzling, that any kind of a “surrounding,” here Iran and Syria, could be positioned against another of its parts (Saudi Arabia) without taking the notion of approaching this khaymah to the absurd. However, “the region” is an imagined entity; it has always been deeply divided. The difficulties of integrating Lebanon (more or less) in that “region” always stemmed from the notion’s ostensible smoothness and the actual rifts it tried to conceal. “Contextualism” has always been only about a political option, it never stood for the region as a whole.

However, this tendency to find common ground with a certain part of that region, does, of course, lead the other side into harsh criticism. The discrepancy between ‘Aoun’s formerly rather conventional, Christian influenced Lebanese nationalist narrative and the slow adoption of a language encompassing notions widely used by the Syrian or Iranian governments, by leftists, Arab Nationalists, and Shiite Islamists, becomes visible in Sehnaoui’s little book to promote him as a promising candidate for the (postponed) elections in 2013. There is an ostensible anti-Israeli tone in it, quite in line with “March 8.” He describes Israel in his small booklet as the hub of sectarianism in the Middle East, and brings a cultural essentialism about, which is at its core, no less unintellectual as a good deal of the LF wartime discourse on the essential difference between Muslims and Christians. Thus, we learn that Israel has a “racist population” without any further qualification, quantification or anything else (Sehnaoui 2011, p. 53). Instead, the author tells us, (Israeli) Jews see the world as being divided into Jews and “Goyim,” i.e. non-Jews. That is nothing more than to claim all (Syrian etc.) Muslims would inevitably strive to establish a state bound to repress non-Muslims.

The other side sees this lingual adaption of the new alliance as an indicator for the FPM getting absorbed by Hezbollah rather than Lebanonizing her:

“General ‘Aoun has announced one would be Lebanonizing Hezbollah. What has come about is that Hezbollah has not handed its arms over. Also the terminology, you know that
among the Christians one had never attacked Zionism or imperialism. That was not in our
cultural discourse. ... A cultural transformation is inside the FPM towards Hezbollah.
Instead of having an influence, one had an absorption by Hezbollah. They are stronger.”
(Interview 24)

This rhetorical rapprochement becomes more obvious when taking the question of whether
the “resistance” against Israel’s occupation of the South has to come to an end after the Israeli
withdrawal from Southern Lebanon in 2000 or not. After the memorandum of understanding
with Hezbollah, ‘Aoun supported the “resistance” to free the Shebaa farms (‘Aoun and
Domont 2007, p. 111). Before, he had argued for a Syrian withdrawal by reminding
Damascus it had lost its “pretext” as well as its cause amid fears of staying in Lebanon with
the Israeli withdrawal from the South (Mausuw‘ah Michel ‘Aoun, I, p. 153). Obviously,
Lebanon was, back then, fully reconstituted, whereas now it is no more. In addition, whereas
he now lashes out against the Hariri tribunal to diminish Lebanon’s sovereignty, he left the
question of guilt intentionally open (‘Aoun and Domont 2007, pp. 107f.), as he was, in
February 2005, sure the Syrians were behind the former Prime Minister’s assassination.

That Aoun’s drastic discourse stands, at least partially, uneasily with a good deal of the FPM
supporter’s life experiences, renders it somewhat shaky and makes it likely to be altered if
circumstances would necessitate to do so. The political identities here in question are not
cased by any external alignment, but by Lebanese events. They are derived from the wartime
experience, the difficulties of a shattered Lebanese statehood and the dynamics of finding a
concrete strategy of moving out of the “Christian frustration” to allow for a state ensuring
their rights to influence politics. In the FPM, that developed into a contextualist position. It
added a principal willingness to move closer into their region to the theoretical construct of
liberalism, making up for a much localized version of insisting upon a civic identity not
directly focused on being Christian.

Yet, the recent rapprochement between the LF and the FPM in 2016, when Samir Geagea
withdrew his own candidature to support ‘Aoun’s, could be such a change. When announcing
his run for the presidency, ‘Aoun learned the “8th of March” would not support him as much
as he wished. On the other hand, the rising fears of Sunni Islamists, fanned by the Syrian civil
war among Christians in the region, led to a frequently pronounced necessity to close ranks.

261 A short clip from him appearing in February 2005 in French TV could until recently be still watched at
The cautious rapprochement resulting from these two tendencies was symbolically expressed in some joint FPM-LF lists in the municipal elections in 2016 and a FPM parliamentarian showing up on the occasion of the LF “martyr mass” shortly thereafter.

3. EPILOGUE: THE ELECTIONS OF 2009
In 2006, 46.4% of a survey’s Christian Lebanese respondents had preferred ‘Aoun as president, 10.9% chose Geagea. Roughly, 64% saw Hezbollah as a “resistance”, only 35% solely as a “militia” (Mausuw‘ah Michel ‘Aoun, III, pp. 7-10).262 The short, yet bloody civil war in 2008, when the “8th of March” turned its weapons on other Lebanese (primarily the men of Mustaqbal and the PSP) changed things. In a state of total internal blockade and widespread foreign interference, only the Doha Agreement on May 21, 2008, broke the deadlock of blocked state institutions. As of 2017, the last Lebanese parliamentary elections held in 2009, aptly showed how the strategies of dealing with the “Christian frustration” after 2005 have deflated the mobilizational inflation the FPM has undergone and become a rather blurry Christian gathering since they clarified their respective, untouchable resources that allowed for a legitimate state. Contrarily, the two essentialist parties, whose inflation had, during the first years of the war, seemed to be at least partially rehabilitated by the Christian voters.

The elections of 2009 were staged in an exceptionally poisoned atmosphere. The country was deeply divided along the lines of the “8th” and the “14th of March.” Consequently, according to a survey conducted in 2013, 66% of all Christians surveyed, felt their existence there as a community was endangered; 83% of those polled claimed they were worried about the country’s security situation, weapons owned by individuals and the Lebanese army’s obvious weakness. A major concern for 79% of those surveyed, named the economic situation, including unemployment and the unusually high cost of living, as a major concern for them. Slightly less than half of all respondents (47%) feared for their personal safety and that of their family (The Daily Star, 2013-01-09).

The electoral result in 2009 was a win after votes for the “8th of March,” but a win after seats for the other “March,” leaving the PSP as a third actor somewhat in between them. Candidates often, but not always, related to national issues, transgressing the parochial by far. How far

262 Despite the biased source, I trust the numbers since they were provided by “Markaz Beirut,” an established polling agency.
this process has already moved into Lebanon becomes nowhere clearer than in an anonymous Shiite counselor’s pitiless judgement of the local “8th of March” Shiite candidate at Byblos, a region hitherto beyond the reach of Hezbollah and its organizational network. Although the candidate he spoke about was not only a local notable, but the proprietor of one of the country’s biggest chains of gas stations, the local representative rhetorically questioned his personality, “Who is Abbas [Hachem]? The majority of Shiites did not vote for him. They voted for a black picture. … They voted for the list of Hezbollah and ‘Aoun. …” (quoted in Catusse and Mouawad 2011, p. 49) That was quite in line with what the other side saw as the decisive motivation of most of its voters; thus, a Phalangist election-campaigner divided his party’s electorate into two parts: those who adhere to the party’s milieu since several generations and those who could be simply mobilized along the lines of the ongoing confrontation between “8th of March” and “14th of March” who do not choose a specific party but one from one of the two camps (Interview May 2012). Whereas Hachem’s Shiite counterpart, Fares Souhaid, got only 3.08% of the local Shiite vote, Hachem himself, the “black image,” increased his share of votes from 50.9% in 2005 to 90.42% in 2009, in line with the general concentration of the Shiite voters on the “8th of March” list (Statistics Lebanon 2009, p. 335). The overall result reflected a polarization among Sunnis and Shiites unknown since 1972, both sects voted nearly unanimously for one of the two “Marches”. The Christians, instead, were divided. The FPM preserved the upper hand in the Christian areas but lost significantly, being depleted of several of its seats either by various “independents” associated with Hariri’s Mustaqbal, by the LF and the Phalanges. Michel ‘Aoun himself did not face any listed official from the “14th of March” in the Kisrawan district. Only loosely affiliated notables, Mansur Ghanim al-Bun and Farid Haykal al-Khazin, were fielded against him, as the other side obviously saw no chance in winning there. Yet, ‘Aoun lost no less than 17.2%, falling from 70.0% to 52.8%. The rest of his list had been reduced by between 4.5% and 14.3%. The two opposing candidates each raised their shares by roughly 13%. ‘Aoun’s losses become even more telling when being broken down by sects. He lost up to 18.02% among the constituency’s Maronite voters, whereas he increased his share among the Shiites by 42.5% up to a nearly unanimous 93.05%. The two opposing bidders, al-Bun and al-Khazin, each lost around four, respectively 28% in this group (Statistics Lebanon 2009, p. 304). The result in Kisrawan was by no means an exception; by and large it held true for the whole of Christian Lebanon. The FPM emerged from the

263 The Druze main parties PSP and LDP did as they always do: They settled their disputes temporally for the sake of keeping a common Druze interest of remaining as strong as possible in parliament and did not run candidates against each other. Only in Ba‘abda-district this did not work out.
elections considerably weakened, especially among Maronites and Greek Catholics, less among the Greek Orthodox but it strengthened its Shiite share. The municipal elections of 2010 further affirmed the trend of the 2009 elections. Those from the “14th of March” did, in varying combinations, quite well in several FPM bastions (NOW Lebanon, 2010-03-02). This indicates quite strikingly how ‘Aoun’s image changed from “the Christians’ leader” into “Hezbollah’s ally,” thus becoming recognizable as a proponent of a specific conception of the just order of the state and no longer as a leader in which everyone could project his respective wishes.

This reminds us of former occasions favoring partyism in Lebanon: In all cases - foundation of the state, questions of independence, the civil wars of 1958 and 1975, the influx of Palestinians, social reforms in the 1960s – it was about the ability to mobilize on a supralocal level. It was always related to those untouchable resources associated with what Lebanon shall be as a legitimate polity. In 2009, parties dominated political camps and all successful “independents” had to align themselves with them. The same pattern was repeated in 2018, favoring party blocks. In the Christian areas, the FPM and the LF were clearly dominating, only the Sunni dominated constituencies witnessed an erosion of the dominating Mustaqbal-bloc. Only at Beirut, a representative associated with the “You Stink” protests in 2015, journalist Paula Yacoubian, made it into parliament (L’Orient-Le-Jour, 2018-05-07/08). With tensions slackening, notables could probably become stronger again, although certainly not as much as they used to be. Thus, the 2009 elections marked a new high of partyism and simultaneously brought about a deflated ‘Aoun, who had been transformed from the “leader of the Christians” to one Christian standing only for one of the two options marked by the exceptionalism-contextualism divide. This divide has, lately, emerged as a primary cleavage of Christian politics in Lebanon. Its current distribution among parties, does not need to be forever lasting.

However, as we saw in this chapter’s panorama, both options were always trying to reclaim the agency of formulating a “real state,” imagined as a break with the current one, finally leading to a “real society” with a “real nation”. Either by designating the Christians as a demos in its own right or by trying to approach the alleged khaymah. Both strategies were triggered by a Lebanese experience but couched in borrowing heavily from international discourses. As such, it allows for vernacularized versions of being conservative or liberal (or leftist), reaching deeply into private life and by structuring individual behavior through a habitus visible among partisans. We will see in the next panorama how the individual indeed
forms an important part of how these parties imagine themselves as “real parties,” although only in a delicate balancing act.
CHAPTER VI: PARTIES AND THEIR ADHERENTS

1. LEADERS AND PARTISANS
In previous chapters, I tried to retrace encounters with a global modernity throughout selected historical situations. In chapter five, I sketched out how that translated from 2005 to the current date into different strategies related to political identities, reaching well into the everyday lives of partisans. Yet, all Lebanese parties share two core-problems; their fluidity and person-centeredness. In this last panorama, I will try to close the circle of portraying them as meaningful encounters with a global modernity by trying to illustrate how these parties attempt to master the delicate balancing act of bringing together their aspirations of being a modern, democratic party with that volatility and their top-heaviness.

Yet, no party is just a person and a written programmatic sketch. Instead, to become a modern political party, one needs to become the object of an “investment” (see: de Certeau 1988, p. 178); someone needs to invest something in it, and by it, I do not mean capital spending. Rather, a party and thereby the person heading it, is a social interaction; only that turns the person and the program into something meaningful. Therefore, this chapter tries to sketch out these leaders as part of a reciprocity, as symbols to be interpreted by an audience as part of a process of gaining legitimacy. Claude Lefort had argued (1986, p. 189), “ideology” is an “attempt … to cancel out the effects of social and temporal division which are produced therein, to re-establish the ‘real’,” something which “it cannot realize itself without losing its function, it cannot completely affirm the real without running the risk of appearing as external to practice and to the instituting discourse from which it arises in order to defuse the scandal.” (Ibid.) In other words, the promise to “represent the people,” or at least a specific segment of it, cannot constantly run the risk of falling short of the pretension. Rebellion, thus, would be the first alternative if one part of the relationship considers the function to be lost. We will see in this chapter how partisans left their organizations but also how party leaders have to fit into expectations of how to represent “the people.” Thus, I will first show how the leaders of these three parties are narrated. We will see that this is usually done by attributing a high degree of individual agency to him. This reflects a surprisingly high degree of how partisans see themselves. I will show that none of these parties is living out of the leader as a person but as a person standing for a content, read by interpreting members in an act of identification. On the one hand, that is destabilizing the identity of the leader as a symbolism by allowing for something within a social relation beyond his reach. On the other hand, members might see
this leader as symbolic, indeed, as “freedom conceived as self-determination.” (Laclau and Zac 1994, pp. 14,17-23) We will see that the individual becomes very visible, as well in their narratives as when the balancing does not work out as expected. Leaders and partisans alike, claim *individuality*, but *individualism* values independence, and provides a little more than “leeway of liberty” (Interview 20) which results only from a rupture. Yet, it is not sought for and not imagined as being contempt with the state of things in Lebanon. To discuss these elements of interaction within parties, a mixture of passages from my in-depth questions, as well as written testimonies penned down by former partisans, will be used.

To round off this chapter on the party as a democratic, yet Jacobinist, social relationship, I will try to indicate in the last sections, how these parties use various means to reach out into society and establish a milieu. I will base this section largely on press material, my own experience in the field, and the rich insights provided by “WikiLeaks” through classified American diplomatic material.

2. NARRATING THE LEADER

Official party narration on the leader indulges in the *res gestae* of what he has already done as a kind of application letter for future jobs to come. The LF alone, published an *encyclopedia* of twenty-four volumes (Mausuw’at al-Quwwat); the Phalangists produced twenty-five tomes (Mausuw’ah Hizb-l-Kata’ib); the FPM contented itself with only four (Mausuw’ah Michel ‘Aoun). All their biographical sketches offer a life open to be actively arranged by the respective actors, as an active individual but not as an individualist. They are chronologically ordered and sorted along a standardized “normal biography.” The life retraces the history of the nation as an exemplary life (Schumann 2001b). The leader is widely seen as a rebel, not a ruler, thereby resembling the widespread utopia of the “Dream of a Republic.” Therefore, narrating him is always a difficult balancing act; although he has to be set apart from his social environment, he constantly needs to refer to this context. Only within the framework of democratic-modern normativity, the leaders here in question can be mythologized. They embody an ideal to allow for an imitation by a broader community to be constituted by this imitation process (see also: Thuselt 2017).

*Pierre Gemayel’s* biography outlines the leader’s formative years in an almost sterile way, portraying a monkish patriot in the making, endowed with “love” for his country as well as “belief” in it, conveyed by teachers and parents alike. Nothing private is allowed for which
might not serve the purpose of portraying a young man whose journey through early life gets narrated as aiming towards a heroic role for the sake of Lebanon. All the emotional vocabulary employed is ostensibly addressing the cause of bringing about the modern nation. His favorite lessons at school were history and geography. He developed a special interest in “exceptional heroes” of Lebanese history, instilling in him a “love for the fatherland,” “vigor” and “pride,” and the will to emulate these “heroes” with his youthful friends (Sharaf 1979, p. 97). Following a fashionable zeitgeist, he, too, sought the pure, the pristine, as a societal re-education through nature, as a way of strengthening oneself (cf. Urry 2000, p. 52). Thus, doing sports or scouting is said to have “activated [in him] … the love for the cheerful life out in the open, the humble spirit towards the norms, the loyalty to the leaders, and the shared life in common camps.” (Sharaf 1979, p. 98) There is no doubt allowed for, and no ambiguity tarnishes the heroic steadfastness. His “serving” came to its celebrated high when Gemayel had been wounded during a manifestation together with the Muslim Najjadé against the French and was subsequently imprisoned, “Indeed, Pierre Gemayel and his comrades wrote with their pure and sincere blood the first active line in the history of liberating Lebanon.” (Sharaf 1979, p. 129) By giving something extraordinary, he proved a worth that stood for something matching expectations of a time. For his followers, by working ruthlessly and unselfishly dedicated to the public interest (al-Lahham, Mausuw’ah Hizb al-Kata’ib, I, p. 5), he embodied “the unity of the party and its continuity in serving Lebanon.” (Sharaf 1979, p. 130) The party audience claimed in its panegyrics to be connected to him “by the bonds of the heart, the mind, and the thought,” (Ibid., p. 131) by “fraternal affection” (P. Gemayel 1948, p. 54) since they chose him, as they claim in a pledge for a paramilitary manifestation:

“[He is] guardian of our embodied faith, [as] realized by a gathering …. He will maintain, as he had courageously maintained [before], our ideal of purity, our loyalty in his simplicity, our force in his cohesion. He will be the first one responsible in facing our enemies and our friends (...). To him, the honors: [he] is our flag.” (Ibid., p. 57)

In their official chronicle, the Lebanese Forces restrict the biography of Bashir Gemayel in a more personal sense to only a very few sentences. We learn something about the family he was born into and his infancy. Afterwards, his political life, hovering around the “cause,” is almost excessively displayed. There is no psychology offered. It is all just heroism, which needs pure facts to prove itself in heroic deeds. In case we learn something about his alleged characteristics, they are related to the political in its proper sense. So, some sensitivity is only allowed by the authors to reveal itself directly in the field of political action as being sha’abiyy:
“Sheikh Bashir Gemayel expressed its responsibility in Achrafieh, he was near to the people, listened to them, alleviated their daily suffering, strived for a solution of their problems, felt their suffering and tragedies.” (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, II, p. 11)

Family and upbringing seem to be somewhat intentionally cut short, as if to diminish their role (Ibid., pp. 5ff.). Of course, one might feel inclined to ask how a man of such a tender age (and a difficult time as he was at school and then university, cf. Ménargues 2004, p. 42) could have studied at an outrageously expensive university (the USJ), thereby acquiring a certificate in law, open a law firm in one of Beirut’s most expensive areas (Hamra), to study, notwithstanding his work as a jurist, once more (political science) and to dedicate a large part of his life to party politics without his family’s fortune?

The same tendency is also true for Samir Geagea. His biography starts with a kind of a personal sheet, leaving no room for anything other than those things most important to introduce him as a sha’abiyy politician; where he was born (Hazmieh), where he grew up (’Ain ar-Rummanah, both lower to middle class suburbs of Beirut), where his ancestors originated from (Bsharri), that his family is from a rather modest background (his father served as a sergeant in the Lebanese army). The chronicle already starts with his political “sirah.” As in the case of Bashir Gemayel, a certain form of respectability is not missing; his studies at the prestigious American University of Beirut (AUB) are explicitly mentioned (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, V, pp. 8f.).

Otherwise, his family background is only narrated as some “political genealogy,” thereby indicating that the political standpoint Geagea chose was by no means accidental, but due to having been influenced by his social environment, demonstrating his origins from a family that had already opted for a modern ideology. The LF’s chronicles mention, therefore, the Geagea family as being of “Chamounist orientation.” He, himself, had engaged very early on in students’ elections at school, starting to take an interest in politics by the tender age of 10 by watching the TV news (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, V, p. 21) and learning to appreciate the likes of Camille Chamoun and Fu’ad Chéhab (Ibid., p. 26). In another biography, a work solely dedicated to him as a person, we could find something similar. Again, the leader is embedded in a context, but set apart from those parts of it, which might be seen as “pre-modern.” Thus, we are explicitly told his origins in Bsharri did not foretell his life, although the hardy mountaineers seem to have influenced him enough to call him a genuine “son of Bsharri.” (ash-Shartuni 2008, pp, 63ff.) The author continues that the specific personality in question, is not simply set off by the respective background. He insists Geagea instead had
left the family system of his origins by turning to modern-day politics. He is said to have been born in “an atmosphere of poverty and a modest milieu.” (Ibid., p. 67) Thus, he understood the need to change something. Whereas the region has been characterized by fear and a will for persistence, he, Geagea, strove for change, thereby emancipating himself from tribal origins. By doing so, he is symbolically reproducing the coming-into-existence of the modern nation, which he, himself, actually brings about by uniting the families of Bsharri for the first time in their history in just one military apparatus, the Lebanese Forces (Ibid., pp. 87ff.).

The encyclopedia of the FPM, tellingly named after the party leader Michel ʿAoun, deals with the latter in a plot close to a res gestea. It produces nothing but a few personal details related to the family in a brief personal sheet (Mausuwʿah Michel ʿAoun, I, p. 3), the rest is covered as a political career. Only his parents’ social background (butcher, farmer) is mentioned to establish a shaʿabiyy narrative. In contrast to Geagea’s biographical sketches, we do not learn much more about him therein. That is, of course, due to the nature of the series. It resembles more or less a compilation of news coverage and speeches, whereas the LF, at times, added some accounts of their own. Nevertheless, the former general speaks about his life when asked in interviews. Thus, we learn elsewhere, very personal details about his religious beliefs; that Christ was for him about giving, not taking; that he considers him rather a rebel than a conventionalist; that God is universal (ʿAoun and Domont 2008, pp. 23-30; ʿAoun and Sadek 2016, pp. 26-, 33-36). This sets a liberal, but faithful tone, which should be seen less a private matter than one of public morality in a more or less religious society.264 As with the other politicians above, the family is cut short, the life of the individual is an exemplary one. Thus, ʿAoun himself, portrays his idea about the army in society in biographical terms, contrasting the pristine life of a rural multi-religious community with an army unrelated to the demos:

“I was born in a poor suburb in Haret Hreik, south of Beirut. ... My father exercised the profession of the butcher. These were happy years. All my infancy, I passed in Harek Hreik. I had Christian and Muslim friends. The contact with nature has been important for me. One played barefooted on the pathway, one climbed trees ... I was very familiar with nature and very open-minded in dealing with people. This is a richness, which stems from my infancy. That what left most its mark on me was the Second World War. I kept certain images in mind, especially that one of the foreign soldier who filled people with fear.

264 In the sixth wave of the World Values Survey (2010-14) religiosity in Lebanon proofed to be less entrenched than in other Middle Eastern countries, but more than in Europe or the US, cf. http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOnline.jsp, rev. 2015-05-08.
Stemming therefrom, the notion of the protecting soldier was awoken to me. I believe that there needs to be an osmosis between the army and the people. And I understood it. It is not necessary that the soldier instills fear. … The soldier does not need to frighten. … The soldier must not serve against anyone except the troublemakers, the element of disorder; not against the masses, or else he becomes an element of repression. He needs to be the friend of the people and to be assisted by it." (quoted in: Bourre 1990, pp. 85f., my translation)

The sha’abiy life that could be imitated by others, gets more and more difficult in the Gemayels’ case, the longer they provide leaders to the Phalanges. Often Phalangists meandered a bit when I asked them about the role played by the Gemayel family. They all acknowledged that the Gemayels have “given” something (Interviews 6 and 9; Duplan and Raulin 2016, pp. 168f.), most notably martyrs, five265 until now. In all cases, it was expected that the party be established collectivity. Thus, a party functionary, despite being on close terms with Samy Gemayel, acknowledged his party was not “100% democratic,” since it lacked a proper institutionalization; precisely because of the Gemayels’ role in it. He had only joined since he considered the Phalanges as something transgressing a person and a family, something that has produced “really some serious literature” in the decades of its existence, and by also participating actively in government (Interview 6).

The Kata’ib party itself, when narrating the family as such, falls at times, into a discourse that borrows from more traditional accounts of families and their “honor” as “claim and proof of title and dominance.” (Gilsenan 1996, p. 13) I found a highly interesting case in a book published by the “Maurice Gemayel” foundation, run by the party. Interestingly, in this case, the author does not differentiate when dealing with the “buyut,” the leading families, any more between “elite” as “the others” and “us” as the “real elite” from below; “the families” turn collectively through their heritage, into the gems of a steadfast patriotism (Sha’aban 2000, p. 11). In a very traditional way, the Gemayel’s historical narrative is evoked as “honorable.” Such genealogical trees are frequently constructed by referring the family back to a foreign place, associating it with something noble or sacred (see: Gilsenan 1996). In that case, the chronicle has it that the Gemayels originally stemmed from a sacred Christian place, Jerusalem, before they came, via the region around Sa’ida to the Lebanese Mountains, to the

265 Bashir, his infant daughter Maya, Pierre Jr., the son of Amin Gemayel, Amin, Assouad and Manuel; the latter two died as a fighters during the civil war. Amin Assouad fell during the first months of the war during the “Battle of the Hotels” in downtown Beirut when still being 17; Maya was killed by a bomb, when Bashir Gemayel had not accompanied her on her usual Saturdays way to her grandmother. Pierre Jr. was killed in 2006 by a hitherto unknown group also claiming responsibility for the death of well-known journalist Jibran Tuéni.
village of Jaj in the present-day district of Byblos. They are even described, in another conveyed version, as having roots among the Bannu Quraysh – the Islamic prophet Muhammad’s tribe - migrating over what is now Iraq and Syria further to the coast (Sha’aban 2000, pp. 15ff.). When coming to Lebanon, they already distinguished themselves by “proving” their “suitability” to exercise power in present-day multiconfessional Lebanon, by helping to settle Muslim families in this area to protect them from the attacks of the crusaders; albeit they seem to have supported, as the other Maronites from the Mountains, the Crusaders later-on (Sha’aban 2000, p. 17). Their Iraqi relatives proved themselves on the political stage, even providing Syria with a Prime Minister; Ma’aruf ad-Dawalibi who held office for four months in 1961/62 (Ibid., p. 16).\(^{266}\) In a sheer exhibition of the Gemayels’ achievements, literally dozens of their members are introduced to the reader with all their societal accomplishments. Here, history is used to explain the present political position of the party, for example, by narrating the suffering at the hands of the oppressive Turkoman rulers of the coastal plain. The purpose seems to be clear; some historical depth should be added to the claim to stand for a freedom loving Lebanese patriotism with consociational undertones (Ibid., pp. 18ff.). Only then, when reaching the biography of Pierre Gemayel himself, the modernist facet begins to enter the narrative. Obviously, the longer relatives from one family pour into a party, the more the danger increases of not mastering the balancing act of tying into a society where the family plays an important role and upholding the normativity of modernism.

In all cases, the individual claiming agency is prevalent. Yet, as Judith Tucker (2001, p. 11) noted for more traditional Arab biographies: “… Arab biographers invariably locate the individual within time – in a lineage of blood and scholarship, in a concrete community of intellectuals or notables, in a place and century. The overweening importance of historical context drives the emphasis on relationships between teachers and students … Time is the setting for understanding these relationships, for grasping how they life of any one individual takes much of its significance from the ways in which it was influenced and in turn influences others. … by the same token, the individual life serves to illuminate its age.” Not unlike the biographical sketches here in question, there are no self-exploring introspections such as there are in autobiographies (Philipp 1993). This could be clearly attributed to the role of a politician; he still has to uphold the respectability of exercising power; something, which

\(^{266}\) Ibid., p. 16. Little biographical information on his earlier life could be drawn from: s.v. Muhammad Ma’aruf ad-Dawalibi, in: Man huwa fi Suriyyah [Who is Who in Syria] (Damascus: Maktab ad-Dirasat as-Suriyyah wa-l-’Arabiyyah, 1951), pp. 296f.
could hardly be done by washing the potentially dirty linen of the individual’s psychology in public. Susanne Enderwitz (2002, p. 18) generally concluded the problem of Middle Eastern autobiographical literature to be the authors’ hesitation to violate their respective societal role, whereas the idea of a worthy individual had existed within certain confinements. Thus, whereas Pierre Gemayel lived in a time that kept their private lives strictly private, Bashir Gemayel’s status of a “martyr” does not allow for too many banalities. Even the caricature of him is not deconstructing his image, but indirectly lauding him. The most frequently accessed YouTube video of the comedy series’ “Ktir Salbe’s” Bashir “caricature” (produced by Murr TV), is a rather wistful look back, than an irony. In this spot, a double is lamenting Lebanon’s present situation with a resurrected Bashir Gemayel, while a widespread LF war song is played in the background:

“It is so bad, brothers in Lebanon of the 10,452km². The Sunnis dominate, the Shiites are armed, the Druze are afraid, the Christians are emigrating. It is so bad, brothers in Lebanon of 2010, that the Palestinians had still not gone back to their country, and there is nothing happening without the Syrians’ acceptance. Neither is the constitution protected, nor are the laws enforced, nor is independence complete. The territory is not free, the people not united, and the country not sovereign. It is so bad that the brothers tell me ‘We wander in your footsteps’ …, and you, the Christians, are divided, and you did not learn anything from history … and till today nothing has changed ….”

If even in a comedy show, irony could – as far as the respective in-group is concerned – not be allowed for, the same would be true for the hagiographies written down for the rank and file. Consequently, I did not find too many sources that gave more details on private matters. Only in some contemporary cases, alive and, therefore, unassociated with “martyrdom,” we learn more about the ordinary life of the person in question. We might learn about Samir Geagea; that he loves art, listens to classical music or traditional rural Lebanese songs. Literature preferred by him is characterized as being politically, socially or philosophically oriented. He cherishes Lebanese food without being picky in this regard, and chocolate, particularly “chocolate foam kisses” with “Pepsi.” (Mausuwʿah al-Quwwat, V, pp. 21, 35) This is, of course, only reaching the likable, though harmless, field of everyday banalities. In recent times, immediately before accessing the presidency in 2016, his rival Michel ’Aoun decided to display a bit more of his personhood. The reason, therefore, is simple: the road to
office necessitates living up to the “real.” Since the times of Pierre Gemayel, after authority is assured, a bit more of the person renders the office less overwhelming and reflects gradual changes in expectations towards its bearer. A journalist working for a fashion magazine wrote up the whole self-presentation (’Aoun and Sadek 2016). Its overall design stands, at least partially, in remarkable contrast to other narrations of the leader, whereas the rest is, as usual, a compilation of speeches. Some of the questions the newly elected president was asked were taken from Marcel Proust. In other cases, the answers were somewhat intentionally poetized. As with Geagea’s mysticism, they are intended to show an educated individual capable of deeper reflection. Altogether, the impact of an international lifestyle magazine becomes clearly visible. Thus, the booklet befits the FPM’s “sois belle et vote” campaign of 2009, emulating the habitus of a cosmopolitan, Christian bourgeoisie. Despite all these references to a self-confident bourgeoisie, the editor begins her introduction with the claim that all these glimpses into a president missing his mother or hiding his tenderness (Ibid., pp. 53f.), would finally still portray a man “that has shown us the path to accomplish his destiny,” a destiny of Lebanese “identity, unity, truth” (Ibid., p. 8). His “dream” is nothing but a “Watan ’Insaniyy,” “a humanist nation” to be brought about (Ibid., p. 43). Thus, despite changing expectations on how to present oneself, the essence of what makes up the leader remains largely unchanged, there is nothing “all-deriding, all-eroding, all-dissolving” (Bauman 1992, pp. VIIff.) in it.

In principle, all these biographies are not fundamentally set apart from the lives of the regular members. Yet, they need distinction; ’Aoun is “so close and yet so different” to the Lebanese “whom he resembles and whom he assembles” (’Aoun and Sadek 2016, p. 9). The often quite honorific way to narrate the leader speaks volumes about somehow still being set apart. A striking case of this hierarchy of distinction, was an accidental encounter with Samy Gemayel while waiting for another appointment in the rooms of the al-Kata’ib party headquarters. The secretaries, watchmen and coordinators, in a room adjacent to the hallway, whispered respectfully that “the Sheikh” would soon show up and those close to the door, especially the guard, virtually snapped to attention when Samy Gemayel, with a group of young party officials, emerged from a conference room. Clothed in suit pants and a business shirt, he could afford to show some juvenility by omitting the necktie, or closeness by kidding around a little bit with his inferior functionaries, jumping playfully on the back of one of them without losing his social difference at all; “… The refusal to take things seriously” could also mark social difference (Bourdieu 1984, p. 34). Despite this rather normal, everyday boy behavior and his young age – he was barely 31 years of age back then - he still gets addressed
in all official dealings as “Sheikh,” in an absolutely traditional way. Since this actually means “distancing,” without having offered some genuinely acquired characteristics justifying his elevated position - he was too young for that - it also indicates the ongoing process of the underlying charisma’s routinization. Yet, despite having been obviously promoted to these positions because of his name, he at least acquired a political identity by, together with his fellow partisans, sharing an active life of being a party affiliated student confronting the Syrian-controlled Lebanese authorities before 2005.

Without a family at hand, distinction at least partially, appears differently. Let us briefly return to the interview documentary “The Doctor in the prison cell.” Geagea presents himself as thoughtful, calm, often reluctant in choosing words. He speaks about his life in general, his wife, and the 11 years spent in his underground cell, thereby locating himself right into the gallery of those who had been supposedly blown up by Syria or imprisoned elsewhere. This is how he finds a new place in a new Lebanon, which allows him to leave his old image of a “warlord” behind. He talks about how he immersed himself into the exemplary life of Mar Charbel, one of the few Catholic saints provided by the Maronite Church, illustrated by pictures resembling the religious clips on Telelumière, the official channel of the Maronite Patriarchate. Thus, he appeals to a conservative, religious Christian audience. Despite all humbleness displayed, to qualify for a leading position, necessitates distinction. Here, the “Doctor”, the intellectual from humble origins, the one who studied, steps in. Geagea opens his library for the camera and puts some titles on display. The specter reaches from the German sociologist Erich Fromm (L’Art d’être), via staples of religious literature, to books on the Druze and Lebanese history, Yoga manuals (Zen in the Martial Arts) and books on wholefood (Diet for Life). He professes to having read in his cell, a book on the existence of angels by the Serbo-French author Pierre Jovanović, whom he mistakenly considers to be a Hungarian; an author dealing with angels, the apocalypse and all kinds of economic breakdowns, often thoroughly conspiratorial. Further, Geagea mentions his sympathy for the meditation of Teresa d’Ávila whom he had encountered through a biography by Marcelle Auclair. Whereas Ávila belongs to a more traditional Catholic thinking, Auclair wrote popular psychology, mostly in French magazines where she authored life advisory columns and several biographies. That is far from those authors his official biography likes to refer to;

269 The title, indicating a lesser nobility, has been bestowed on the family in 1855 by Emir Bashir Ahmad Abu Lama’a for faithful service.
271 His family was among the rural notables since it was one of the oldest there, but he grew up under economically modest if not poor conditions, ash-Shartuni 2008, pp. 65ff. See also: “Samir Geagea: une enfance très pauvre,” FL-Infos, No. 4 (2001), p. 2.
Teilhard de Chardin, Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, Friedrich Hegel and Immanuel Kant (ash-Shartuni 2008, pp. 110f.). Thus, the lapse into a “non-established” culture (Bourdieu 1984), surely is not intended. Despite his interest in works of an academic curriculum, he also stands for a rural-suburban milieu, which cherishes this kind of popular piety and mysticism. It simply reflects a social base not drawn from an intellectual “juste milieu”; “the virgin” as a nickname (see IV.2.a), also holds a deprecating smack. Thus, that kind of distinction displayed, is not everyone’s. The party, base at times, even cherishes that. Therefore, when I asked a functionary if he knew others were scorning Geagea as “the shepherd from Bsharri,” he simply turned the tables and saw that as something also standing for himself as he, too, came from the country’s periphery:

“Yeah, they mean that he came from the farthest point in Lebanon and he talks about politics, so the way to do politics was that it was done by the big families. ... So, a shepherd, and a person that is coming from a very far region and from a very poor family and now he wants to talk politics and he [even] has supporters.” (Interview 5)

In a highly interesting way, this kind of distinction mixes up two things; a rather conventionalist display of distinctive attributes, yet, also some break is offered, albeit only one appealing to an audience habitually close to the bearer of charisma.

3. CHARISMA AS A BREAK

Personal austerity seems to be a common denominator all these politicians have in common. However, this austerity has a paradoxical dimension; it is foremost what it seems to be at first glance – austere. Yet, through the break with the existing order, some restricted “you may” is sneaking in through the backdoor.

Being related to a concrete order, is why a FPM functionary claimed ‘Aoun to be charismatic, because he was a “true patriot … someone who works in a national and not in a political sense”. By contrast, Bashir Gemayel and Samir Geagea could not be charismatic for him. As “militiamen,” they stood only for the particular, the narrow interest, “they were leaders that gave a scare.” (Interview 25) It definitely makes a difference where one stands; it sets apart the right from the wrong. The charismatic leader is not therapeutic; he sets order (Rieff 2007, p. 5), even when it allows for something permissive, something Slavoj Žižek (2009) once called “libidinal bribery.” For the youthful fighters, the war in Lebanon might not only have been, despite all interpellations to the stern and ideological, a serious business, but also a breaking
out of the ambivalence and of everyday order (Haugbolle 2010, pp. 156-159), by making
participants feel “as high school students on a graduation trip.” (Žižek 2009) However, with
the exception of the few postmodern, ironizing, already distanced biographies related to the
war (R. Hage 2006; Bazzi 2006), normally this kind of revolt is shamefully concealed;
rebellion is to bring something about, as a rite of passage, restricted to a certain age dear to
modernity (see: chapter III.2) and within certain limitations. Thus, in one of the rare glimpses
into Bashir Gemayel’s private life, Abou calls him, for example, “a devil” during his
childhood, a good-hearted but unruly pupil, tearing down his father’s posters at Achrafieh in
anger at him (Abou 1984, p. 37). Despite this act of rebellion, he is still no releaser. There is a
limited time when one could still tear down dad’s posters. Then, the “libidinal bribery” is
related to something within the confines of seriousness. The leader stands exemplarily for the
break. Not only by using “clear speech,” i.e. simplifying matters by taking one’s own
narrative as the one really describing facts, but also by being associated with characteristics
that are almost excessively related to a rupture; introducing its “you may” through the
backdoor of smashing the alleged old, in an act of setting a new order. In fact, this relation
seems to be the only thing all these party leaders here do have in common.

Theodor Hanf once tellingly characterized Bashir Gemayel’s father, Pierre, as the “antithesis
of the adroit, flexible broker of traditional Lebanese politics. A simple soul, unswerving to the
point of intransigence and utterly incorruptible, he stood for a pure and uncompromising
Lebanese nationalism. In matters of principle, opportunism fell by the wayside.” (Hanf 2015,
p. 192) A likewise mixed judgment could be gained from the US Embassy’s reports, which
described him as really interested in human fate but also as a “political primitive in that sense
that however naïve his ideas, he conveys them from the heart, without artifice or guile,”
generally trusting most Muslims, with an “austere devotion” to his cause, and a considerable
sense for practical pragmatism. “Sincere,” “neither corrupted nor individualist,” but with a
“very authoritarian mentality,” (Interview Najm, 2012-07-20) or not being a man of thoughts
but of deeds (J. Abou Khalil in the TV-Series “ʾAhzab Lubnan”), were other
colorizations. After all, no bad qualification in a time, whose zeitgeist favored the rigor of
revolting against the existent order over self-doubt (Wohl 1980, pp. 8f.).

Bashir Gemayel, in turn, was once describe by Karim Pakradouni as follows:

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272 As for Bazzi, the irony stems from a narration from the distance. He himself acknowledged in an interview to
have deeply believed in the SSNP’s ideology for at least large parts of the war, see NOW Lebanon 2008-09-26.
“He conceived life as a movement, a perpetual project, and when he started to withdraw, it was only to counter-attack more easily. Unable to settle down neither in routine nor in the ordinary, he was only [fully] himself in the confrontation, the drama, the spectacular. His taste was the adventure, his character disruptive, his frankness and his stubbornness got him often in the ways of a bourgeois and traditional surrounding, where he embarrassed everyone, friends and allies included. Yet, he succeeded in imposing his infernal rhythm on the Lebanese Forces, the Phalangist party, and finally the state.” (Pakradouni 1984, p. 243, my translation)

Bashir Gemayel, when described by those close to the LF or Kata’ib, is usually described in terms signaling a break with the negatively connoted dysfunctional state before 1975. Simultaneously, he is said to have been in close dialogue with the demos, positively connoted as the rightful subject of politics. He is said to have been determined, very direct, the responsible strong one, natural, transparent, close to the troops, courageous (Duplan and Raulin 2015, p. 169), having been humble enough to drive his car himself (Abou 1984, p. 36), to have stood for a break with a “subservient generation,” (Sneifer 2006, p. 79) as having embodied “our dream: a Lebanese state with strong Christians” (Ibid., p. 111) that would finally “put an end to the old ideas, the spineless politics of compromise, the phrases and the indecipherable discourses” (Ibid., p. 112).

Obviously, the rather gnarly and somehow demure Samir Geagea is different from Bashir Gemayel, and both differ from Michel ‘Aoun or Pierre Gemayel. Although Geagea shares with Bashir Gemayel “an almost puritanical disdain for material concerns,” albeit on a keener edge (Hanf 2015, p. 301), his total outlook is less boyish, less prone to outbursts, rather “solid” (Interview 14). His calm voice and interest in books is different from Pierre Gemayel’s manners of a First Sergeant. “Doctor Samir Geagea is a shy person, hating disorder, scattered thought, and the political myths of the Christian community” (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, V, p. 26), as we get introduced to him by his own party. A man often said to retreat occasionally from the hurly-burly of politics into monastic solitude. The LF, therefore, always tried to turn a handicap into an advantage, by calling this demureness discipline, accountability, orderliness, or the will to work actively in order to still preserve a vision:

“And in practice we determine what we want by clearness and exactitude, our aims are precise. Therefore, it is time to say, enough! Because we know what we want and we
declare [openly] what we know; we do not stay without a vision." (Geagea: al-Fikr wa-l-Qadhiyyah)\textsuperscript{274}

Likewise, Michel ʿAoun, is not portrayed as having a flourishing personality, but as the reformer, lashing out against the establishment, whose self-confessed motto is “Dream, Act, and Revolt!” (Hulm, 'Iqdam wa Tamarrud": ʿAoun and Sadek 2016, p. 28):

“Because, indeed, it is [among the common people] where one finds the holy and humble feeling, the sincerity. The more one moves up the social hierarchy, the more things become dirty. This is why I am completely detached from every [kind of] political class that has been indeed avid to come to me. But it was me who did reject them; because I had an inner repugnance of them.” (quoted in: Bourre 1990, pp. 86f.)

ʿAoun as a leader, breaks with social distinction by eating the same food as his soldiers and his nephew participates in battle (Ibid, p. 27).\textsuperscript{275} Thus, similar habits of being shaʿabiyy and dedicated, as in the other examples, are evoked. Likewise, an ascetic, disciplined dedication of “giving something” seems to stand, next to ambition, in the foreground of many former army comrades remembering his earlier steps on the career ladder (see: Charbel 2011, p. 349).\textsuperscript{276}

Obviously, all these charismatics do differ considerably in their specific personal traits. What they all have in common, is that utopian break with the dysfunctionalities of the Lebanese political system. Thus, their personal characteristics are less personal than relative to a “cause,” one enabling for an emotionally constituted community bringing about what contemporary Lebanon is not. This closely resembles what we already found out about the way their exemplary lives are narrated; the extraordinary is bound to a modernist proposition of something transgressing the individual. Yet, this break stands in an obviously ambivalent relation to distinction. Shawkat ʿIshtiyy (1997a, p. 487) has observed that the “reform parties” are most directly hovering around a leader as personification of a program, in contrast to those parties rather based on texts. Since the three parties here in question are less revolutionary than rebellious, their rebellion constituted rather a “conventionalist revolt,” allowing for already established attributes of power. Moreover, every party leader, even the most revolutionary one, needs to exercise power. However, power is something which is already

\textsuperscript{274} Originally in a talk to the press, 1985-03-09.

\textsuperscript{275} Likewise, Hezbollah emphasizes Hasan Nasrallah’s eldest son operated as a guerilla fighter, too, see: Yadav 2013, p. 90.

\textsuperscript{276} The source, a short introductory text, has obviously based its narration on such oral accounts since no source is indicated.
there. Consequently, the capability of exercising it, inevitably needs to use symbolisms already proven as attributes of those who have done so. This ambivalent relation between distinction and break is a shaky one; it lives out of a balancing act of putting proven attributes on display and still allowing for a break. Yet, this is something they share with their partisans.

4. “WHY DID I CHOOSE THIS PARTY? IT LOOKS LIKE ME!”

Agency, as actively shaping life, is claimed for in all oral or written self-locations. The individual as a cornerstone of a modernist self-perception, becomes visible exactly as an individual, by gaining visibility against its surroundings. That is also true for my interviewees’ self-depiction. In fact, a good deal of how the leader is narrated, matches the way Lebanese partisans narrate themselves.

Let us start with one of the written self-locations, the one of Nicolas Sehnaoui. Since he wrote his piece as a minister, his biographical sketch has already acquired many traits of all the narrations of party leaders. Foremost is, of course, its intention to reach a wider audience, which renders it conventional. Sehnaoui starts by describing his family’s background and political orientations (Sehnaoui 2011, pp. 16-22). He tries to root his party’s actual position back into his family as one being critical of Israel and any kind of sectarianism, explicitly distancing his parents from al-Kata’ib and the Lebanese Forces whom he considers “racist.” Thus, as in other biographies, the author gets extensively located in a time and a family environment, but he becomes visible as an individual; it is he who revolted actively against the militias’ “whims.” A revolt said to be against all established order, even against his own parents, but that is nothing more than a short adolescent phase, soon canalized into more respectable forms of revolting for the fatherland. Yet, the revolt remains for him an important, valuable asset in Lebanese politics, where conformism could be suspected to accept conditions as they are. It allows for shaking off the ills of fatalism, and carving out modernity. Thus, his revolt is not egoistic; it fulfills the normativity of bringing about a renewed society.

This trope of the “revolt” matches the one of the break. For example, one of the FPM functionaries I encountered, then a young soldier in a logistics unit of the Lebanese army, is a man forty years of age. Hailing from a wealthy Eastern Beiruti Orthodox family, he ran as a candidate in elections, being a high-ranking functionary in the FPM. On his Facebook page, he published, just a couple of days before I spoke to him, a cartoon showing Samir Geagea as

277 Interview 10.
a dwarfish butcher, holding a knife in between his teeth and, stained with blood, asking for the way to the operating room; an allusion to the title of a “doctor.” The interviewee’s friends ‘liked’ that picture in high numbers. Obviously, it fits into what they conceive as the ugly side of Lebanese Christianity. There are reasons for that. When I asked him his opinion on the other two Christian parties, he interestingly did not mention the Kata’ib at all. He was, in contrast to older ‘Aounists, too young to have witnessed the days of the Phalanges having been the most important Christian party in Lebanon. For him, the “significant other” has been the Lebanese Forces, with whom he had felt, as many others, originally somewhat safe, as long as he perceived them as only defending his region, until they became “corrupted” (all from Interview 28):

“Hm, we could disagree on different aspects or different... but I, when you say to me “Ouwwet”, Lebanese Forces\textsuperscript{278}, I remember two things. First, the several massacres and killings during the war, the Ouwwet - I cannot forget that. Especially, that a lot of MY relatives were killed by [the] Lebanese Forces.” (Ibid.)

This ‘Aounist himself, had his first political act of participating, as he put it, when immediately after leaving school, he volunteered for the army to fight against the “foreign occupation”. As his family’s only male scion, he had to enlist in secrecy, pretending to his parents to go to university instead of undergoing military training; getting dressed in his uniform inside the car. There is a lot of agency in it; and something that is not done for money. After having served as a soldier, he continued as a student activist. For him, that still did not smack of traditional politics, “it was some kind of a rebellion against the existing parties, especially for their role in the Lebanese war.” This rebellion was couched in a much more determined discourse than the rather cautious one describing his rebellion against the family, which was narrated in a tone of understanding of his parents’ concern of losing their only son (Ibid.).

In an advertising video, the FPM functionary in question here, placed online on YouTube, this narrative of the revolt playing a role, too: he is portrayed as a youthful activist among the crowds at Ba’abda, cheering for “the general,” who evokes, in turn, the Lebanese people as the base of politics, the one’s who decide. The narrative continues uninterrupted into the “underground years,” standing against foreign occupation, speaking up for detained friends, fixing banners at night. But he never seems to end up as a politician. Instead, the video

\textsuperscript{278}“Ouwwet” is the local Beiruti colloquial version of “Quwwat”, dropping the “Qaf.”
promises he is nothing more than “an activist that is still struggling.” To be an activist seems to be a legitimizing narrative, it is about breaking with the present state of affairs. To end as a politician seems to break the spell. The activist continues to be an activist even after the tristesse of the underground is replaced by the return of the exiled leader. That is more interesting since the FPM man himself, is portrayed in the last third of the video as a pretty normal politician doing normal things; attending rallies, delivering speeches, appearing on TV, attending sports fests and parades, meeting, together with ’Aoun or Hasan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah general secretary. Like the leader, the activist cannot settle into the ordinary life of a politician in a country where the break represents an important benefit of doing politics.

Similarly, in my interviews, party members frequently emphasized their individuality by indicating that their parents did not approve of their engagement. Primarily for being afraid for their sons and daughters, rather than for having a different outlook (Interview 9 and 10):

“I am the only one in the family who’s involved in politics. And they didn’t approve it in the beginning, you know. … They are afraid that you get into a party, [laughing] maybe there is danger, yeah. But I did what I wanted.” (Interview 9)

Not only did these life cycle related transgressions of their former role of children constitute an important part of demonstrating individuality, the general socialization process does so too. For example, a LF functionary chose to narrate his beginnings as such:

“Let’s say we are a patriotic family. We care. Now, during the war, during all the conflicts... my family... we have positions, we care for the national issue, the patriotic issue, about politics. So, I was raised within this framework. Now I did not join the party where my parents were activists for years and years. I chose another one, with close values.” (Interview 15)

The family is not just a social conditioner here – although it factually is, and the interviewee believes that – it is still an actively acting social unit; it cares. Furthermore, it is he himself who chooses, albeit within constraints. The very same respondent staunchly refused that the ideological training he underwent when serving as an officer in the LF during the war, should be designated as such. He explicitly protested it since he deemed “ideology” to be something rigid, inflexible and particular. That would not match the normativity of being an active individual. Thus, he narrated it as if the lectures delivered to him and his comrades functioned

like a self-service counter: it was scientific; you could consider it, take it and use it freely – it was not virtually drummed into the recipient. This training, as he put it, formed his and his comrades’ personality to “survive” as a party in the post-war era under the Syrians (Ibid.).

The same is true for one of his party comrades. The man, being around 30, claimed he actually entered politics during the Syrian years but independently from his family:

“Me: Hm, if, if you think back to your family, were they politically active?

He: Ugh, they were not into politics, but they have different views. For example, sometimes during the war and in the past, they were supporting this organization or that political party, but I did not take my decision because of my parents. I took my decision at university.” (Interview 5)

In fact, he entered because his normativity of how to be independent as a modern body politic, was hurt by being under Syrian tutelage:

“I found these people are the closest to the way that I’m thinking. They are fighting for freedom, they are fighting for democracy, they are fighting for human rights, are fighting to make Lebanon A REAL country, not a FARM, like the Syrians are doing.” (Ibid.)

That “how” was obviously conveyed among his kin. Several members of his extended family were, and still are, active in the Lebanese Forces; some of them fought in the war. At least two of his ancestors once ran for a seat in parliament, but as independents on notables’ lists. Only when I confronted him later with what I already knew, he acknowledged a deeper reaching social influence on himself. Yet, he still insisted on being an independently deciding individual. How far these influences might have gone, became visible when I asked about intellectual influences on his life. Interestingly, the very first books he ever mentioned were two books about the Lebanese Civil War in whom the LF provide a martyrology. The books are also advertised by the party on its webpage. Only then, he named 19th century poet Jibran Khalil Jibran and two intellectuals, Charles Malik and Antoine Najm, who formed much of the LF wartime discourse. With the sole exception of Jibran, a classic familiar author, these readings were out of the orbit of the party, respectively, the militia (Ibid.). It was obvious that there was a cultural stamp left by an education, which did not lead into parents “ordering” the children into the parties, but allowed for perceiving certain situations as violating basic expectations of how things shall be ordered.
Thus, families are always at stake and they are a Janus-faced social entity. On the one hand, in a rather conservative society such as the Lebanese one, which depends largely on genealogical bonds for making up the malfunctioning of the state, falling out of the family’s confines is difficult or even tabooed. Most of those I talked to, remained at least close to those political standpoints their parents had. That was also true in the leftists’ case; all but one came from left-leaning families (Interviews 7, 11, 12, and with N. Wakim). Nevertheless, these bonds bear the unmissable connotations of “feudalism.” Consequently, the usual strategy of dealing with it was to transform the family into a social condition, to allow for analyzing it with proper (sociological) means signaling distance. One is located within a certain time and surrounded by people by whom one is influenced, but still one becomes visible with this background, as an individual the very same way as in their leaders’ biographic sketches analyzed above.

Thus, a Phalangist, the son of another high-ranking functionary, did his best to bring the connotation of “feudalism” out of the story of his own political life through normal family socialization. He protested my question of whether his membership was a family matter, even if it meant to include a close political and personal friendship as a price for reducing one’s own family. The friendship in turn was not legitimated by its private character but by participating oneself in patriotic activism, hovering around the question of “believing in something.” The content of that belief is a specific version of a Lebanese state:

“Look, when you wake up, you are with your parents and you see in the main library in the house, the logo of the party. Or you hear, you see your father on TV; or you hear him delivering a speech. As a child, the only adult person that you know is your mother and your father and you see your father is involved in something, believes in something… OF COURSE, it will influence you. However, that DOES NOT mean that we follow blindly. Why are neither my brother nor my sister party members? Because they do not have this, ugh, energy inside of them …. I had it out of many reasons and mainly because I am with Samy Gemayel. In the first year at university, he was with me at university … [when we did] demonstrations and sit-ins at all the universities in 2000 against the Syrian occupation. So, it was normal to be active.” (Interview 16)

This omnipresent scheme goes to a point where it sounds exaggerated. A young Phalangist functionary insisted that he decided alone to join in, not knowing his father served in the

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280 Interview number 7 is the sole exception - see further down.
party’s militia during the war (Interview 14). This is unconvincing. A father, who comes home from work in a uniform, probably even holding a weapon in hand, is most likely not a solicitor or a baker. Obviously, that point was important to the narrator — he wanted to hammer the message of “individuality” home — and individualism is nothing but an assumption of the good life, not a precise reconstruction of how we actually acquire our identities (see: Soeffner 1992; Taylor 1989).

This individualism was also prevalent in that part of political socialization, not any longer directly connected to the respective own family, but to the relationship between the leader and the partisans. He is a paramount symbol, but he is not alone. In one interview, the interviewee, a FPM functionary, interrupted me a bit angrily when I started to formulate my next question with the following, “Your party is a party that has been formed after a time in exile…” He did not want to have it understood like this, “No, not at all! Despite the general being exiled, we have begun to work and to organize here...” Indeed, he organized meetings, at times under the protection of the Maronite Church; he wrote and distributed pamphlets calling for independence (from Syria) that could have brought him, as he insisted, easily into prison (Interview 26). One of my respondents was arrested no less than twenty-eight times (Interview 28). Obviously, they invested something of themselves into that party life.

Yet, all this individuality is nevertheless embedded in something wider. As the leaders’ lives stand for something exemplary, all biographical sketches of their partisans do likewise. As such, the prison experience of Samir Geagea or the exile of Michel ʿAoun, are establishing a personal bond between their own partisan activities and their leader’s fate. Indeed, it would have been easy for Geagea to repent and to side with the Syrians, but he never did so. Instead of sitting in a solitary underground prison cell, he could have done as his former comrade and later rival, Elie Hobeika, who had become minister under the Syrians, despite his wartime record. Undergoing solitary confinement or going into exile is, therefore, seen as steadfast and charismatic; it holds a personally felt meaning for those who sacrificed something of themselves to the “cause”:

“He became the embodiment of the cause of what we were fighting for. Because he could have taken the easy choices like everyone else in Lebanon. He could have gone to France or he could have become an ally of the Syrians, he could have been in a much better situation. However, he did what was right. He said no! No to occupation, no to compromise, and we have to undergo challenges, even if that means to draw personal consequences. … I do not even want to think of myself in his position, because - I do not
think I can withstand it for 12 years. Oh, it's not easy and we appreciate what he did."

(Interview 3)

In another version:

“I think that is the only party in the world that survived its dissolution. ... We are very proud of this dissolution, of the Syrian regime’s decision to dismantle the party. It means that this party was indeed resistant against the Syrian regime and they could not bury it. ... It was because we were defending the sovereignty of the country. ... [Samir Geagea] was proposed to become minister under the Syrian occupation and he said 'no' and went to jail. This deserves a lot of respect, a Lebanese in jail just do defend his values! ... And the fact that he NEVER, never accepted to compromise ..., gives him a lot of charisma and respect as well from his men. Because, they believe, I believe, that he paid a huge price for what we believe in. So, this is charisma!” (Interview 15)

The heroic act is extraordinary, yet not isolated. It links up to the fate of those partisans who kept the apparatus alive. Geagea himself equated his prison experience with that of one of his partisans, remaining at large as a burden uniting them. Whereas his prison had been the solitary cell, the Christians in particular, and the Lebanese in general, are said to have been imprisoned in a country as if it were a jail at large (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat; V, p. 151; G. Harik 2007, p. 18). All three parties underwent strong pressure from the Syrians and the Lebanese police. The ‘Aounists alone, allegedly saw up to 4,000 of their adherents detained until 2001 (Gambill 2001). One reason why party politics in Lebanon looks, at times, like an enclosed lifeworld, is that partisans often share experiences touching existential dimensions. To have participated in those events referred to as constitutive for one’s party, structures biographies. “I cried that day all afternoon,” as a former ‘Aounist remembered the day after the storm on the Ba’abda in October 1990 (Interview 28). Yet, these experiences transcend the single individual and his biography by embedding oneself into experiences and meanings shared by others. For example, the already mentioned Najib Zouein, former Phalangist, then Tanzim man, and later on in the top-echelon of the “‘Aounist Movement,” narrates his communitarization-experience at Ba’abda like an epiphany, transgressing the individual as an eternal archetype:

“I saw my son in those moments. He was, as I have been when I defended Lebanon as a child during the events of 1958281. He was me and I was him, not of the same age;

281 He participated as a 14 years old boy in the short civil war back then.
different, disparate, separated, but together we strode simultaneously with a firm step in
the same direction: bound together and open to reach a free and independent Lebanon.”
(ʿAbi Samra and Shararah 2009, p. 49)

The narrator obviously longs for these community experiences. According to him, the “spirit
of freedom and sovereignty” “erupted” for him first when Bashir Gemayel became president,
then when ʿAoun stepped in and finally, his last time, in 2005, during the “Cedar Revolution”
(Ibid., p. 50). Afterwards, he experienced a different aspect of charismatic leadership; the one
of not identifying oneself with that tangible symbolism the leaders stand for.

5. ON DREAMS AND DREAM KILLERS
Agency and individuality, but not necessary individualism, is claimed for in both written and
oral narratives. Both indicate the importance of the individual and thereby, the constitutive
element of reciprocity; democratic politics needs to claim the individual’s consent. However,
dialogue as a direct personal exchange has limits. The most important is that party leaders
make decisions relatively alone or with their inner circles.

Respondents differed about the leadership of their respective leaders. Nearly all were
laudatory, some indicated criticism. Those from the FPM were especially rather open therein.
That is not necessarily because there is more dissatisfaction inside the party; at least I feel in
no position to judge that. Rather, that still active partisans from the LF never engaged in
criticizing their leader, has to be mostly attributed to their higher discipline. Thus a LF-
functionary praised the open discussion culture “We discuss everything” of his party in a way
that was at least a bit too much and too often. What we know from the Lebanese Press, is that
Samir Geagea’s leadership patterns are highly centralistic (al-ʿAkhbar, 2013-01-20). From
functionaries, I learned he meets the higher ranking among them every one or two weeks
(Interview 4). Thus, LF partisans and sympathizers can ask for a meeting with Samir Geagea
at the party HQ at Maʿarab. The meeting is not structured as a reciprocal questions and
answers engagement (Interview 27). Nevertheless, they are not really interfering with the
tightly organized core-apparatus of the Lebanese Forces. As background information, there is
a strong sense of reciprocity, yet, it has an atmosphere of granting audiences with people who
inform the leader on what he needs for his pervasive patterns of micromanagement.

Generally spoken, what was mostly complained about was the lack of dialogue. At least some
former FPM members felt alienated by ʿAoun’s frequent refusal to enter into meaningful
discussions (ʿAbi Samra and Sharara 2009, pp. 154, 160-171). One active ʿAounist complained:

“Unfortunately, General ʿAoun has a style of leadership that takes a bit from the dictate of the military. He is rather communicative; it is easy to communicate with him, to exchange standpoints with him, to exchange ideas. Yet, unfortunately, there are no institutions in the party who prepare the decision-making. ... Actually, [decision-making] is here in the hands of General ʿAoun! He has his advisors, he has specialized cadres for proposing dossiers ... but the final decision is in the hands of the general; it comes out of the general’s office.” (Interview 26)

In contrast to others with whom I will deal below, he still felt comfortable with the decisions actually taken. This is why he seems to be a bit unhappy with the way ʿAoun deals with his party, but he still takes it, “He is never draconian, because he has a lot of consultations” (Ibid.).

Another member of the party’s top-echelon asked to describe ʿAoun’s antics inside the party, admitted to him being headstrong, but insisted the former general allowed for the executive council’s members to frequently take a vote on issues of all kinds and accepting the decisions taken. Yet, he indicated at least, that the voting process as such is not necessarily prescribed as being obligatory on all occasions, but conceded, since ʿAoun as a person is open to other opinions, “he hears, but he does not do anything which are not his ideas” (Interview 21).

Another FPM member ascribed the centrality of the founder to him still being present, as birth pangs normal for a party with a charismatic leader. He characterized him as a man of principles, “very passionate, like a father, very emotional” (Interview 28). The description as such – listening to others – is interestingly, a personal trait quite frequently mentioned. Furthermore, hardly anyone did not use it to characterize the leader he or she wanted to describe. It, therefore, stands for a democratic normativity, for the reciprocity of a personalized social contract, of a shaʿabiyy leader who knows about what the proverbial “little man” feels and suffers. The limitations are indicated in the subtext. That ʿAoun is emotional is not only softening up his, at times, brusque manners. It is also meant as a personified contrast to a political system often conceived as being mercantile or utilitarian, when the former general is lauded as “a man whom you will see rather easily to get watery eyes when he is touched by a gesture, a word” (Interview 22). Likewise, the eulogy for Saʿad al-Hariri as being “… a very good listener. He is – if you are alone with him - prepared to take a lot of criticism” (Interview 20), hints that the culture of strong political men does not
support an openly and institutionalized criticism, although one might add, dismantling the chairman, or woman, in an average Western party in full public view would normally also be an act hardly done, if at all.

Party leaders are primarily imagined to approximate expectations very much related to the respective own self-conception. The one Christian, a non-member but self-described “March fourteener,” who lauded Hariri as an excellent listener, did see herself well represented by him. More exactly, how she characterized him, resembled more or less as she saw herself; they simply shared important basic convictions, a similar socialization, and a common habitus:

“... he is funny, he is witty, he is young, he is digital, he is very modest, extremely humble, and very humane. He can actually cry when he sees something humanely ugly. He is down to earth, he never loses his temper, ..., he is very determined, [and] yes, he cooks very well, we used to have Sunday dinner where he would cook himself, [exclaiming joyfully, C. T.] he loves life actually! ... He is also truly liberal; economically and how he sees life.”

(Interview 20)

The very same thing, albeit situated in a different life experience, can be seen from the following laudatory offered by a LF functionary on Samir Geagea. Stemming from a family of petty notables, the man, a Maronite from a peripheral area in Lebanon, offers Geagea as basically symbolizing everything the LF usually ascribes to themselves as being typical for them: being close to the church, being seemingly virtually intermingled with the Maronite historical existence as a minority; Geagea stands for the break with “feudalism.” For this Christian, aged around 30, the experience of being an endangered minority had a very different meaning, as for the woman quoted above. Here, having been a war leader, is something positive. It ties well into the functionary’s own version of a collective identity, even sharing with him an origin in the country’s periphery. Above all, he is as hardy as the party usually describes itself. Thus, he stands for their historical experience as well as for their habitus, or at least for a part of it:

“First, he is a real leader. Second, he does not make any compromises, so he has his view, this view of the Christian Maronite Church. It did not change its values in Lebanon for 1,400 years. Samir Geagea, did not change his values, he is always next to the church, he is always with the church, and we always have ONE view for Lebanon. Therefore, we do not make compromises. He is not coming from a rich family. ... He was a student, of
medicine at the American University of Beirut. Therefore, suddenly he had to fight because he wanted to preserve his family like most of the Christian youth during the first years. So, you have a leader that started out as a student, then as a fighter, then as a leader, and now as a political leader.” (Interview 5)

Likewise, in an 'Aounist example, the narrator emphasized, unsurprising for a liberal sociologist, both the original background, indicating a social climber, as well as 'Aoun’s biography, reflecting an exemplary patriotic life as embodying the liberal state he wished so ardently to be brought about. Most importantly, he initially integrated him into Raymond Eddé’s political tradition, which also happened to be the one of his very own family:

“He had not the pretensions of the bourgeois, no, he lives the sufferings, he lives an ordinary live, he is very open towards the Muslims, especially, the Shiites. He has grown up among them .... Well, being always open towards the Muslims, towards the other, that is a component of his spirit, his soul. General 'Aoun incarnates Eddé therein. ... That is a proven patriot.” (Interview 22)

However, later on, the story took a twist. Although the narrator still spoke like an avid FPM partisan, he had already left the party. The reason simply was that he did not feel the former party president took him seriously. Not having found his expectations of a more meaningful dialogue met by the leader, he turned the integration of 'Aoun into his own life against the leader, by describing the emperor as being naked, since he functioned most importantly as nothing else than the sum of others’ investment in his position:

“He tends to personalize his leadership. ... It is as if he was the source of light and we did nothing more than learn from him, to echo him. Well, in reality, if we rallied, that was because we have seen that he echoed, that he responded positively to our choices [laughs out a grim laughter, C. T.], to our own ambitions, which were already there in our spirits. Yes, he considers himself as if he were alpha and omega, the absolute beginning of things. That is very bad, since he effectively torpedoes the chances of the FPM of becoming a veritable institution” (Interview 22)

It is not for nothing that the dialogic scheme tends to fail first. It is the one thread running through virtually all examples where expectations have not been met.

Most gravely, expectations were, of course, disappointed during the war. Regina Sneifer, a former LF militiawomen, for example, saw her reading of a new, inspiring Christian spiritualist, Samir Geagea, damaged, when she encountered the hardships of Geagea’s prisoners, the “disappearing” of political opponents. Before, she admired his monastic
lifestyle, the ostensible discourse on religion. She considered him “seductive” by standing for a “vision,” for discipline, that offered a Christianity tying up the loose ends of spirituality and a mundane political idea (Sneifer 2006, pp. 136, 139f.), offering “a kind of power, …, strength, clarity, firmness” (Ibid., p. 125). Her admiration of him only faded away with the incomprehension with which he reacted when, in an emotional outburst, she confronted him with all she had seen in his prisons. Geagea was in no mood to discuss, resulting in her outer disappointment, “the spirit of Teilhard de Chardin has disappeared” (Ibid., p. 170).

Less drastic, yet, still marked by disappointment, were the many recounts in “Masks of the Savior,” a compilation book of testimonies of former ʿAounists. One among the first members of the FPM, a man born in 1959 in Northern Lebanon, had gone through the clandestine years; an experience obviously quite important to him. The Cedar Revolution and the general’s return seem to have revived in him a kind of emotional flush. Soon, the first wave ebbed down; some of those who were not enthusiastic about approaching “March 8,” allegedly only stayed because they had already spent that many years inside the movement. He, himself, had the impression that ʿAoun had, in obvious contrast to the way he perceived himself, not dreamed of the “cause” but of a career. The brusque antics of his military leadership style were interpreted by him as an indicator of the general, now over 70 years, not having enough time to be “wasted” in discussions while being in pursuit of the presidency. Thus, what my interviewees from the FPM saw as a logical and genius-like step, the rapprochement to “March 8,” has been the real reason why this dissenter felt much more alienated by the very same antics the other members or former members, grinningly or grimly, commented on. Yet, in contrast to the dissenters, they still identified with the cause. Therefore, these antics bothered them, but most of them did not place it centrally in their narrative. As soon as the expectations of what should be embodied by the leaders are no longer fulfilled, the lack of more institutionalized channels of reciprocity fail to uphold the party discourses’ very own premises of democratic shaʿabiyy representation. For the dissenter discussed here, getting into “March 8” meant the victory of Syria as an occupying power, which had humiliated him during the underground years. This is why he considers ʿAoun as the one who, as he put it, killed his dreams (qatil al-ʾahlam, ʿAbi Samra 2009, pp. 145-157). Thereby, he puts him into opposition to the very dreams he had when entering politics. This is so characteristic of Middle Eastern political discourses.

As nearly everything in Lebanon, also that publication has to be located within the confrontation between the “two Marches”. Dar an-Nahar, the book’s publishing house, belongs to the orbit of an-Nahar newspaper, which is staunchly pro-March 14. Its long-serving editor-in-chief Ghassan Tuéni started out as a Phalangist but developed into a rather independent, liberal direction. His son Jibran Tuéni was killed in 2005 by a car bomb usually ascribed to the Syrian secret services and/or their Lebanese allies.
We can see the very same process of estrangement in another “testimony.” This founding member of the party designated ‘Aoun as “the father-leader who devours his children”, a pun alluding to the double meaning of “Ab”: “father” as well as “August” in Syro-Lebanese Arabic, the month (in 2005) the former “movement” was officially transformed into a party. He felt deeply disillusioned when seeing the activists’ records and hearing their leader allegedly telling them the best fighters would not necessarily be the best leaders. He, himself, would rather believe in the principle of leadership than having too many particular interests spoiling the way to a non-isolated Christian community. Some of the quotations attributed to ‘Aoun seem to be questionable, for example, that he claimed to have a deep divide between himself and the Tayyar. However, he was obviously not willing to discuss the path to revive Lebanon’s Christian community with those party members who would have wanted to go down a different route. The dissenter narrated the story as more or less an issuing of orders. At first, the former general stated he would not participate at all in a meeting with them, or at least not to speak up. However, he finally spoke alone. In another meeting, ‘Aoun threatened, in a fit of anger, to throw the dissenters, about 80 functionaries, out of the party. Thus, whereas this dissent became frustrated as a result of considering the normativity of reciprocity having been violated, he noticed that simultaneously, ‘Aoun’s son-in-law, Jibran Bassil, rose though the party’s ranks. He suspected the party to be no real party any more but a movement already worn out since it served only the personal ambitions of a happy few. We know that motif; it is the very same one we encountered inside the Kata’ib/LF camp in the person of Amin Gemayel. Only to belong to a family by not living up to the respective expectations, is not sustaining democratic reciprocity. Whereas this former member understood functionaries like him as having upheld the party under the Syrians, during “the years of fear,” he now saw his reading of the symbol “‘Aoun,” violated by those who went into exile with the general and by Syria, whom he suspected of actually having replaced himself and his likes. He felt treated as a “disobedient child,” whereas another one of those who disapproved of the new policy of the party, commented on his situation ironically as one should better hand over all his fortune to the party, since not one of them would be worthy to serve as a servant in ‘Aoun’s house (‘Abi Samra 2009, pp. 160-171). These incidents fit in with ‘Aoun’s language. For example, on one occasion, he simply brushed all the inner party objections aside, by calling them a part of some “conspiracies,” set up by “marginal persons” to unsettle the country’s Christians (Mausuw’ah Michel ‘Aoun, III, p. 118). This former partisan, whose story I recounted here, considered the harsh language therein as deprecating, whereas another one, still active inside the party, lauded the former general’s ability to “tell
things as they are” (Interview 25). The difference is that the latter man considered the content of ’Aoun’s usually rather harsh and dichotomizing speeches as the right ones, the other did not.

A rather prominent recent example of dissidence is Antoine Najm, the former primary LF intellectual, who dropped out after the civil war. A party official for education, commented rather tersely that his federalization program was a model one could not apply at all to a party in Lebanon (Interview 27). Najm instead, though still affirming the broader identity formulated by the Lebanese Forces, reproaches his former party for turning towards dictatorship, thereby hurting his ideas of federalism as a general means to organize societies. Authority had once not been a problem for him. During the war, he had preferred a putschist approach for placing Bashir Gemayel at the head of the state (Ménargues 2004, p. 370), and he had willfully submitted himself to the centralized discipline of the earlier Phalanges years (Interview Najm, 2012-07-20). Yet, all that lived out of the perception the leader would still take the right decisions. Only when it became clear that Samir Geagea would not keep to the wartime version of federalism, let alone accept federalism’s deeper potential of drawing back on restrictions set by natural law, the latter stepped into the foreground as a protection against authority:

“I disagree with Samir Geagea. Not in political terms. The Lebanese Forces have been for the federation. Geagea withdraw from it, I did not accept that. [moves his hand abruptly as if to cut something]. Finally, inside the party there is no democracy. … [Sights] One experienced all day [Geagea’s] authority, as if he was a Caliph …. Why is there nothing except a dictatorship between the Atlantic and Indonesia? To have the power to quash this diversity [of the region]!” (Interview Najm)

The interesting thing about these experiences with leadership, is that the negative characteristics recounted in the examples above, are the very same ones thought to be positive qualities, especially when it comes to one man acting as if he were one man alone, wreaking his will upon history. Michel ’Aoun was praised as a “visionary” (Interview 22). Samir Geagea was described to me as:

“What gives him this charisma? … His capacity of thinking big and very important things, at least. At least! 1989, he decided to give up the weapons of the Lebanese Forces, to support the Ta’if Agreement, despite the fact that it was neither brokered inside the

283 As exactly that he sees himself: ’Aoun and Sadek, p. 21.
In Bashir Gemayel’s case, other authors experiencing the same cult of personality, have documented this enhancement of charismatic political qualities straight into the realm of prophecy (Haugbolle 2013, p. 199). The leader, as a visionary, is leading on horseback. What turned him into the simple fighters’ favorite choice was his omnipresence at the frontlines (see: Ménargues 2004, p. 50), at times unshaved, often armed, inevitably adorned with sunglasses and military fatigues. A good deal of his hagiographic pictorial representation still conveys that image, whose frequency of occurrence is only matched by those pictures capturing the moments of his ascendance to the presidency. It needs his personal “yallah” to start the construction work for an airport at Hamah (Mausuwʿah al-Quwwat, II, p. 44), the committee of the merchants of Achrafieh is of his personal concern (Ibid., pp. 33-39). He, personally, is in charge of the model state. Sometimes, this combination of seeing the major lines and being the direct source of action touches a line where things become almost unreal or bizarre. A very striking example of his tendency is the following passage out of the Lebanese Forces’ chronicle; it is not difficult at all to imagine the “genius at work,” brooding over the next large throw for the country:

“And he spends hours with reading reports and studies, which he had prepared [in advance], before he takes a decision. He dreams of seeing all the studies he had prepared to be entered into force as beneficial measures, that they are translated into reality that they touch the citizen in a chain of works. And he feels how they blend well together … their criterion: a ‘model state’.” (Mausuwʿah al-Quwwat, II, pp. 30f.)

Thus, the ability to make decisions, to rail them through, to enforce (if necessary) the modern nation-state, seems to be an overtly important part of charisma in Lebanon. The interpretational turnaround obviously occurs as soon as the interpreter is no longer able to decipher in the leader a symbolism what he expected to read; the qualities stay the same but their effect changes.

To sum up, all characterizations of the leader are based upon normativities of the modern democratic nation-state. He stands for the “ordinary men,” the patriotic, the future state to come, for dialogue, and a vision assumed to be beneficial for all – the common good. The strong tendency to interpret the respective party leader as one more or less mirroring their own biography, being an important part of their own respective life cycle, reflects the importance of the audience. That often, the very same traits of character could be read
positively or negatively, illustrates how much depends upon the side of the interpreter. Yet, who falls out of these parties does so by accusing the party leader of having lost the “true” cause. Societal dissociation is never willfully sought.

6. OVER-PERSONALIZATION AS POLITICAL KITSCH
Reciprocity seems to be an important aspect of these parties, especially when the leader, as a symbol, is no longer deciphered as expected. However, this problem is not just about different interpretations. It is deeper. It is about a central aspect of parties relying heavily on persons and having a lack of institutions. Charisma as personalized politics steps in at times of crisis, when institutions are missing or overstrained (M. Günther 2005, pp. 249ff.). Yet, the very same mechanism said to step in might lead to an even more crippled institutionalism.

Some of the portrayals of Lebanese political leaders might arouse at times, a painful silence or a grinning smile. Thus, when I presented some of the official biographical sketches to a German auditorium several years ago, one student called them “kitschy.” A “kitschy” effect can indeed be seen as a central aspect of personalized politics as such: the personification of politics as a means to overcome and reduce complex, abstract structures of modern societies in favor of a personification that is easier to be understood (Telesko 2004, p. 164). Of course, this has also a lot to do with meeting different expectations. Kitsch is nothing but a misplaced artwork (Dorfles 1969). The misplacement of a narrative is deeply dependent upon individual expectations. A LF fighter from the civil war era, would most probably not feel the untarnished heroism of Bashir Gemayel as a “martyr” to be misplaced. Yet, being misplaced is also about a certain function ascribed by a global framework of how to do partyism: integrating parts of the demos by providing for meaningful institutions of participation, allowing for stabilizing the party in those situations when interpretations temporarily differ. Charisma, so often attributed to these party leaders, often tends to undo them and leaves an impression of kitsch by aggrandizing a leader too often, too far.

Offering personalized masks for politics is especially done by evoking notions of intimacy. For example, a story taken from the “Encyclopedia of the Lebanese Forces,” where the normativity of being modern and the intimate mise-en-scène of Bashir Gemayel are in a state of contradiction, is hard to miss:

A boy is giving a speech at a convention of the party youth, al-ʿAshbal, while Bashir Gemayel is sitting in the audience. Water is slowly trickling down from the ceiling, directly hitting his
head. Bashir Gemayel neither says anything, nor moves so as not to disturb the boy. After some time, one of the functionaries’ grasps an umbrella and puts it up over Gemayel’s head. Still, the latter does not move to avoid unsettling the speaker. After the young party member ends, he applauds him enthusiastically. However, the boy does not recognize his congratulator. This would, admittedly, have been rather unlikely, since Bashir Gemayel’s portraits hung in nearly every party office, even then. Yet, for the sake of the story, we continue. The boy asks the unknown stranger who he was, just to hear the answer, “I have been a shablan\textsuperscript{284} in Beirut, and I learned from you.” (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, II, pp. 48f.)

This episode is meant to illustrate the “Sheikh’s” plainness and modesty. However, its moral is by no means subtle; it is explicitly told in advance so as to hammer the message home: Bashir Gemayel simply acted like the bigger brother to every young party member. This story, from an official account, might seem on a subjective level a bit too naïve, too direct in conveying its message. It reminds us of an often “burlesque exaggeration and naïve symbolism” that characterized the LF visual self-portrayal during the war, lacking playful subtlety (Maasri 2009, pp. 47f.). Admittedly, every symbolism is a reduction; nevertheless, it stands for a more complex meaning, only to be deciphered within the process of interpretation: politics is seldom only about policy issues but rather about conveying a sense of purpose (Sarcinelli 1986, pp. 194f.). Thus, the story above is primarily kitschy because what it conveys violates functions within a party, in a way endangering the role of the party as such. It is about intimacy blurring officially accountable positions based on regulations at their core; Bashir Gemayel was not all young partisans’ brother. He acted as the party youth’s chair in Achrafieh, later as the Lebanese Forces’ undisputed leader; positions not based upon intimacy within that normativity which the party historiographies are desperately trying to convey.

These deficits of accountability are even more prevalent when martyrdom steps in. For example, a former LF soldier commented in the TV documentary “Massacre” (Borgmann et al. 2004), that an ice-cold wind blew into his face as soon as Bashir Gemayel entered the room. The same applies to the depiction of Bashir Gemayel on a poster almost melting together the figures of him and Jesus Christ, the Christians, the party/militia, and Lebanon, in a way that is reminiscent of a watermark (see just below).

\textsuperscript{284} Singular of ‘Ashbal = cub
Reciprocity as a social contract in a formal, liberal version is bound to the immanence. That kind of sacralization related to the notion of martyrdom, eliminates mechanisms of pluralism. The martyr has sacrificed oneself for a higher cause; through his martyrdom, we see that the slain was an advocate of truth. Whereas martyrdom in general in the Middle East is not restricted to a religious background, here it means to comply with the sacred; it does not establish a reciprocal relationship, caused by its reciprocity.  

Even in its mundane versions, the cult of Bashir Gemayel offers only an emotional relationship. Admittedly, emotion is a facet often veiled by the typical judicially informed language of liberal contractualism. As such, on just a single Facebook page dedicated to him, Bashir Gemayel is praised as having been a “beautiful gift for Lebanon,” as “the best man that ever lived,” as “Lebanon’s Messiah,” “Our head’s crown,” “King of Lebanon,” and “Hero.” Those deep feelings could indeed be caused by Bashir Gemayel, and the cult established around his life and death, can easily be grasped by simply consulting one of the many panegyric platforms where adherents articulate their feelings about the “martyr president,” as the following example clearly shows:

“How many times can you hear Sheikh Bashir Gemayel and get enough of it? I witness[ed] in real life most of his speeches, and still hear them as if it was yesterday. I lived the worst and the best of these times, and still can’t get over it. His words were part of our soul, we were part of his force, and till today I will not hesitate

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285 In contrast to other authors writing on martyrdom, I do not draw a distinct line between the political and religious martyr.

to give it all. Tell me how many leaders in the past [have] gone and kept their ideology alive? Show me if those leaders make you cry and laugh at the same time. I only know one.... Thank you Lord for that beautiful gift you gave Lebanon."

However, the accountability that is an aspect of the typically liberal language of contractualism is dearly missed when emotion offers only an opting out but no institutionalized channels of reciprocity. This lack of institutionalization is a fundamental weakness of all the parties here in question. I encountered this as a criticism, particularly in one of my own in-depth interviews. An already quoted Maronite academic, stemming from a liberal, bourgeois background, left the party since he felt a lack of institutionalization. He considered the program, which he still endorsed, to be counteracted by ‘Aoun’s strong tendency to undo any kind of formal party hierarchy through the very same kind of micromanagement so typical of many authoritarian leadership styles in Middle Eastern parties, as Joseph Sassoon had shown in probably the worst case of the Iraqi Ba’ath Party (Sassoon 2012). Instead of relying on the written statutes, personal relationships allow for that degree of confidence ‘Aoun considers necessary. Thereby, the official procedures are “marginalized”:

“He does not respect the statutory framework. He appoints you to a position and when you start out working, you find out that he already charged another one with it who is going to torpedo you somehow. ... We were very satisfied seeing him against the reign of the families. But what is he currently doing? He has entrusted key positions rather to his son-in-law.

Me: That is Jibran Bassil?

He: Yes, Jibran, who is the ‘super minister’ [speaks it with a mocking tone]. ... [Michel ‘Aoun] is that much of a personalizing power that there are radically no institutions existing any more, they are a marginal thing. The essential that is he.” (Interview 22)

The man was not alone. In fact, I later learned that two of my other FPM interviewees (No. 23 and 28) had left the party in opposition to the ongoing promotion of two of Michel ‘Aoun’s favorites, Jibran Bassil and Nicolas Sehnaoui, within its framework. In August 2015, Bassil took over the party leadership from ‘Aoun with the latter’s support. Thus, ironically, the FPM introduces inner party primaries of candidates for the parliament, but functionaries protesting decisions taken by its leadership are summoned to a party tribunal for openly criticizing ‘Aoun’s decisions in the media.

287 Ibid.
288 The son-in-law means Jibran Bassil who took over the FPM with Michel ‘Aoun’s support in 2015.
The frailty of institutionalized participation is not unique to Lebanon. All parties experience the conflict between personal reign and institutionalization. Despite their wishes for active participation, members in German parties also seem to expect much more responsiveness from their parties than they are offered (von Alemann and Laux 2012). Yet, primary mechanisms of control within parties are beyond the wisdom of theories of democracy: personal contacts and the anticipation of the conditions for loyalty by their leadership (Greven 1987, pp. 72-77). The Bavarian CSU, for example, was for a long time known for a limited culture of internal discussion, although these antics have changed considerably since 2010. Instead, functionaries were often regarded as disseminators of what has already been predetermined. Yet, the party dominated Bavaria for decades and continues to do so, although with lower electoral results. Obviously, most functionaries and their addressees in the electorate, for a long time, felt quite comfortable with what was disseminated and what was collected as mood barometers from the pre-political sphere (Weigl 2013, pp. 135-144).

Probably, the most radical versions of Western European person-centered parties without meaningful control mechanisms of the party base, have been the recent examples of Forza Italia, of French parties originating in presidential campaigns, and the Austrian Peoples Party (ÖVP) that virtually threw itself at the feet of Sebastian Kurz, its new leading candidate. Kurz, as of 2017, Austrian foreign minister, virtually reduced his party to an organizational skeleton without much say in all classic fields of intraparty control such as coalition talks, establishing an electoral program or an electoral list (Profil, 2017-07-01; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 2017-05-16). That is a somewhat similar experience to the Lebanese one, although the Lebanese parties here in question, seem to be even more person-centered and far more drastic in enforcing discipline.

7. NOT FITTING INTO A PARTY
Not being in a party is indeed an interesting point. Passive deviance and those evasive strategies resulting from them (Broszat 1981, pp. 691-709, esp. pp. 697ff.; Port 2007, esp. pp. 279-286) might be an important option. That was especially relevant during the civil war, and continues to be for those depending upon political organizations as sources of clientelism, or simply feeling pressured by their possession of arms. Yet, one can leave most Lebanese parties without risking everything. Thus, in this section I will deal with the limits of identifying oneself with a party. This will first necessitate a few critical remarks on the often quite unreflected way of depicting politics in Lebanon, especially when talking about the
much-famed “civil society.” After these introductory, but necessary considerations, I will discuss two examples of activists that are non-party members but still somehow related to them. I will try to indicate these relations as well as providing reasons for them not joining parties.

In general, parties influence society more than the number of partisans alone suggests. The difficulties already arise from political identities that are related to political parties but do not necessarily involve a direct engagement with them. Therefore, many political discussions – also in Western societies – use topoi like “they all steal; they do not care at all about us”. Of the Lebanese respondents to the “World Values Survey,” 74% suspected that voters are at least fairly often bribed, and 64% assumed elections to be rigged by buying people off.289 As in the whole region, pessimism, disillusion, and apathy are widespread (Albert and Hegasy 2018). The statistics below reveal that in the highly politicized societies of the Middle East, the highest percentage of confidence in parties is in those who already have extensive experience with parties (Lebanon, Turkey, Morocco; Pakistan would have produced similar numbers). Those countries without that depth dimension or those where political order broke down in post-revolutionary turmoil (Tunisia, Egypt) and civil wars (Iraq, Libya), indicate disastrous results, testifying to frustration with the current conditions there. Yet, in those Middle Eastern societies with a history of partyism, confidence in it is significantly higher than in the US or Germany, where parties – albeit in different forms – are well established.

Table 4: Confidence in parties, measured by the World Values Survey (sixth wave, 2010-14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidence in political parties (in %)</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Lebanon</th>
<th>Egypt</th>
<th>Libya</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th>Iraq</th>
<th>Tunisia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a lot</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very much</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None at all</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Active involvement in Lebanese parties is less widespread in Christian, than in Muslim areas. However, trust in them is spread widest in those regions where partyism has been deepest, i.e. the Shiite areas, Beirut, Tripoli, al-Kurah (SSNP), and Zaghurta (Maradah). Whereas regions highly embattled during the last years (Eastern Beirut, Zahlé, Jounieh), show a considerable degree of division (Beirut) or dissatisfaction (the other two). Being scattered rather unevenly among age and occupational groups, several things could be mentioned: the younger the respondents were, the more parties were out of fashion. The unemployed (18.0% “a great deal”) and lower educated, hold parties in an esteem unmatched among all other groups. This indicates a strong outcome expectancy, whereas in the US as in Germany or Sweden, the relationship is mirror-inverted: confidence in parties is raised with the level of income. In none of the latter three countries, is one dependent on some substitute replacing the state. Another survey conducted in 2018 among first time voters, showed a voting choice based mainly on loyalty to parties (66%) or candidates (26%) than on so-called “civil society lists” (6%). The main influences on electoral choices mentioned by the respondents, were the services offered (69%), the political party (66%) or the personality running (68%) and the respective families (60%).

Thus, partyism is an obviously disputed phenomenon in Lebanon, although not as categorically, as “civil society” literature might at first indicate. It has become somewhat popular to contrast parties and “civil society.” The Lebanese garbage crisis of 2014-16 provided a new climax for this narrative. Unfortunately, this understanding of “civil society” is largely shaped by an overtly idealistic reception of Habermas’ ideal of a deliberative society (Habermas 1999). “Civil society’s” definition of being based upon a principal recognition of some “other” in society, being influenced by the ideal of the discursive mutual understanding, and not by affective solidarity (as put by: Rucht 2005, pp. 39f.), seems at times, to resemble rather some “political biedermeier” than empirics. At best, we could follow Helmut Dubiel’s insightful analysis (2001, pp. 135f.) of grasping civil society as the epitome of the tensions between an empirical understanding of it and these normative utopian ideals encompassed in the notion. Obviously, it is far more difficult to establish how far parties actually reach into this society, as the cult of civil society suggests.

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In fact, Lebanese parties are volatile, yet, they reach deeper into society than expected at a first glance. I will try to discuss two examples of activists not engaged with parties but somewhat close to them. The first interviewee (No. 7) is a Greek Orthodox in his late twenties, working as an activist for a NGO concerned with political transparency in Lebanon. Although soft-spoken, he is one of the few “rebels” in the sample. Highly enthusiastic about politics, he is not a member of a party and consciously does not vote.

Commemorating the war, the very same social practice that is ubiquitous in Lebanon, appalled him. It was the narrowness of a specific commemoration, related to a ready-made (sectarian) concept of him “as a person” that bothered him:

“(...) because my parents are from a war generation, so they have their own ideas about the other and me as a person. I did not really accept everything they told me about the war, about politics, so I have my own ideas.

Me: What ideas do they have?
He: ugh, you know, if we are Christian, we have a bad idea about Muslims, if we are Muslims, we have a bad idea about Christians, and the other is responsible for having the war.\textsuperscript{291}

His wish to leave these confines led him to react positively on the former Greek Catholic Archbishop Grégoire Haddad, one of the icons of the Lebanese left and at times, also of liberals, proposing “secularism” on TV as a condition for having “democracy.” In fact, that was a total political break with his rather conservative parents. A rupture to be continued by professing not to being religious in a traditional sense. Going to church, as some Christians inside the Phalanges indicated to me, just because societal culture expects one to do so (“But it is the society that I live in and I must accept its rules”, Interview 6), was appalling to him. The activist chose to label himself as an “agnostic,” not an “atheist,” but felt visibly uneasy talking about it at all. Thus, he broke with “sectarianism” in a rather radical way. Politically, he translated his youthful rebellion into a membership of the Communist Youth, whose sessions he attended for a short time as a teenager of 15, 16 years. Yet, he did not feel at home in the Communist Party whose strict discipline did not appeal to him. Asked why he preferred a NGO to a party he answered:

“I did not find myself a political party. It is more liberal here, it is freer. We cannot stick to one ideology ... Here, there is a little bit more space, it is freer, so I found myself here.”

(Interview 7)

In a way, this activist also fell out with the social practices of the party to whom he once briefly belonged. Yet, while he did not like the political standpoints of his conservative parents at all, he still shared something with the Communists. We could still locate him, as an independent, into a political family with them. Asked how a “secular” political landscape would have changed the actual voting behavior as of 2009, he vociferously protested that secularism would bring about a totally different mindset, changing the electoral results thoroughly, “Leaders will change and people will change their voting behavior as soon as they know it would be a totally different voting behavior.” Therefore, one could not compare this secularism to any actual result at all. Asked how to convince the other Christians to give up seats – a necessary precondition since their demographic share is below that share guaranteed to them by the “formula” – he did not even want to answer, insisting the mindset would do its work.

\textsuperscript{291} All from: Interview 7. See also Karolin Sengebusch’s work, who had another interview with him.
These answers are, of course, rather lofty, if not unrealistic. In fact, as liberation from tradition, they are utopian. They share a lot with the Communists, who are, in Lebanon, not only characterized by their insistence on planned economics, but also by their radical refutation of any kind of “sectarianism” as a social behavior (Interviews 11 and 12), e.g. not only as a political formula, but also as a mode of social behavior based upon a religious affiliation. Whereas the other parties discussed here would insist on not being sectarian, they still consider that group identity somewhat worthy, as the ubiquitous “Lebanon on behalf of the Christians” aptly demonstrates. Despite being far from “inclusive” - in fact, they exclude a lot - Lebanon’s leftists usually do not feel at home in identities provided by this affiliation. That is what the leftist singer Ziad ar-Rahbani means when singing about “all this bullshit”; a whole set of expectations of behavior, considered as “[some]thing else,” a social identity as a regulation, self-regulation, and a way to interact, deemed by some as not actually fitting to their own self-conceptions (Haugbolle 2015, pp. 189 f.). For example, Najjah Wakim, officially a Greek Orthodox, did not want to see himself as a Christian at all; he preferred to be a leftist, to whom his nominal religion meant nothing. As he stated, “It never played a role in my life.” (Interview 2012-06-18) Interestingly, the activist in question, proposed as a secular party his former one; the Communists (Interview 7). Although not actually voting for them, he obviously still holds certain sympathies, since they share parts of his habitus that appeared to be an alternative one, although only timidly hinted.

The second case, much more enthusiastic about narrating herself than the first one, is a Christian in her early forties, working for Sa’ad al-Hariri, but she is not a member of the Mustaqbal and does not plan to enter (Interview 20). She worked in PR management, largely resembling the liberal, hedonistic postmodern subject. Despite being observant, as she professed, her office is devoid of any confessional symbolisms, the decoration is intentionally a bit kitschy; pompous artifacts and furniture are located, as if to undermine the official seriousness of the many other offices I visited when getting in contact with partisans and sympathizers. This playful, deliberately designed anarchy stands in contrast to the Jaguar car in which she arrived. She truly constituted the postmodern subject, if we understood “postmodern,” not as something structural but, as Manfred Sing has observed in the case of several Middle Eastern leftist intellectuals, as passing through the experience of having witnessed a contradiction between the individual experience and the collectively shared convictions of where one came from. The subjectivity stepping into the foreground, therefore, results from a collective loss which they had not yet replaced by a new firmly established collectivity (Sing 2015, pp. 166 f.). This loss is not about everyone feeling lost, but about
those who fell out of their former in-group’s collectively felt truths. This interviewee underwent a partial falling out of the discourse and she regarded her milieu as protected currency for quite a long time. Asked about why she never entered a party, she answered:

“Because I think that I am someone who is fairly free-minded and fairly free spoken. And that I think that once you are officially part of a political party, you have to adhere to the political party line or the political party direction, and sometimes I am someone who is an individual who doesn’t always agree, and I like to leave myself that leeway of liberty and freedom.” (Interview 20)

She continued in that highly individualistic tone. She had been attracted by Michel ʿAoun in the late 1980s. As a student, she helped organize campaigns against the Syrian presence, against censorship or in support of the refugees from the south who had fled the Israeli offensive in 1996. Her family, instead, had provided two generations of Phalangists, a member of the highest party echelon and an advisor to Bashir Gemayel. It soon became quite apparent that she actually was not that far from her family’s political positions. Thus, her view on what Islam is, very much resembled a typical Phalangist discourse:

“Because Islam is not just a religion. Islam dictates as a religion, your way of life or how much money you should give to the poor. That’s part of the religion, different from Christianity. That’s more than a religion, that’s a regulation of life.” (Ibid.)

The interesting thing therein, is that she had to switch to French to express these convictions; since she had attended an Anglophone boarding school, we normally spoke in English. This judgment on Islam was quite obviously from her older, Lebanese part of education. Likewise, she mused about the necessity of establishing a “real state” as a precondition for “democracy,” very much as her family had done before. Explicitly, when asked about it, she did not see a difference concerning contents:

“No, very sadly, no. That is very sad to say, because we still have the same problems since [then], but my mother [once an advisor to Bashir Gemayel, C. T.] tells me that everything I say now and work towards, she worked towards back then [laughs] and so I am always very depressed because basically, in 50 years we haven’t really advanced on it, on any of those. Because she keeps telling me, it’s funny to hear you when I hear you preparing speeches or whatever, and I hear you saying a word which is the same word we used to say. … We’re stuck. We’re stuck in defining Lebanon. What is Lebanon? What is it to be a Lebanese? Ugh, what is your relation to the neighbors?” (Ibid.)
Even the wording of the last string of questions concerning the country’s identity, reflects very similar passages from earlier Kata’ib sources (see: chapter II.1). Also, other topoi, such as the Syrian presence (“I wanted the Syrians out since I was born”), or the thread she felt, as being posed by Hezbollah, were not far from the Phalanges. So, what kept her from entering the al-Kata’ib party? First, a more or less accidental thing; no one asked her which is probably quite telling for the post-war turbulences the party went through. Equally important, despite growing up in a deeply Phalangist surrounding, she left Lebanon during the war and acquainted another social reality far from the societal pillar her milieu had been, especially during the civil war. When studying abroad and after the war at home in Lebanon, she ran into Lebanese of all sorts of religious and political affiliations and backgrounds; this she perceived to be enriching. It denied any heroic commemoration of the civil war:

“Only, strangely enough, the Lebanese are terrible in getting together when they’re at home and the minute they’re away they become one and all goes well, and so I think this was my first real encounter with Lebanese richness, I would say. … I realized that, ugh, how interesting we are as people and how rich and varied, because I never really realized before, because I was never in contact during the civil war years. … You went to a school where people were mainly Christian, and you went to nightclubs where everyone was Christian, you went to restaurants where everyone was Christian, and the same happened for Muslims I guess.” (Ibid.)

This falling out of the original surroundings was further aggravated by the striking differences between her habitus and the one of many older Phalangists whom she contrasted, without mentioning them explicitly, with the group around Sa’ad al-Hariri, untainted by the war. The different habitus patterns were also because she shared a lot with the younger Hariri: the bourgeois background, the cosmopolitan manners and an international education at least temporarily outside of the country, torn apart by the war. Even that she lauded Hariri’s qualities as a cook, indicates something held in common: a playful use of traditional role-assets; it is difficult to imagine the likes of Pierre or Bashir Gemayel peeling potatoes or chopping onions. This is why she considered the al-Kata’ib to be “at the end of the day … a very traditional party, they come from a very traditional family.” Thus, the difference was obviously about the experience of crossing the lines, encountering a different academic

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292 Sa’ad al-Hariri had attended a Catholic [sic!] School near Sa’ida, schools in France and Saudi Arabia, a university in the US.
surrounding and, therefore, developing a habitus that has strong relations to her original milieu, but disagrees on the idea of sacrificing one’s entire life to an unshakable truth:

“[Political engagement for Hariri] is part of my life but it’s not my life. It is a part of my life that I love and that I am committed to, but it’s not… it does not INHABIT me. It’s, you know, I also have another job, … I have a social life. Ugh, it’s not as a sacrifice for me as it was for someone as my grandmother [for whom politics was] close to a marriage.” (Ibid.)

Just compare that to the older Phalanges generations. Joseph Abou Khalil indeed resembles the party’s old hierarchical teacher-student scheme (′Ishtiyy 1997a., pp. 489f.). When meeting him, he confined himself to reproducing mechanically, at times nearly word for word, what he had already said elsewhere. He used phrases like “the young generation” repeatedly. This was, of course, because he knew them by heart. He did not even think about them nor did he choose to question their content. “Forming the new generation” was what he repeated in very much cut-down sentences, without the slightest doubt if the many “new generations” that actually came in between, wanted to be trained or in which way they chose to be (Interview with him, 2012-07-18). He often started to answer my questions with a fretful groaning that showed me I asked inappropriately. The paper he gave me as a “scientific explanation,” instead of annoying him with questions, is a short apologetic (Abou Khalil, d. d.). An important reason, therefore, was that he had stood still where he had started his political life, in an organization that was all consuming for his life. He brushed off all my cautious attempts to turn his answers into questions, since both – answers and questions - were perfectly clear to him. This example is, admittedly, a blatant one, also due to Abou Khalil’s age (he was born in 1925). However, it illustrates why it could, at times, be difficult for a quite hierarchically structured party to reach out to groups with a more or less differing life experience. These differences become easily visible and could be turned into breaking lines.

Thus, both interviewees discussed in this section are “postmodern.” They both fell out of their original milieu, the first one more, the second far less. They did not feel at home in a milieu as established by conflict lines both did not share as much as others did, since both of them transgressed them; one abroad, the other one in a youthful rebellion. Yet, both hover around parties with whom they share at least central parts of their habitus, since experiencing similar events or perceiving these experiences similarly. Whereas the first example falls completely out of his original milieu, but only short of the organizational confines of a party, the second

293 Obviously, I am not the only one who faced these problems: a young Lebanese scholar whom I ran into after the interview asked me grinningly: “He did not say anything, right? He does not talk at all.”
example does not even fall completely apart from her origins. Both are thereby reflecting the sociological diagnosis of the “postmodern” not being an opting out at will nor a general erosion of the milieu as such, but a loss of hegemony of the established intellectuals and the organizations over their adherents (Vester et al. 2001, pp. 103f). Yet, even if both are about more space for themselves, this needs to address the polity dimension in which both find practical restrictions, as well as institutionalized allies they need.

At least, these findings do question the often blunt contrasting of Lebanese politicians, their partisans, and civil society. However, we need to blur this alleged contrast even further. In Lebanon, I observed cab drivers cursing politicians but listening to Radio an-Nur, affiliated with Hezbollah, or having a picture of Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah fixed to their rearview mirrors. An old half-German, half-Lebanese woman reacted to me telling her the subject of my study—political parties—that she considers them all being rather a problem than a solution. However, when talking about the civil war, she expressed exactly the position of the Lebanese Forces. People utter disdain for political leaders but at least one of them is often held in at least a moderate favor, sometimes much more.

A good deal of Beirut’s shopkeepers exhibit at least one political symbol of any kind in their shops. Therefore, their exact degree of involvement in the politics of these organizations seems at times, difficult to estimate. To get an idea about how far they actually influence society, one needed a broader analysis of their members’ personal networks (paradigmatically: Greven 1987), or a mapping of the way cultural lifestyles294 are distributed in the country and interrelated to politics (as done by: Sinus 1984; Gluchowski 1987). I, to be sure, cannot do that. However, at least I could indicate in the following sections that parties in Lebanon systematically do reach out into society to stabilize their somewhat unstable existence.

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294 Especially important for Lebanon, since vertical sociostructural inequalities have seldom led to party-organizations, a premise generally regarded as considerably important for the relevance of lifestyle-studies, see: Otte 2004, pp. 19ff
8. REACHING OUT INTO SOCIETY
We saw how Lebanese political parties emerged out of a social transformation, the densening of a public and in relation to each other, out of structural conflicts visible in their discourses. The results of these encounters became visible down to their members’ lifeworlds. One important reason why the first two tiers of social action could be translated into something like a habitus, is the way these organizations reach out into society and how they leave their marks on their adherents, which we will deal with in the following two sections.

Allowing for a “consumer membership,” Lebanese parties produce a wide array of gimmicks and commodities, also sold at normal shops or by street vendors. For the FPM, the events of 1989 are still an emotional encounter, visualized by dozens of videos and a considerable array of songs. In general, I had the impression the al-Kata’ib and the LF were more visible, more openly displaying symbols of a unique party culture. Party offices are, as long as no violent conflict prevents one party from competing, widely distributed in all Christian areas in an almost regular way.

A party office in Lebanon is not a closed-up place, where some secretary works, but a meeting point open for everyone; half bureau, half coffeehouse. People meet there in the evening, drink, eat, watch football, smoke hookah, or share their political views. Living for almost two months opposite two party offices, one of the Phalanges, the other one of the FPM, I have managed to observe their meetings. Only on rare occasions, these gatherings had a formal character. The FPM office next door organized, until the weather worsened, barbecues nearly every evening; their talk was only occasionally about politics. The participants varied, although a core, the “official members,” were present almost every night. These offices are intended to reach out into the population, to provide a venue for social encounters. The whole concept is organized on a central level but filled with life by the local committees. They hold lists of their sympathizers (Interview 26). This local visibility and expertise also constitutes an important asset for electoral campaigning. Analyzing voting behavior by applying international models in Lebanon is usually difficult. Voting is, as an election manager assured me, solely predicted by the party apparatuses upon locally known identities. The campaign managers compile voters lists and ask the local party section to inform on a family’s reputation of being close to X or Y, or being a potential swing voter. Then, the party seeks personal communication based upon that evaluation, instead of applying statistical or lifestyle-based methods to forecast the pending decision.296 Not that Lebanese do not get their political identities largely from something transgressing their family, but social control is still upheld, primary social structures are intact enough to allow for at least a wild guess on the respective voting behavior. Therefore, local cells and their outreach are of considerable importance.

Meeting in the coffeehouses of the local party centers often happens not only under the photographs of the party leader but also by accompanying the members’ leisure activities therein with “Bashir speeches” or music clips from the vast array of political “heroic” music. At rallies, members of the two “March 14” parties vow to the slain short-term president to “wander in your footsteps” (‘a da’asatak nakhna mshina), and there is a well-known song among followers, that has the same title.297 Best of compilations of his speeches are at times played via videos or DVD’s to these assemblies, as if he himself, were still speaking to the auditorium to locate the present situation of the party into a wider, historical context. Thus, the “terrorism” of our days is linked to their wartime experience and its “Dream of a

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297 One of the many videos can be found at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRjHLrnzInw, rev. 2013-12-04.
Republic.” The audience, although in its Sunday best, is cheerfully jeering and whistling to affirm his “truths” to be timeless.298

Bashir Gemayel exists on gimmicks of every kind. That is no exception as every bigger Lebanese party offers a similar array of symbols as consumer products or in a more immaterial version for festive occasions. Hezbollah has a “fan shop” in the “Dahiyyah,” selling an impressive product range from flags and portraits of its general secretary Hasan Nasrallah, to coffee mugs with his picture printed on it. There are millions of posters of leaders and martyrs in the country, martyr shrines, mausoleums, video clips, speech collections, films, pictures in private households and portraits in shops. Recently, joining the global fashion of the tattoo, some young Eastern Beirutis even have a tattoo of Bashir Gemayel on their bodies. When I was traveling by bus to Jounieh, the (Christian) bus driver set his vehicle’s aging, creaking radio to full volume to entertain his passengers with fervid “Bashir speeches.” Many of my interlocutors had photos of their respective party leaders at home. As Isabelle Rivoal (2012) has observed for the Druze in Australia, they were often positioned in a very private and intimate way; between or next to the family photos, on the desk, in the living room, etc. There is even a genre of songs, composed for these parties. Either soldierly war songs or rather cheap, synthesizer-based, highly rhythmic Arabic disco music with a strong tendency toward strength and heroism. Within the Christian sector, the LF especially, have something to offer when it comes to this specific culture; their wartime experience allows for a good deal of heroism and the communitarization of the trenches. Thus, the party not only offers books on the war, it also provides, as others do too, music downloads to arrange your own playlist of war songs. Teenagers are invited to sport events, taken out for a hike in the mountains, road and snow trips, or watch films within the party (Interviews 16 and 17). That the war, as part of this party culture, is something seductive, was also lamented by a FPM functionary, who was worried that the war DVDs and inviting children to camps, might be much more attractive than his own party’s rather bourgeois outlook that could not offer an emotional event than that of his own youth around the Ba’abda-palace (Interview 28).

All these forms of socializing and consuming are an essential part of the socialization that members undergo. The party socialization adopts the form of an ongoing curriculum. The sheer amount of “encyclopedias,” books, booklets, films, video clips etc. are an outflow of the

298 Thus, the LF put themselves a video online of one of an assembly held together with the al-Kata’ib where Bashir Gemayel is played in as an opener before one of the party-songs related to the war, follows on, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhD3-soMKfU, 2016-09-28.
idea to “inform” the audience in a literally understood way; to shape it up into a certain form, to “give form to social practices”; assuming the audience is molded by what it actually consumes (de Certeau 1988, pp. 166f.).

Parties are not always simply mapping societal conflicts in a deterministic manner; they shape themselves in the process of translating these conflicts into institutions (Wiesendahl 1996, p. 403). One of these translations, is of course, the selection of political elites as an important function parties normally fulfill (see chapter I.2). But how they do this differs widely. Neither did the thin notables parties of former times rely on organizing the process as political socialization within their own ranks, nor do contemporary heavily organized Western parties, offer patterns of socialization that are as rigidly organized as at least some Lebanese parties prefer. Whereas in Western parties, the prospective members hardly have to meet any requirements, which leads to an open process inside the party, characterized by learning on-the-job (Wiesendahl 1996, p. 414). The right-winged AfD in Germany might be a rare but interesting exception: the party elaborated in an internal conceptual paper in 2018 the necessity to bring adherents in seminars “in line” (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2018-03-09). Those Lebanese parties I dealt with in this study do otherwise. All parties alike, organize a “popular university” in the form of a speech, followed on by questions and answers. That is, of course, a global pattern. But they do not stop there.

The Phalanges’ educational system has already been described elsewhere (ʾIshtiyy 1997a, pp. 375-381). Although “training” stood very much at the root of the party, it was the effort to establish Personalism as a widely shared systematic thought among members, which compelled the party to expand its party school (Ibid., pp. 375ff.). Joseph Abou Khalil reshaped and centralized party education in the late 1950s, by putting down a curriculum to unify daily practice and ideological assumptions (Sayghiyyah 1991, p. 62f.; Interview with J. Abou Khalil, 2012-07-18). That also resulted in the establishment of steady relations between the more peripheral party branches and the center, which had hitherto, been largely based on occasional personal contacts (Sayghiyyah 1991, p. 63). Participation in these programs is encompassing, from ordinary members up to those leading a regional unit. Subjects are mostly concerned with politics, geography or the history of Lebanon and the party, with a strong emphasis on comparing Phalangist thinking with that of one of the competitors. Participants receive certificates (ʾIshtiyy 1997a, pp. 377ff.). No one wanted to tell me if the results of these teachings are indeed influencing careers. At least we can assume a “hidden curriculum” (Kohlberg 1983) to be at place.
As far as I learned from the other parties, it seems that a training regimen is rigidly, and in a disciplined manner, applied among the Lebanese Forces. There, members need to undertake courses for which they get diplomas at the end and whose marks are important for a possible career inside the party (Mazaeff 2012, pp. 273f.). Whereas the party claims, taking part in these courses happens on a voluntary base (Interview 27), it is clear that only those who attend classes can become cadres. Functionaries even inquire at public or private schools about their sympathizers; antics Mazaeff (2012, p. 273) characterizes as a tendency to substitute the parents. The party is proud of a regimen that still very much resembles the old Phalangist party culture of “training the nation.” It describes it quite openly as “information” for sympathizers and ordinary members, but “a formation” for those undergoing advanced training (Interview 27). Whereas the party offers private lessons for their teenage members, providing them with help for their exams (Mazaeff 2012, p. 273), it is more demanding with regard to those students undergoing a university education. They meet twice a week, making ample use of group dynamics, and attend party courses that are evaluated at the end. The whole way the LF described its socialization apparatus, is very much characterized by societal hierarchies emphasizing university diplomas. Results are considered a broader process of “communicating with the masses” (Interview 22), yet, these masses need to fulfill requirements.

This also includes the old idea of stripping them of an “oriental mindset,” allegedly bringing Lebanon down (Interview 17). That is no accident. It is the openly conveyed objective of the party to “try to form an elite inside the party” (Interview 4) which is set to be at the core of a better Lebanon to come:

“I, myself, in the party, in my function [as a youth-group leader, C. T.], I am enforcing discipline. At the beginning, it was a bit annoying but now they are starting to get accustomed to discipline. Maybe this is also a way to let people start functioning in a disciplined manner, which will have, in a few years, an impact, a positive impact on society.” (Interview 17)

That seems to hold a rather strong appeal since the very same functionary emphasized the “leading by example” in almost every part of his narrative. If it was his party’s former role as a militia, Samir Geagea having been incarcerated, or he, himself, appearing visibly religious, it was all about a perceived lack of responsibility being addressed by disciplining oneself, as well as society.
This firm will to “form” and nothing less, is professed as being primarily motivated by one’s own risky existence, said to be endangered by “instinctive” partisans not living up to the highest expectations provided by “reason”:

“The people that establish the membership and are inside the party constitute a true problem, because generally, you cannot bring along political questions basing [yourself] upon an affect, but it should be reason that decides. When you have a mass of partisans that is not reasonable. It won’t be able to deal with something nor to be flexible enough for grasping the difference between tactic and strategy. Just as these partisans are partisans by affect, there is an overwhelming necessity for power or, in a way, to rationalize their affiliation.” (Interview 27)

This fear of losing one’s existence is the one driving force behind that felt need to train; one has to lead Middle Eastern Christianity for whom “politics is an existential game” out of danger (Ibid.). The “conflict over life opportunities” (Dahrendorf 1972, p. 7) drives using utopian elements of forming society. How this kind of education might look became obvious when I witnessed this interviewee on a video on one of his courses. Whereas in talking with me he proved to be a well-educated scientist, among his own rank and file, he switched into broad dialect, addressing his partisans in fiery speeches that somewhat resembled a deeper voiced Bashir Gemayel, lecturing Lebanese history from a completely Christian perspective. He was not giving a campaign speech in a narrower sense, but placed the contemporary party and its members’ experience into a historical surrounding. As in the oldest Phalangist historiographies, this embedding spanned from ancient history until today, offering a closed circle of self-interpretation, hovering around the topos of the hardy mountaineer clinging to his freedom and soil. The way he spoke, the way he presented his topic, talking with a very intense voice and a piercing gaze, very much resembled this emphasis on strength and survival I discovered sooner or later in every partisan of the LF I encountered. And it resembles the way the LF narrates Lebanese history in general (For example, Harb 1985; G. Harik 2007, pp. 20-29). The party training, with its focus on discipline and the Christian existence, seems indeed to live up to their common fears of a surrounding, which is in their experience, a largely dangerous one.

The difference to German politics is that the core staff of German parties is comparatively smaller and relies upon professional expertise acquired in a professional extra partisan life. Seminaries inside German parties’ do resemble more the LF’s popular university scheme;
only grant holding students are expected to attend at least one theoretical seminary which is
neither evaluated nor does its result, or any result at all, influence a political career.

The FPM are far less rigid than the LF, but they too emphasize “training,” although less
vociferously formulated by those with whom I spoke. However, sectarianism as “primarily a
mentality” is to be overcome by raising the individual above the level he currently is on.
Instead, he needs to develop a true national thinking in terms of citizenship (Interview 28).
“One cannot abolish the political confessionalism but maintaining confessionalism in the
society” as a former FPM activist put it, demanding the very mentality had to be changed,
starting quite logically at the lowest level, the individual and the family as the place where
society reproduces itself (Interview 22). Lebanon in its present-day form, instead, is said to
constitute merely a “politically immature” society, whose citizens fear change, lacking
confidence in liberal democracy, which could only be brought about by getting away with
sectarianism (Mausuw‘ah Michel ʿAoun, II, p. 25). This starts with less fundamental
occasions, such as strategic decisions. Thus, the party’s functionaries were accustomed to the
newly forged alliance with Hezbollah after the “Cedar Revolution,” by courses of six to eight
weeks, organized to tell them what the party hierarchy considered as the new strategy. Up to
300-400 party cadres participated, taking exams in the end. The purpose here, too, was openly
professed as being “to form teachers” to allow them to form themselves as active cadres
(militants). Those who did not agree with these programs simply dropped out (Interview 22).

Yet, reaching out into society to perpetuate one’s own organizational existence does not stop
there. It might also tie into the sacred. Religious ceremonies could also be organized by
parties. Especially ‘Ashura’, which developed into a main political manifestation of being a
Shiite, is largely organized by Hezbollah and Harakah ʾAmal (Tabet 2012). In a Christian
case, the very same political reinterpretation of sacred ceremonies by organizational
“hijacking” is more difficult, given the institutional autonomy of churches, but nevertheless, it
is also done on a much lower level. One has at least to be visibly present. Thus, when the
Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Aleppo died, the FPM decorated a main road in Achrafieh with a
picture of him, adding a quotation of Aurelius Augustine to it.
Additionally, priests often take part in political ceremonies. The very active role of the Lebanese Maronite Monks inside the LF during the war is probably the most prominent case. Or, the other way around, scouts, often organized either by religious institutions or by political parties (see for example: Le Thomas 2012), do participate in religious activities of the churches. Often, party youths decorate those uncountable little figures of saints with flowers that are so typical in Christian quarters in Lebanon. Parties even build these small statues of Christian saints themselves, sometimes decorated with small allusions to the benefactor. While obviously no Christian party in Lebanon has ever proposed a religiously inspired political system as an alternative to the liberal state, most of their members are pious and the party has to locate itself in a world as explained by a religious narrative (see also: Thuselt 2016).
Media activities are just another outreach into society. During the civil war, nearly all militias and political organizations founded their own media outlets. *al-Maruni* (the Maronite), *al-ʿAmal* (the Work, the official mouthpiece of the Phalanges), *al-Masirah* (the Journey, the LF’s weekly paper), or *ash-Shaʿab al-Masihiyy* (The Christian People, another gazette of the Forces) pushed themselves into a broader public. Of these, only *al-ʿAmal* had a noticeable pre-war history. Phalangists were simply expected to have read its issues. It had a regular circulation of 35,000 papers at the early 2000s\(^{299}\), during the civil war, its circulation stood between 23% of the total readership in 1981 and 5% six years later. The decline matched a general tendency, mirroring the war’s economic effects on the Lebanese. In contrast, *an-Nahar*, the country’s leading Christian newspaper, stood at 57% (1981) and 28% (1987), respectively (Hanf 2015, p. 505). After 1975, the Phalanges launched *Saut Lubnan*, the “Voice of Lebanon”, a radio station they still own. Shortly afterwards, Bashir Gemayel tried

\(^{299}\) [http://www.pressreference.com/Ky-Ma/Lebanon.html](http://www.pressreference.com/Ky-Ma/Lebanon.html), rev. 2015-01-01.
to bolster his growing independence from his original party by establishing *Saut Lubnan al-Hurr* (Voice of Free Lebanon) as a media outlet for himself and the Lebanese Forces.

The LF had also established their own TV station, LBCI. Officially disbanded in 1994, they lost the station and struggled for years to regain control of it after 2005. It can be seen by up to 90% of all Lebanese (Nesemann 2001, p. 61). In October 2012, an Appeal Council at Beirut ordered the station to be handed back to the Forces (El-Richani 2003, p. 81, FN 38 + 39). Yet, most of the LF personnel remained at LBCI. Others migrated to *Murr TV* (MTV), originally established by the rather pro-Syrian Jibra’il al-Murr. In 1991, he launched the TV station, without having any media experience, and gradually developed it into another station of Christian “exceptionalism.” Closed down under Syrian pressure between 2002 and 2005, quite a lot of Phalanges and LF members or sympathizers are arguably employed there. ‘Aoun established *Orange TV* (OTV), a TV outlet of his own in 2007, having founded his own radio station (*Saut al-Ghad*, i.e. Voice of Tomorrow) in 2006 (Mausuw’ah Michel ‘Aoun, vol. II, pp. 35f; L’Orient Le Jour, 2006-03-06). Arguably, he interferes quite directly in program affairs.

Despite these efforts to disseminate “the truth and nothing else than the truth” (Mausuw’ah al-Quwwat, II, p. 18), the very concept of media consumption necessitates a probably unbalanced, but at least existing, reciprocal relationship between producer and consumer. This is more relevant, given the fact that regional and international media are also accessible (H. Ziadeh 2005; Rinnawi 2006). Nevertheless, given that media consumption tends to restrict itself to that information fitting into the already preexisting cognitions (Sunstein 2007; Kahan 2013), the Lebanese audiovisual media rather functions as another instrument to build up, foster, and preserve a milieu under the current conditions. Therefore, cooperation between various stations exists mainly on the unsuspicious field of entertainment formats, whereas political news in Lebanon, continues to be party orientated (Nesemann 2001, p. 56).

Over the last years, all parties have developed further media outlets by founding Web TV channels. These channels, the website and TV stations, not only spread the good news of the party’s latest standpoints, they also try to establish a full-scale coverage comprised of

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301 Informal conversation with a Phalanges-functionary in 2012.

international news or sports. The whole makeup of the respective media outlet is to try to establish coverage to allow the consumer to inform oneself, if not only from the party’s sources. In comparison, no German, American, or British party offers much beyond a news coverage that comprises anything other than announcing their positions on something.

Obviously, all three parties here in question, do invest considerable resources into producing their own party cultures by settling deep into their members’ lives. This tendency makes partisanship visible in daily lives. One rather humoristic example surely might be “Abu Samir” of the comedy series “Ktir Salbe” (“very negative”). He is a symbolized, exaggerated and caricatured personification of a political identity formed by the war experience and informed largely by his party’s specific culture. He stands for the imagined prototype of a LF partisan. Being a former militiaman, he looks a bit as if he indeed spent half of his life in the trenches, unshaven, often wearing military fatigues and sunglasses (see picture below). Having literally plastered his home with LF symbols, his musical taste would scarcely go beyond the party’s war songs. He named his son “Samir” to honor his widely sung hero Samir Geagea, whom he admires so much that he teaches little Samir about the best poet, author, etc. Lebanon ever had, who is no other than “al-Hakim Duktur Samir Geagea.” Instead Orange, the FPM’s color, is what he abhors. Therefore, he reacts sensitively to the correction marks in his son’s notebooks which resemble the ‘Aounists’ checkmark symbols. Of course, this constitutes a distorted picture, but obviously, any such personification could not be possible without a widespread ability to recognize it as standing for something perceptible. The perceptibility stems, in turn, from an auditory formed by its political affiliation.

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303 I tried in 2016 the CDU, SPD, FDP, Greens, Leftists, AfD, Republicans, Democrats, Labour, Conservative Party, Liberal Democrats. However, at least two of them offer media coverage, too: thus, the SPD owns media-holding, thereby holding shares of different newspapers; the CSU publishes a monthly (once a weekly) which tries to establish itself as a regular newspaper. In fact, it is almost completely restricted to party members.
This aspect of settling into daily lives is probably currently the most striking difference from most examples of contemporary “Western” partyism. Since the milieu-based party organization is in decline, “Western” parties turned, over several decades, into more or less professional parties that reach into the local population by explicitly organizing these contacts, especially during election campaigns and by providing irregularly for festivities and local regulars’ tables. Political party life is, therefore, less regular, less daily. Being an established, although somewhat shrinking, trademark, these parties could obviously expect to afford that they do not disappear because they are not present every day. Nor do they need to surrogate a failing state, or consider it necessary, to provide a new elite, functioning as a germ cell of the nation to come. Nevertheless, research on expectations of German party members showed these partisans, throughout all parties in question, hold a strong inclination to wish for a stauncher adherence to their alleged principles, instead of maximizing the voter turnout (von Alemann and Laux 2012, pp. 252ff.). These wishes constitute a virtual antithesis to the loss of certainties by eroding the closely knitted party and milieu structures.

When “Western” parties were still more closely related to societal milieu structures, i.e. roughly until the mid-1980s, they were likewise characterized by a wide array of societal platforms; local clubs organizing the milieu, shooting associations, Catholic associations, unions, sports clubs, peasant and craftsmen associations, hiking associations or choirs etc. (see for some local examples in Northern Germany: Naßmacher 1989). One of the most
interesting insights into how important this anchoring in their members’ lives actually has been, is provided by the experience of the German Social Democrats in the former GDR. They could not re-establish the tightly woven net of Vorfeld organizations after 1990, due to various reasons. Consequently, the former model city of the Social Democratic “counter-society,” Freital near Dresden, turned into a conservative locality, which is nowadays no less than a terra incognita, due to the SPD no longer organizing a milieu in their former bastion (Walter et al. 1993; Walter 2010, pp. 51-65).

The industrial society had created social experiences too different to be organized in catch-all parties (Walter 2010, pp. 175f.). A catch-all party without deep roots in a Vorfeld, only came with the shrinking importance of conflicts established in the 19th century. When these lines lose a part of their conflicting character, as has been the case, at least partially, with some of the old cleavage lines in the West (Vester et al. 2001, pp. 13f.), the broadest and widest scheme of social organizations - establishing complete cultural subsystems - lost their importance. Political experiences in Lebanon, instead, are hitherto still far too different to allow for more encompassing parties.

The most important difference between Lebanon and formerly pillarized Western societies is that in the latter, organizing parties and milieu was simply done the other way around; it was not the party which organized the milieu, but the milieu that organized a party (Lepsius 1973). The Catholic and Socialist examples resulted out of a total antagonism between the state and a marginalized part of society. In the Protestant agrarian and bourgeois milieu, the whole set of institutionalization and therefore also the relationship between party and “civic association” remained more amorphous. Organizing a party as just one outlet of an already existing milieu, necessitated a more powerful organizational nucleus than nearly everything Lebanon had to offer. The Lebanese state was, over a long time, too consociational to allow for such a confrontation. Moreover, no antagonism in Lebanon has been that all-encompassing. In fact, even the Christian-Muslim divide was powerful, but bound by situational mobilization, prone to fall apart into different groups due to different encounters with modernity within each sect. These groups were stabilized in organizational terms and hampered by a heavy-handed Jacobinism, rendering these fissures within, extremely visible and painful. Whereas before the 19th century reforms, the experience of minority discrimination came well before the idea of organizing political parties became an option. Therefore, there is a strong tendency in Lebanon to establish an organized surrounding, by stabilizing the mentality that brought about the parties here in question, by anchoring the party in its members’ and sympathizers’ daily
lives, with the will of carving out an organized milieu. The will to change society provides the deeper narrative for why this “pedagogical” side of the representation (Bhabha 2007, pp. 297ff.) is that much emphasized.

9. VIGILANTISM AND ARMS
Reaching out into society might also occur in forms of leaving those functions normally attributed to parties. Lebanese parties all share a much-localized view on doing politics; to be present in a locality, to control it, is not only related to the local functioning as relational identities, it also has something to do with a much-localized life in Lebanon. Whoever wanders through Lebanon’s cities and villages cannot miss the prevalence of political and religious symbols. The civil war aggravated the retreat into the respective own area. Mixed areas are accepted for work or leisure time activities, yet, many Lebanese only feel safe within their own in-group (Yassin 2012). As Chantal Mazaef f (2012) has argued, there is a widespread affiliation with the territorial space of one’s own quarter and parties try to shape this mentality into true partisanship. They also do so by organizing a kind of vigilantism that is about defending one’s own quarter and those identities associated with it.

It is safe to assume, defending the quarter would, in case of conflict, be organized by the parties as it was in 1975. Their youth assembles, mostly without visible weapons, at the quarter’s entrances or borders. As soon as it gets dark, these posts literally grow out of nowhere at every possible inroad into a given area. In case of political tensions, the quarter gets cordoned off by them. I witnessed that frequently, in a Shia quarter as well as in a Christian one. In the latter, it was mostly the LF organized young men, sitting together on camping chairs in front of their offices or near the roads leading from Christian ʿAin ar-Rummanah to Muslim inhabited Chiya, sipping their beers, smoking hookah, listening to Bashir speeches. This increased as per the proximity to the “other” (the Muslim) side. In Shia quarters, during the ʿAshura’ celebrations, men in khaki baggy trousers, black T-shirts with army vests over them, guarded the quarter’s entrances. They controlled my bag and ordered me to turn around when I got too close to a mosque where they celebrated the day. Their weapons were sometimes barely concealed. Police did not interfere; they stayed largely beyond the quarters, on the city’s main roads. Inside, a tacit agreement seems to exist that they belong to the parties.
After the civil war, it proved impossible to integrate the former Lebanese Forces’ fighters into the country’s reconstituted official armed forces. Despite Ta’if’s promise to turn militiamen into regular soldiers, by admitting them into the Lebanese Armed Forces, almost all LF fighters were denied these possibilities. Mostly Muslims were accepted in the new army. Those Christians who were admitted, were by majority newly recruited ones, unrelated to the militias (Barak 2009, p. 174). As a result, many former combatants migrated into various private professions, especially into the private security services (Perthes 1994, pp. 27f.). To utilize them could, at least at times, be a political statement, signaling a basic accordance with the principles they fought for.In the case of Hariri’s Mustaqbal block, most efforts to counter Hezbollah’s men in 2008, were organized by private security enterprises. Most drastically, these zones of seemingly autonomous party control, developed in the famous Dahiyah. Whoever takes a photograph in the capital’s southern suburbs, will suddenly discover the seemingly uninterested men sitting on plastic chairs, turning out to be Hezbollah’s security guards, who clarify the foreigner’s identity, as well as remind him that taking a picture is forbidden here because the party says so. At times, even the police run into trouble, when its men find themselves suddenly arrested for entering a Hezbollah “security zone” (CNN, 2007-06-15). Different branches of the state’s security forces do have political sympathies, such as the “General Security” being often associated by popular wisdom, with “March 8” and the “Internal Security Force” (ISF, Quwa al-ʾAmn ad-Dahiliyy), whom the Mustaqbal tried to turn into a counterweight to Hezbollah and its allies by staffing it with its own sympathizers (Picard 2012, p. 101). On many army posts, little stickers inform one of the soldiers’ respective political identities.

In Christian areas, these patterns look different. With the exception of the Dashnak run Armenian Bourj Hammoud quarter, after the war, no party has established such a rigid
control and virtual hegemony of public spaces. Yet, the parties, or those close to them, interfere with the state. This might look as banal as the following incident from a Shia quarter describes. A foreign professor hit a local motorcyclist in a narrow alley with his car. The fallen Lebanese went to the ground, quickly assured he was not wounded and called for help with his mobile. The assistance he asked for was not the police, not even an insurance agent. A few minutes later, a group of ʾAmal men popped up and started to negotiate the compensation amount. Since Lebanese are often reluctant to call the police, any group might assume such a function, whether organized by a party or not. That is by no means a unique Shiite experience: I got once the friendly invitation to call an LF-functionary when running into trouble, but only in a Christian area, since he assumed not to be of any help in a Muslim one.

For the three parties in question here, arming their members is also common, but less blatant and less easily visible. Functionaries whom I asked about this, bluntly denied it. A LF man claimed he could only defend his family “with a kitchen-knife” (Interview 4). Weapons in Lebanon are freely accessible for nearly everyone on the free market, combat clothing is sold in military shops which have mushroomed throughout the country over the last years, and Lebanese often go hunting in full military attire. Unsurprisingly, party members have access to arms. Therefore, there is no doubt that more or less all parties have armed members. The only question remaining is the one of if, and how far, the party apparatus is organizing them in these efforts.

At the Kataʾib HQ, near the Beirut harbor, I could verify that myself. Whereas at daytime, the guardsmen were unarmed, at night those at the main entrance bore arms. When I reported to the officer in charge, I saw inside his bunker-like room, a couple of armed men in khaki party uniforms with walkie-talkies. A door swung open, allowing for a short glance on dozens of semi-automatic assault-rifles of various kinds stored there. Everyone whom I asked about that, explained that they were actually suspicious of the state’s security apparatus being infiltrated. In most cases, that meant by Hezbollah and her allies.

For the FPM, on several occasions, the formation of armed groups has been reported. Back in 2007, pictures taken by security forces surfaced showing FPM members undergoing weapons training near Byblos. First, the FPM denied their involvement with the party, then it acknowledged them being a part of its security apparatus, although at least one of these

Daily Star, 2014-05-20. The Dashnak at times acknowledges that incidents involving Armenians from Bourj Hammoud are handled on short notice by the party-police itself, see: Migliorino 2008, p. 187.
photos shows university students carrying arms (Now Lebanon, 2007-01-0). 307 When American diplomatic material surfaced in 2010, it became immediately clear that all parties try to organize their armed men in case of a war. Hariri (Naharnet, 2012-05-08), as well as the future President Michel Suleiman, 308 former defense minister Ilyas Murr, 309 Amin Gemayel 310 and Samir Geagea, 311 accused the FPM of preparing their own militia with the help of Hezbollah. 312 It remains unclear how centralized these efforts are. Given the top-heavy structure of the party, it seems somewhat daring to assume their leadership knows nothing of them at all. In any case, they would probably not be a crucial contribution in military terms. Rather, they could provide a legitimizing cover-up as proof of the Lebanese character of the two Shiite parties. The party itself vehemently denies having a military or an intelligence arm (Interview 28).

The very same scheme, a “security apparatus” undergoing military training, also occurred on the other side of the main political divide. In February 2007, the Lebanese army arrested nine paramilitary armed men in Mount Lebanon province. Soon, Hezbollah accused the LF of arming its members, whereas the latter claimed those in question did not form a party militia, but were the LBCI broadcasting corporation’s official security personal (Daily Star, 2007-02-21). What this explanation means, becomes clear when keeping in mind the station’s longtime owner, Pierre Daher’s complaint of facing a virtual “armed occupation” of LBCI, then still under his direction, by members of the LF that were providing the broadcaster’s security men. He lamented not exercising any control over them at all. 313 That also the LF and the shrunken Phalangists train their members became clear from American diplomatic correspondence. 314 Samir Geagea, a frequent and talkative visitor to the American mission to Lebanon, acknowledged being able to mobilize some 7,000 to 10,000 trained fighters, since he did not

307 They can be seen at: https://tinyurl.com/yd8pjeox, and: https://tinyurl.com/yanu2p85, rev. 2015-06-04. The photographed on at least one of these pictures where Lebanese students posing with weapons. First, the FPM denied their involvement with the party, then it acknowledged them being a part of its security-apparatus, https://tinyurl.com/yaoyglia, rev. 2015-06-04: one doubts how professional a security-force made up of students could be; rather, it seems, they contribute to a broader mobilization scheme.


312 According to one Lebanese press-source, Hezbollah established a Christian unit at Jezzine, an area very close to 'Aoun, drawing its men from the FPM’s adherents, Daily Star, 2014-09-15.


believe in the official army’s ability to defend Christian areas from a Hezbollah attack. Indeed, in 2008, the actual conduct of the Lebanese army left many questions open: whereas it generally coordinated its actions with “March 8” forces, its communication with the ISF proved to be occasionally difficult (Picard 2012, p. 101). Geagea complained that his men suffered from a severe shortage of arms, when compared to the two Shiite parties and their smaller allies.\footnote{Cable from 2008-05-09, http://www.cablesearch.net/cable.php?id=08BEIRUT642, an assessment, former defense-minister Murr shared: http://www.cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=07BEIRUT1435. The US-embassy’s personal expressed its concern of diverting the LF’s or the PSP’s financial resources from their patronage- and party-organizational capabilities to buying arms could weaken them as parties.}

The less severe version of these efforts to shape the affiliation with the territorial space of one’s own quarter into true partisanship, is flagging the space. As with all other efforts undertaken by Lebanese parties, it primarily serves the purposes of acquiring organizational permanence by reaching out to a given population. By structuring a political landscape in every sense, societal socialization is meant to be channeled towards these organizations, associated with the quarter and its political identity.

Placarding, spraying graffiti, hoisting flags, at times painting murals, largely developed into a ubiquitously employed way of doing politics. (Maasri 2009; Haugbolle 2012) Parties insist on having these visualizations of their presence done by “sympathizers”\footnote{Interview with a LF-functionary, 2012-09-05.}; or partially organized by them.\footnote{The posters, motifs, etc. are delivered by the party-HQ, the local section organizes the rest, interview with a al-Kata’ib-campaign manager May 2012.} However, the LF Website, for example, provides detailed instructions on how to produce a LF stencil, how to use it and, obviously important too, how to secure the spraying in a cavalcade of at least three cars. The illegal outcome should amount to no less than 200 logos between one and five o’clock in the night - not quite the time of reputable, hard-working conservatives.\footnote{http://www.lebaneseforces.com/spraying.asp, rev. 2015-12-21. Because of this political tagging, the NGO CCER demanded in its own proposal for a new Lebanese electoral law the state to provide advertising space for all.} Thereby, the party establishes an outreach to more adventurous juvenile cultures, adopting globally consumable styles to locally established contents. The FPM is, in contrast to the al-Kata’ib and the LF, symbolically visible but comparatively underrepresented in the Christian quarters of Beirut and its surroundings. As a FPM official indicated, the reason for this is their members are largely of middle class backgrounds and do not want to spend that much time on these efforts. Therefore, the party leadership decided not to organize it centrally (Interview 25). How risky this symbolic competition might be, even under quite ordinary conditions, at times is aptly shown when partisans clash. Thus, the
Kata‘ib complained in August 2007, that several of their offices in the Christian heartland had been shot at and one of theirs was killed after a quarrel about “provocations” – flagging the village of Kahaleh with the FPM’s flags or, in another version, of tearing them down (Dailystar, 2007-08-23).319

Yet, in general, there are differences between areas. Especially the two Shiite parties (Hezbollah, Harakah 'Amal) who control mixed Sunni-Shiite quarters militarily, in a way unmatched by any other organization in the country. Compliance with “acting as if,” becomes especially necessary, as long as a potentially coercive apparatus still manages to hold sway over crucial parts of the public space (Wedeen 1999). There, the widespread frustration about this visible dominance, is often symbolically expressed by fixing political symbols associated to any form of Sunnism in their homes, shops or backyards, but usually not in public. With some exceptions (most notably Zahurta, see chapter I.5.D), in most Christian areas, there is a meaningful party competition. Not one of my interviewees ever articulated any kind of systematic persecution by the respective opponent. Not even the FPM did, although the former army chief, Michel Suleiman, suspected it in 2007 to be weaker in military terms than the LF.320 Muscle packed teenagers, sipping coffee on the street, might feel threatening for some but the difficulties of fixing posters, other than theirs, are not as dramatic as in those regions where Hezbollah, 'Amal or the SSNP patrols the streets. Despite all efforts of reaching out into society, by providing an organizational grid for vigilantism, occasional armed confrontations and intimidations are, at times, simply related to a self-help society under arms. Thus, even daily conflicts can erupt into political violence, such as in 2010, when Shiites from Hezbollah and Sunnis from the Sufi-related al-Akhbash movement, engaged in armed clashes after a quarrel between individual members and some parking spot (Al-Jazeera, 2010-08-24).

As ironic as it may sound, the enthusiasm within the parties, as well as its pessimistic opposite, alienation, stems from encounters like that, illustrating the discrepancy between normativity and the state failure in Lebanon. The normativity in question here, is for all three parties I researched, the concepts of a democratic modernity with a legitimate form of doing politics: the nation-state. All their leaders are portrayed as modern individuals but not as individualists. Their charisma does not stem from anything directly related to specific traits of character, but from being the personalized mask of bringing this democratic modernity about.

319 Also: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07BEIRUT1345_a.html.
This usually emphasizes a break with things as they are. Yet, despite all reciprocity, the leader is still towering over his party in a way that renders them too ponderous and institutionally amorphous, thus sustaining graver cases of not identifying oneself with that ideology personified in the leader. To stabilize themselves as a long-lasting phenomenon, the parties try to reach out into society by all possible means. This includes fitting into a much-localized society, under arms and afraid of being overrun by those outside of the very own in-group. One of the most remarkable traits of these organizations is the strong tendency to virtually invade their members’ lives by offering closed lifeworlds and by the inherent will to “form.” This can be both attributed to their will to consolidate one’s own organizational existence as to the will to bring about the one state they are “dreaming” of.
CONCLUSION

We have come a long way since asking what it could mean to be a “real party,” and if Lebanese parties could be among them. All these parties considered as “real parties” were surely not just part of some “colonial encounter,” but resulted from a true change within society and its expectations. This change, broadening the base of those legitimately formulating politics, was nothing but modernity. We followed up on how Lebanese parties came into existence in a broader context of bringing the demos, as a subject and as an object of politics, into existence. Some parties in Lebanon might still be family-based façades (ʾIshtiyy 2012). Yet, even they need to adapt to those patterns set by thickly organized, “real” parties. Certainly, parties in Lebanon are rather bad in a typical field of partyism - competitive elections. Yet, we saw, that parties have seldom been exclusively about elections. Their prevalent discourse was one of the demos acting. We first saw that when they emerged as a product of a new education, brought about by the emergence of a social group that could afford a “utopian-speculative reflection of the world” (Döbert and Nunner-Winkler 1975, p. 43), haunted by the shortcomings they diagnosed within their society. They translated the structural conflicts, resulting from this transformation on a discursive level, into a longing for the organic, the vigorous and self-assured, to be brought about by a radical break with the past. They addressed a demos brought about by the emergence of a public, imagining it as the subject and object of politics, situated within a world made up of nation-states. The problem with defining a body politic, no longer available as “God’s own people,” was derived from this self-articulation and provided for the immediate cause of the new parties’ coming into existence. The original model of these newly founded organizations was strongly in favor of “training society”; of bringing about a society that could only allow for the “real” state and the citizen as an allegedly “disembedded” (Taylor 2007) individual. They largely drew the self-confidence to shape society from the experience of having accessed a modern form of education. That process constituted a meaningful vernacularization. It was done with a deeply felt inner desire to do so, yet, there remains a yardstick from the outside. The necessity to fulfill this standard is seen as twofold. First, it stems from a global framework enforcing the ability to keep pace with others, often also feeding them with the orientalism of being an “unruly people” (Sharaf 1979, pp. 6f.). Second, it is always seen as a consequence of the fundamental structural change of bringing the demos in and necessitating an answer of how to obtain favorable political conditions of how to survive. To construct a secular nation-state, as
a democratic self-articulation, is seen here as the sole possibility of fulfilling the inherent premises of equality, for a group haunted by the commemorating narrative of having been dhimmis in the age of cosmologies. Yet, the deep social divides in Lebanon, especially the deeply elitist character of the country’s political system, prevented a full integration of all the thickly organized parties into it, as was the case with the Phalanges. During the civil war, largely stemming from the prevalent problem of defining what a Lebanese had to be (and what not), the “Dream of a Republic” rose to its mythologized high. Taking over the state, i.e. defining which untouchable resources could basically make up the “real” Lebanon, resulted in an unbridgeable gap between the Phalangist/LF self-conception of being the germ cell of the better Lebanon still to come and their unacknowledged Jacobinism. That radicalized, by adding a physical dimension, the already existing tendency to equate the state through a pretty narrow definition of its “personality” (shakhsiyyah, kiyyan), indirectly with the party and its milieu. This failure, in turn, gave rise to a radicalized federalism discourse that was more or less about the redefinition of the demos. Originally, the Phalangist thinking had been about “Lebanon for the sake of the Christians”; now the Christians were increasingly imagined as themselves being nothing but a demos of its own rights. The factual results emerging from these encounters with taking over power, led to a new movement, functioning much like a trawl, netting primarily through the unsatisfied within the Lebanese Christians. It staged this conflict over power, as one between sectarianism and the “legitimate state.” ʿAoun, too, emphasized the normativity of a modern democracy. He, himself, functioned as the charismatic, personalized mask of a state he equated with his movement. That this movement was no less particularistic than any of its contenders, became more obvious after 2005, when the ongoing regional confrontation between Saudi Arabia and Iran forced them to develop a more specific version of how Lebanon should be by, taking the role of Hezbollah as a primary cleavage line. One of the two versions, proposed by ʿAoun and his advisors, was overcoming the “Christian frustration” by choosing Hezbollah and its allies as a vehicle to allow for integration into a wider surrounding. That “contextualization” was imagined as offering common ground by allowing for shared untouchable resources for the “real” Lebanese state. The other side, the Phalanges and the Lebanese Forces, remained highly suspicious of the pitfalls included in these common grounds. They rather emphasized a dimmed down version of federalism for overcoming the “Christian frustration.” Both discourses were largely informed by the war, tied into meaningful processes of socialization, and borrowed from an international language, providing them with concepts to be filled with life on the Lebanese ground. The effects of the “untouchable resources” gained from these vernacularizations
could be felt down into everyday life, by recognizing each other as either “liberal” or “conservative.” Thus, modernity was seen on all three tiers of social practice: It could be seen from a structural change of bringing about an articulated demos; it could be observed in party discourses and as everyday identities embedded in a political socialization, it became visible in the lifeworld. That defies the “Black Legend” of Lebanon as having only outdated parties, not rooted in society or of the whole Middle East being untouched by modernity and allegedly, Western, but in fact, universal concepts.

However, the three parties here in question, remained rather fluid and person based, reducing institutionalized mechanisms of surviving dissent. Whereas all party leaders were seen as depending upon a reciprocal relationship with their members, these often highly emotional links were prone to failing to uphold the delicate balancing act of bringing together the need for a personalized mask of the “real state” to come and the normativity of the demos as a subject and object of politics.

Various reasons foster this reliance on leaders. They are all related to Lebanon’s instability as a “real state” within the modern age. First, consociationalism is deeply elitist. Rather than bringing the coalition parties to the table, their leaders perform important tasks of intermediating, not only between the different partners in government, but also between themselves and their respective societal bases (Lijphart 1970, pp. 49f.).

Second, a mix of a potential physical threat and the occasionally harsh economic conditions, enforced by a state incapable of fulfilling functions normatively ascribed to it, provides the background for political apathy, as well as for its optimistic opposite, enthusiasm for something better to come. The Middle East, being virtually awash with “dreams” of various kinds, is an answer to the gnawing question of how to overcome all these dysfunctionalities of not living up to one’s own wishes. The bigger the task, the bigger the hero, seems to be at times, the logic behind some personalizations.

Third, personalized politics, or charisma, is a “personalized mask of a state” (M. Günther 2005, pp. 249ff.), standing for a lack of stability and institutionalization. The Middle East is far from being stable; Lebanon was initially not even wanted back then by half of its population. Thus, all these personalizations are expressions of this ambiguity surrounding the own state and of the wishes to bring something better about.

Fourth, the structure of the parties in question, also has to be mentioned here as a prerequisite for personalized politics. In fact, hierarchies shape all of them. Their leadership is mostly
made up of the better educated. It has always been their concept to translate their knowledge into a program of transforming the tristesse of the status quo. Politics in Lebanon, if not in the whole Middle East, are largely about intellectuals as “legislators,” not merely as “interpreters” (Bauman 1987). This is about germ cells of the better community to come, not about voicing some specially flavored variant of proceduralism. This is very much about all those “untouchable resources” every society has, yet, here, with an exceptionally large amount of resources that are considered as indispensable and untouchable and, therefore, to be easily turned into breaking lines.

Fifth, “relational identities” (Joseph 2011) function as a surrogate of the state. That preponderance of sub-state identity starts at society’s lowest level, the core family, and ends with parties and sectarian communities. Thus, relational identities dominate. This is also at the core of so-called “traditional societies” that are less “traditional” (What exactly is that?), than characterized by group identities. When milieu structures still flourished in Europe, a similar kind of “clientelism” prevailed there too. The individual had to rely on the respective in-group, for example, on its building cooperatives, which, in turn, strongly favoured those “belonging to the same stable.”

However, all discourses were about a break with these alleged “traditions,” of finally bringing about a polity to allow for in- and outputs considered as being necessary for a democratic body politic. Thus, sociability was always at the center of discourses; the “Dream of a Republic” is utopian, as far as it originates in the deficiencies of the existing society, contrasting its reality with an order that could be there. The rupture, societal dissociation, was never willfully sought. It resulted from differing life experiences, aggravated by sterile hierarchical structures of teaching “the truth.” Yet, in all cases, the normativity was not about ambivalences and fluidities but on “bringing about.” It failed whenever it tried to do that, according to a ready-made blueprint, without offering protection from power.

The problem of “bringing about,” as a core asset of these vernacularizations of a global modernity, is of considerable importance for our assumptions about the region in particular, and the future of modernity in general.

First, a self-referring modernity (cf. Bauman 2000) does not exist in a country, where basic normativities of modernity remained unfulfilled; the pervasive evocation of “feudalism” as different from oneself shows that. Second, Reinhard Schulze has analyzed the Arab Revolts since 2010, as a part of a larger, longer lasting process, which also set its foot in the Middle East: the transition from a utopia of alternative models of social order (blueprint utopianism,
Jacoby 2005) into one of differing lifestyles who only strive for opportunities that do not cramp them (R. Schulze 2014). That reminds one of the distinction between creating spatial and temporal utopias; of switching from “progress” to a little space for oneself (see among others: Saage 1990 and 2005; Albrow 1997, p. 81; Jameson 2001, pp. 154-180), from enforcing a new society toward “a regulative principle, encouraging the individual to greater perfection” (Saage 1990, p. 18). Likewise, Kamal Abu Deeb, who has observed the collapse of “Hadathah,” hegemonic modernism, in Arabic writing, allowing for “a Kurdish literary output, a ’Alawite poetic discourse, a Christian accent in writing” (Abu Deeb 2000, here p. 348) sees both the options of fragmentation as a new sense for multiplicity arising. Yet, as we saw in the course of this study, even the latter option might not be without a utopianism informed by a global age of modernity: the fragmentation of the “Christian frustration” did not bring about the end of modernist discourses, and the senses for multiplicity were far from accepting every discourse as part of a legitimate plurality. Christian federalism in Lebanon, the most visible product of such a fragmentation, stems from another vernacularization of modernity (Lebanese nationalism, as distinct from Arabism). Some intellectual contributions to the federalism debate, support Abu Deeb’s argument of making alternating perspectives visible. By skipping the core essence of every utopian thinking, creating a “new man” (Richert 2005, p. 325), they document a self-restriction. Yet, an often heavily overdosed essentialism, the ostensible claim to define authoritatively what “the” Christians are or want,321 counteracts a good deal of that potential. Moreover, the less intellectualized party practice is still about shaping society. The result is about carving out a new demos, allowing for a state, according to the respective own untouchable resources. In case some “Marunistan”, as it was often ridiculed during the civil war, should be that polity, it will, inevitably, be organized as a rather conventional nation-state. It would most probably possess an administrative apparatus, a delineated space, and an identity to be constantly reconstructed, for answering the question who the disturbing “other” might be. It will be forced to cooperate on an increasing number of policy fields with other such political entities around, and it will have to regulate conflicts within its borders.

Fourth, even the dissenters lacking a blueprint utopianism, cannot be without a polity dimension. Those who fall out with parties are not abandoning the concept of bringing about a political community as an articulated whole with institutions considered to be a state, brought

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321 In its less sophisticated version this would sound like a LF-member who, asked about a Christian representative of the “March 8,” stemming from his area, remarked “nominally he is a Christian, politically he is a terrorist” since he “betrayed” his constituency by allying with Hezbollah, Informal conversation August 2012.
about by some “thou shall,” and, therefore, encompassing considerable utopian elements. At times, they were even circling around organized politics. The result might not necessarily always be conceived as “progress” of a society knocked into shape, but it is still related to an institutionalized polity, related to the concept of a demos having a say. Thus, even an imaginative utopianism is not totally imageless. In the case of the three parties discussed here, utopian elements are considerably more coercive through the availability of arms and patronage, than probably expected. The loss of a full-fledged utopianism might, therefore, still lead to the prevalence of a considerable number of utopian elements derived from the concept of modern democracy, whose reduced existence, in turn, results from the loss of a credible power perspective. In fact, the two Christian “March 14” parties will never “train” the Lebanese, according to their own vision. Thus, they lost their vision of an alternative model of society as a whole, a core prerequisite of a full-fledged utopian thinking (Saage 1990, pp. 291-298). Others did not lose a power perspective as soundly as the Christian parties here in question did. One recurrent motif was about fearing Hezbollah or the Salafists. That still has to do with alternative orders, of enforcing oneself within a polity. Additionally, the mobilization against the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, was as much motivated by the fear of getting ruled by a determined numerical majority, as well as how the current military regime illustrates how coercive the “untouchable resources” of various notions of the state could be (see our discussion in Lintl et al.2014). Thus, the contrast of a pure, enforcing thread and the hope of assuring polity, allowing for agency as citizens, is a constant companion in Lebanese politics.

The centrality of the “Dream of a Republic” discourse in Lebanon, and I dare say, in most parts of the Middle East, asks anew if “our” “Western” academic discourses, with their confidence of the nation-state withering away, and their strong normativity of the fluid, ambivalent and interstitial, allegedly juxtaposed to an enforcing utopianism, might not, at times, be misleading. No matter if Marxist theoreticians of postmodernity, such as Jean-François Lyotard (1984), or systemic theory as proposed by Niklas Luhmann (1993), have questioned the abilities to enforce antagonistic visions of order, the Middle East still shows us how enforcing potential politics still holds. The metanarratives of historism, idealism, and of moving forward (cf. Lyotard 1984), with the nation-state as their foremost form of sociability, are by no means dried out there. Thus, the question of who rules the state and forms society, stands still at the very root of fears and dreams alike. The rather existential encounters with politics Lebanon provides, should probably make us more reluctant to declare a universal age of “postmodernity,” of fluid networks and lost certainties, of states withering away. To focus
on those closest related to the rather unfashionable term “order,” political parties and the Middle East, has at times a healthy effect.
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### 6. List of In-Depth Interviews

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<td>Member of the Politbureau</td>
<td>Maronite</td>
<td>Studied, former LF-officer</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>July 2012</td>
<td>Kata’ib</td>
<td>Head of a youth group</td>
<td>Maronite</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Mid 20s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>July 2012</td>
<td>LF</td>
<td>Head of a youth group</td>
<td>Maronite</td>
<td>Works for a logistics-company</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Joseph Abou Khalil</td>
<td>2012-07-18</td>
<td>Kata’ib Member of Politbureau</td>
<td>Maronite</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Born 1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Antoine Najm</td>
<td>2012-07-20</td>
<td>Ex-Kata’ib, LF Member of Politbureau</td>
<td>Maronite</td>
<td>Historian, writer, functionary</td>
<td>Born 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>PR-Department</td>
<td>Greek Orthodox</td>
<td>Event-Manager</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>FPM</td>
<td>Educational activities inside the party</td>
<td>Maronite</td>
<td>Academic Teacher</td>
<td>Around 60</td>
</tr>
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<td>22</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
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<td>Maronite</td>
<td>Academic Teacher</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>FPM</td>
<td>Member of the Constitutive Committee</td>
<td>Shiite</td>
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<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Around 40</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>25 November 2012</td>
<td>Advisor to 'Aoun Maronite Philosopher, cultural activist</td>
<td>FPM</td>
<td>Advisor to 'Aoun Maronite Philosopher, cultural activist</td>
<td>Around 60</td>
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<td>26 November 2012</td>
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<td>28 November 2012</td>
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<td>FPM</td>
<td>Local chairman Greek Orthodox Engineer</td>
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