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**Conflict Transportation in Diasporic Space:
A Study of Lebanese Communities in Senegal and the United States**

By Octavius Pinkard

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations

University of Kent
Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Politics and International Relations
Brussels School of International Studies

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Word Count: 84,572

Abstract

This thesis seeks to advance the current scholarship on conflict transportation from the homeland to the diaspora. Focusing on the Lebanese diaspora in Dearborn, Michigan and Dakar, Senegal, it analyzes the interplay between endogenous (host state) and exogenous (homeland) conditions to determine how these factors affect group interaction. The thesis argues that socioeconomic and political conditions in the country of settlement have helped to mitigate tensions between constituent communities of the diaspora and thus prevent the importation of conflict from the homeland. Factors contributing to these dynamics include the internal features of the diaspora; the migratory trajectory of its members; mode of immigrant incorporation; political and discursive opportunity structures; and the economic opportunity structure. This thesis further argues that the absence of conflict transportation in both Dearborn and Dakar results, in part, from the framing strategies undertaken by diaspora leaders in these respective locales. They consciously framed homeland events in such a way as to forestall rather than incite physical violence, discursive confrontation and spatial separation (mutual avoidance) within the diaspora community. In the Senegalese context, the thesis explains how reactive transnationalism, which developed in response to discrimination during the colonial and early post-colonial eras, drove disparate Lebanese communities to coalesce as a single ethnic group, thus helping to preclude a replication of the core conflict that defines group relations in the homeland. This thesis introduces a new concept (legacy mobilization) to explain the strategies employed by the Lebanese diaspora in Dearborn to build a cohesive community while simultaneously protecting that community from the antagonistic frame of the homeland. This thesis is also among the first to utilize a comparative study of alternative settlement sites (one in the Global South and the other in the Global North) to research relations within a single diaspora community.

The arguments that this thesis makes are based predominantly on empirical research that was undertaken across Lebanon and in Dakar and the Dearborn area. This fieldwork included interviews with clergy, journalists, university students, officials from political parties, representatives from Lebanese civil society organizations and a range of both citizens of Lebanon and diaspora members in Dearborn and Dakar. The study contributes to the scholarship by addressing key themes that are largely understudied in the literature, such as conflict *within* diaspora communities, the impact of host society conditions on diaspora relations, and the role of homeland events at shaping diaspora consciousness and mobilization.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this project represents the culmination of an extraordinarily rewarding period of research and writing. If someone had told me that I would finish writing and then submit my thesis from Donetsk, I would have laughed. It has been quite a journey. A number of people have contributed in myriad ways to my work, and though it would be impossible to convey the depth of my gratitude in this space, I will try.

I am especially grateful to my supervisors. Dr. Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels, my primary supervisor, has been a pillar of sound guidance and support. I am thankful for all of the invaluable insights that she shared with me, for her encouragement that sustained me, and for her unwavering patience with my finicky style of writing. She has always been a tremendous and willing resource, and I consider myself fortunate to have studied under her tutelage.

I also thank my second supervisor, Dr. Yvan Guichaoua, whose expertise in conflict studies offered a perfect complement to Amanda's expertise in migration studies. I am deeply appreciative of the insights he shared. Other members of the teaching staff at the Brussels School of International Studies have read drafts of these chapters and offered constructive criticism during the course of this project. I offer my sincere thanks to Tom Casier, Harm Schepel, Yutaka Arai, Bojan Savić, Maria Mälksoo, and Albena Azmanova. Whether during our weekly seminars or in private moments of encouragement, they have all, in different ways, had a positive influence on my work.

The Brussels campus is fortunate to have an incredible staff who work extremely hard to facilitate the work of the research community. A very special thank you to Sarah Konaté, Michael Sewell, Yingqing Ben, Inez Summers, Kimberly Attard Owen, Tania Durt, Helena Torres and Alastair Ross. I also appreciate the opportunities given to me to represent the Brussels centre at a number of academic events. Each of these occasions only reinforced my appreciation of the University of Kent.

Early on in this project, Dr. Elise Féron helped me to develop and clarify my ideas, and the pivot that I took has afforded me an opportunity to discover the many facets of diasporas and conflict, as well as the Lebanese diaspora. I also thank Dr. Bahar Baser, who has helped me to understand so much more about the dynamics of positionality and ethnographic research within highly politicized and securitized communities.

My time engaging life at Kent was enriched tremendously by Moritz Pieper, a fellow researcher who has become like a brother, and with whom I have shared many memorable experiences. We enriched the coffers and depleted the inventories of many establishments in Brussels and abroad, all the while pushing each other to think more deeply about our respective areas of research. That he traveled to Lebanon to visit and check on me during my fieldwork speaks volumes about the strength and depth of our friendship.

Our small research community provided both an intellectually stimulating and socially engaging environment. Shubranshu Mishra helped us all to appreciate the human dimension of our scholarly pursuits, and had a marked effect on the way that I approached my own research. I am also grateful for the friendship of everyone within our small research community, particularly Nadine Hassouneh, Tomislava Penkova, Richa Kumar, Maïté Regemorter, John

Heieck, Anna Lavizzari, and Rob Zaman. The friendship and camaraderie of fellow PhD students from the Canterbury campus, including Rob Nagel, Camille Merlen, and Kathryn Shotton has also been a rewarding element of this experience. As a part-time researcher, my time at Kent has spanned two cohorts of PhD students on the Brussels campus. I am appreciative of the friendship and meaningful time shared with Azize, Zdena, Caitlin, Mark, Camilla, Shaymaa, Raphael, Nicolas, Azar, Nadja, Rana, Laura, Matthew, and Abdo.

The University of Kent provided financial support and other resources throughout my period of registration, support without which the completion of this project would not have been possible. The opportunity to serve as one of the editors of the working paper series on the securitization of diasporas was a truly enlightening experience, and I am especially thankful to Professor Feargal Cochrane and the Conflict Analysis Research Centre (CARC) for having entrusted me with that responsibility.

In addition to Kent, a number of other institutions and organizations have provided invaluable support. I am thankful to the International Studies Association (ISA), the Association for the Studies of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA), and the Department of Political Science, Law, and International Studies at the University of Padua for generous travel grants and conference funding that afforded me an opportunity to present early versions of chapters and receive valuable external feedback and criticism. The staff of the Arab American National Museum (AANM) in Dearborn and the National Archives of Senegal in Dakar were also extremely helpful in facilitating my work.

I am thankful to the Center for African Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, for welcoming me as a Visiting Scholar for an academic year, and to Tami Driver and Dr. Martha Saveedra for facilitating what was an unthinkably rewarding period. At Berkeley, I am also thankful to PhD students Chase Arnold and Beth Packer, and also to Kevin Eisenhauer, Minson Yen, Max Lopez, Rebecca Weinstein, and Ingrid Good for helping me to navigate Berkeley's housing maze.

I am deeply appreciative of the Institute for Migration Studies (IMS) at Lebanese American University in Beirut, where my time as a visiting researcher proved instrumental to this project. I remain indebted to Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss and Dr. Paul Tabar for making my affiliation possible, and for providing me with the resources that I needed to carry out my fieldwork.

The seminars undertaken at PRIO's Research School on Peace and Conflict offered training that proved beneficial to not only my work in the field, but also to synthesizing conflict themes with those that inform migration studies. To that end, I express my gratitude to Covi Morales Bertrand, Dr. Jørgen Carling, Dr. Cindy Horst, Dr. Jeff Checkel, Dr. Scott Gates, and the PhD students who participated in the seminars: Stian Kjeksrud, Karina Mross, Abellia Wardani, Remco Zwetsloot, Elie Mevel, Ludovico Alcorta Prochazka, Martin Smidt, Casper Sakstrup, and Julien Heredia.

One of the writing up phases for the thesis was taken up at Tallinn University, and funded by the Dora Plus scholarship for visiting doctoral students. I am thankful to the Archimedes Foundation and the European Regional Development Fund, and particularly to Joanna Liiv and Professor Carlo Cubero of Tallinn University for helping to ensure that I had a productive and rewarding experience at the university.

The 2018 general election in Lebanon was its first in nine years, and marked the first time that members of the diaspora were able to cast their votes from abroad. I express gratitude to the National Democratic Institute (NDI) for providing me with an opportunity to join its election observation mission and experience these political dynamics. I especially thank Dr. Tamara Cofman Wittes for facilitating the invitation and for her continued encouragement.

There are so many who have helped to not only inform my work, but who also eased my access to communities in Lebanon, Dakar, and the Detroit-Dearborn area via their familial, professional, and personal ties. I am especially grateful to Sadio Demba, Andre Toriz, Ramez Rahal, Hassan, Randa, Jihad Zein, Wassim, Sean Sheehan, the Ndiaye family, Rifaat Fakhri, Maya Safieddine, Kyle Herman, Rony Serhal, Ghinwa Basbous, Tracey, Rim Haydamous, Souraya Karam, “Combs”, Myriam Rahal, Christine Lindner, Hassan H, Bob Kadi, Aubai Shbib, Cyrene Chebib, Bahia Hariri, Rubina Zainab-Chahine, and the Hariri Foundation. I also express my gratitude to the anonymous party officials, journalists, university students and staff, clergy, and others who gave of their time, demonstrated their trust, and shared their rich perspectives for this project.

The support and encouragement of my family have been unconditional and beyond measure. I am thankful for all that my parents and extended family members have done and provided both before and during my time in Brussels. My sisters Natalie, Trayce and Jessica have been a never-ending source of inspiration, and it is to them that this thesis is dedicated. I hope that, in some way, I have made you proud.

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List of Acronyms

AAI	Arab-American Institute
AANM	Arab American National Museum
ACCESS	Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services
ADC	American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
ATFL	American Task Force for Lebanon
AUB	American University of Beirut
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAAO	Council of Arab American Organizations
CLAO	Council of Lebanese American Organizations
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DGGS	Directorate General of General Security
FPM	Free Patriotic Movement
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
IMS	Institute for Migration Studies
ISF	Internal Security Forces
LAF	Lebanese Armed Forces
LAU	Lebanese American University
LBCI	Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation
LF	Lebanese Forces
LSA	Lebanese Student Association
MTV	Murr Television
NBN	National Broadcasting Network
OTV	Orange Television
UN	United Nations
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Origin of the Thesis: Diasporas and Conflict

This study emerged from an intellectual curiosity about two phenomena related to Lebanon, one rooted in conflict studies and the other grounded in an emphasis on diasporas and the mobilization of transnational communities in their countries of settlement. Shain and Barth (2003) situated diasporas within international relations theory by emphasizing the role that they play as lobbies relative to the foreign policies of their homelands. In so doing, and in an effort to explain international behavior, they demonstrated the nexus between constructivism (identity shaped by a web of interactive processes) and liberalism (political engagement to pursue the interests that flow from these processes). Relative to this project, their treatment of this theme spurred a desire to understand how the constructivist paradigm applies to diasporas that emanate from homelands in which the constituent communities of the diaspora are divided by some vein of enduring conflict. Few transnational communities fit this description more aptly than the Lebanese diaspora, thus making its members an ideal focus for studying conflict transportation from the homeland to the diaspora.

This thesis embraces the view that diasporas are mobilized identity communities (Sökefeld 2006, Adamson 2012), and it started from an interest in understanding how the communities that comprise the Lebanese diaspora – communities entangled in antagonistic relations in the homeland – might mobilize towards an identity that either resists or reinforces homeland fissures. The Lebanese diaspora represents a complex, multi-faceted community for which the homeland-to-diaspora trajectory of identity formation and transformation has been afforded little scholarly attention. This study therefore focuses on the ways in which the aforementioned

web of interactive processes affects both identity and relations within Lebanese diasporic space.

Lebanon is a state afflicted by communal conflict, and in its relatively short history it has witnessed multiple political, economic and security-related crises – a devastating civil war that spanned a period of fifteen years; a wave of political assassinations in the post-civil war era; regional interference that has forestalled a durable, internal peace; and a noticeable shift from Christian-Muslim tension to a rising tide of Sunni-Shia hostility, often violent. In many ways, these dynamics have adversely affected cross-communal relations within the state and helped to sustain a cycle of conflict that has inhibited both socioeconomic and political development. Conflict is thus viewed as a systemic feature of the Lebanese landscape, and the resulting scholarship on Lebanon is defined as much by themes of conflict and crisis as it is by any other notion – except migration. In this latter context, Lebanon provides for a fascinating case of large-scale population movement and resettlement. Prior to the outbreak of the 2011 Syrian crisis, Lebanon had a population of some 4.2 million people. Its diaspora, however, consists of nine million to 18 million people, depending on how the diaspora is conceived (i.e., consisting of only the first- and second-generation, or inclusive of successive generations). Two realities are particularly salient. Firstly, much of this emigration was conflict-driven and catalyzed by sectarian discord. Secondly, the diaspora that has emerged from this emigration remains intimately connected to the homeland and practices a depth and frequency of transnational engagement not witnessed in most diaspora communities. This makes the Lebanese diaspora a particularly strong case for examining conflict transportation.

1.2 Elaboration of the Research Questions and Central Arguments

Although cross-communal conflict has been a defining characteristic of social and political life in Lebanon, and the diaspora is among the most vast in the world (in terms of both size and

geographic distribution), no studies have explicitly addressed whether the socially constructed borders between confessional communities have become more porous in the diaspora. This study seeks to bridge this gap in the scholarship by examining Lebanese communities in Dakar, Senegal and Dearborn, Michigan, guided by the central question of whether the homeland frame continues to structure relations in the diaspora. A central objective of the study is to understand how endogenous conditions affect relations between diaspora communities who shared an adversarial relationship in the country of origin. Do conditions in the country of settlement facilitate retention, remission or reorientation of homeland fissures? The study is further interested in understanding how exogenous conditions, such as politically charged events in the homeland, affect the ways in which these diaspora communities engage one another in the environments where they have settled. How do homeland events influence diaspora mobilization, projection of identity and interaction in the country of settlement?

Flowing from these questions and the empirical work undertaken to pursue them, this thesis argues that while both endogenous (host state) and exogenous (homeland) conditions affect the trajectory of diaspora relations, it is ultimately the interplay of these factors that determines whether conflict is transnationalized from the homeland to the diaspora. For the Lebanese diaspora in Dearborn and Dakar, this interplay has created a reality in which conflict transportation has not occurred. This thesis further argues that diaspora elite in Dearborn and Dakar have purposely conceived their framing strategies to deter the emergence of homeland fissures in their respective areas. This thesis also argues that new socialization norms in the diaspora have affected the willingness of diaspora members to engage in hostile acts. An additional (and related) argument that this thesis advances is that critical incidents and transformative events in Lebanon do not evoke conflict transportation to these diaspora settings, in part because the discursive opportunity structures in these settings constrain social movement framing that might undermine peaceful relations within the diaspora community.

One of the arguments of this thesis is that the interplay of endogenous and exogenous conditions and processes is crucial to explaining whether conflict transportation takes place. Endogenous conditions refer to the model of immigrant incorporation and where, along the spectrum between assimilation and multiculturalism, the societal approach rests. They also include the constellation of opportunity structures – economic, discursive and political – that limit or empower group activity in countries of settlement. Exogenous conditions are those that relate to the sociopolitical environment in the country of origin, and include events and the transnational activities of homeland institutions such as political parties, religious organisations and the mass media. Because diasporas are transnational social formations whose members maintain strong links to the homeland, these exogenous factors are particularly relevant to prospects for conflict transportation. In myriad ways, they are often at the core of boundary maintenance between groups, a dynamic which helps to sustain and sometimes escalate conflict in the homeland. In the diaspora setting, these homeland cleavages tend to emerge in the form of physical violence, discursive confrontation and/or mutual avoidance (spatial separation).

This thesis argues that socioeconomic and political conditions in the country of settlement have helped to mitigate the tensions within the Lebanese communities in Dearborn and Dakar. Moreover, attempts by diaspora elite to frame homeland events in a way that elicits cross-communal conflict do not resonate in these diaspora settings. Although isolated instances of conflict do exist, there are no prevailing patterns of physical violence, discursive confrontation or spatial separation that replicate those demonstrated in the homeland, a phenomenon which has been seen among other communities. Furthermore, where divisions do exist, they are not manifest along sectarian lines. Instead, the primary lines of demarcation are drawn according to class and time of arrival (most notably before or after the civil war). Members of the diaspora neither embrace nor internalize pejorative rhetoric as valid, nor have they sought to use these discourses to elevate the status or image of their own sect (Sunni, Shia, Maronite) at the expense

of any other. Broadly speaking, for the Lebanese in Dakar and Dearborn, conflict transportation in diasporic space has been forestalled by two phenomena – reactive transnationalism and a concept which I term legacy mobilization.

The Lebanese diaspora is widely dispersed, and although the outward migration of the civil war period was induced more by conflict than by any other factor, previous and succeeding waves of emigration have been driven as much by economic and familial considerations. The rationale for leaving the homeland has varied. So, too, have the concomitant attitudes towards Lebanon, and the nature of the relationship that exists not only between the diaspora community and the state, but also between confessional communities at home and those in the diaspora. To be sure, reasons for emigrating – fleeing as a refugee as opposed to leaving for educational opportunity or career pursuits abroad – have a direct impact on how immigrants view their countries of origin, and on how they frame interests relative to the homeland. Time, distance and events can play a critical role in these contexts, and also in terms of influencing how members of diaspora communities self-assess identity relative to their origins and to the trappings of their new or settled environments.

Relative to conflict transportation, leaving the homeland does not ensure that the grievances between communities will cease to exist. Longstanding fissures could, in fact, travel in the diaspora or reemerge in a different form (Féron 2016). What remains true, however, is that physical separation from the homeland exposes members of the diaspora to an environment with different opportunity structures and particular terms of host country reception that might alter the tenor of relations within the diaspora. This has been afforded little scholarly attention. One of the arguments put forward by this thesis is that conditions in the country of settlement matter, and have both a direct and indirect effect on the trajectory of cross-communal relations. For diasporas originating from conflict environments, a key question is whether these conditions lead those within the diaspora to reassess homegrown narratives of blame, division

and cultural exclusion. To be sure, the scholarship has generated considerable work on the relationship between diasporas and conflict, most predominantly emphasizing the peace-maker vs peace-wrecker dichotomy (Østergaard-Nielsen 2006, Smith and Stares 2007). In this context, the focus has been on whether diasporas either escalate conflict in their countries of origin or facilitate resolution of such conflicts by supporting peace processes. Baser (2015) has offered a thorough study of these dynamics relative to the Kurdish diaspora in Germany and Sweden, and Hall (2010) shared insights on how endogenous conditions affected reconciliation between Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs in Sweden. More broadly, Pupcenoks (2016) also considered how socioeconomic conditions in the country of settlement affect the prospects of what he termed “reactive conflict spillover” within Muslim diaspora communities. The importation of conflicts to hostland settings continues, however, to be an under-examined dimension of diaspora research, and emphases on intra-diasporic conflict in the country of settlement are even less common in the literature.

Social and political space in Lebanon are dominated by a core conflict that foments hostilities among communities and creates space between them. This reality has conditioned the ways in which individuals and groups pursue their relations across communities. Most of the scholarship on modern Lebanon focuses on some dimension of communal conflict, or on Lebanon as the staging ground on which regional rivalries and proxy wars are either launched or contested. When produced in the context of diaspora studies, these contributions tend to present one of three strands of emphasis: adjustment and integration in the host society; contributions of the diaspora to the host economy via commerce and trade; or the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland, including the political context and efforts to facilitate development via remittances and direct investment. The research rarely touches upon the themes emphasized in this thesis. This is surprising, given the fact that the Lebanese diaspora is among the most interconnected transnational communities, meaning that transformative

events in the homeland and conditions in respective countries of settlement should constitute a major focus of empirical research on the nature of diaspora interaction. Heretofore, this has not been the case.

The arguments put forward in this thesis draw primarily from extensive fieldwork undertaken in Lebanon, Senegal and the United States. This included interviews with members of the Lebanese diaspora communities in Dakar and the Dearborn, Michigan area. In Lebanon, it also included interviews with religious leaders, journalists, university students, representatives from civil society organizations and teachers. The combination of interviews and participant observation revealed that the homeland frame does not resonate in the diaspora.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter Two outlines the theoretical background of the thesis and reviews the principal academic discourses on diaspora and transnationalism, the two theoretical frameworks that underpin this study and are most relevant to the research questions that guide the project. It demonstrates how this study is both informed by and contributes to two major developments in migration research, namely the ‘diaspora turn’ and the ‘transnational turn’. The former emphasized the emergence of a group consciousness among dispersed communities and the maintenance of some level of connection to a real or perceived homeland. The latter focused its attention on the engagement practices of migrants, and helps to explain the implications that these practices hold for not only the homeland and country of settlement, but also the networked communities to which diasporas belong. Relative specifically to diasporas and conflict, the literature has paid scarce attention to whether core conflicts in countries of origin are replicated or perhaps somehow reoriented in diaspora settings. It has largely ignored, or at least discounted, the ways in which the core conflict in the homeland might affect diaspora relations in the states in which they have settled. The traditional peace-maker vs. peace-wrecker motif

does not speak to these dynamics. This thesis also delineates the state of the art in the empirical research on the Lebanese diaspora. In this vein, it situates the study within a noticeable gap in the existing empirical research. Most studies of the Lebanese diaspora can be easily grouped into one of two predominant themes – patterns of settlement (where emigration took place) and terms of engagement (activities undertaken by members of the diaspora to maintain economic, cultural and political linkages). Existing scholarship on the Lebanese diaspora thus concentrates on relations between the diaspora and host society and between the diaspora and homeland. Few studies explicitly examine relations within the diaspora itself, which is one of the contributions that this thesis makes to the literature. Moreover, the temporal dimension of most research on the Lebanese diaspora focuses on the period preceding the end of the civil war (1990), and therefore does not capture the potential effects of critical post-civil war events in the homeland on diaspora identity and diaspora interaction. This is an additional contribution of the current study to the scholarship.

Chapter Three explains the rationale for choosing a multi-sited ethnographic approach as the preferred qualitative methodology for this study, and discusses how interviews, participant observation and primary sources such as diaries, letters and personal journals helped to inform this study and answer the aforementioned research questions. The chapter offers a brief discussion of the debates surrounding multi-sited ethnography, and offers insights on why it is an appropriate methodology for studying a phenomenon rooted in diaspora and transnationalism. The chapter proceeds to discuss the primary strategies employed for gaining access and generating data in the field. The chapter then touches upon the notions of reflexivity and positionality, elucidating how it was necessary to constantly negotiate and renegotiate positionality depending on particular context. In terms of gaining access and generating trust in the field, for example, my status as a PhD student was sometimes more valuable than my status as an American; at other times, being an African-American proved more advantageous

for establishing a rapport with interview subjects than my nationality alone. This section also pays particular attention to the limitations of the traditional insider-outsider dichotomy that often conditions researcher approaches (and apprehensions) relative to fieldwork. Next, the chapter moves into a discussion of my engagement in the field and characterizes the interviews and participant observation that were followed in Dakar, Dearborn, and across Lebanon. The next two sections focus on ethics in the field and techniques of data analysis, and the chapter then concludes with reflections on the challenges and opportunities of a multi-sited ethnography approach.

Chapter Four discusses the landscapes of homeland conflict in Lebanon, explaining how actors, institutions and historical processes have framed the discourses and practices that shape the boundaries between communities. The aim of this chapter is not to revisit the civil war or offer expansive commentary on its causes, though certain elements of the conflict are discussed in the context of their relevance to the setting of socially constructed boundaries between communities. Nor does the chapter seek to explicate more broadly on the sociology of sectarianism. Its explicit emphasis is on the overlapping landscapes of conflict in Lebanon and how they have influenced the setting and maintenance of boundaries between Lebanese communities. This is important for two key reasons. Firstly, it is at the intersection of these boundaries that competition for social and economic resources elicits conflict; and where political competition also generates conflict among communities. Secondly, diaspora identity is shaped not only by experiences in the country of settlement, but also by memories of past experiences in the country of origin. If diasporas are self-conscious and politically organized mnemonic communities (Gayer 2007), then the nature of group relations in the homeland bears particular relevance for the construction of their identity. The chapter is therefore situated in this study to serve as a point of departure for Chapters 5 and 6, which examine whether and how the borders between communities might become more porous in the diaspora. The

maintenance or dissipation of these boundaries is critical to the development of diaspora identity (Brubaker 2005). This is especially so for diaspora communities emanating from areas affected by conflict, particularly if they have been adversarial parties to that conflict themselves. Considering the nature of boundaries in the diaspora against those demonstrated in the homeland facilitates an analysis of whether conflict transportation has taken place, and whether homeland cleavages structure identity and group relations in diasporic space.

Chapter Five examines how conditions in the country of settlement affect the trajectory of diaspora relations. It demonstrates how the social context, political environment and economic opportunity structure can play a role in influencing group relations, and thus prospects for the importation of homeland conflict. It focuses on how members of a diaspora community may be (re)socialized by the sociopolitical structures and terms of reception in the host society. Following two sections which discuss, respectively, immigrant socialization and conflict transportation, the chapter then moves on to focus on how the patterns of group interaction have been affected by three sets of factors: migration trajectory and terms of reception, the internal features of the diaspora, and opportunity structures in the host society (discursive, political, and economic). The chapter also discusses two key realities influencing patterns of interaction within the diaspora. It explains how, in Dakar, reactive transnationalism led the Lebanese to coalesce as a single ethnicity in the face of discrimination and targeting, rather than bifurcate into Christian-Muslim or Sunni-Shia spheres of contestation. It further illustrates how, in Dearborn, the diaspora has designed strategies and institutions for two distinct purposes. Firstly, its members have deliberately sought to prevent homeland or regional conflict from emerging in the local environment and disrupting group relations. Secondly, they have worked to ensure that no one within the community jeopardizes the societal standing of the Lebanese diaspora that has been cultivated over time, a status that places the Lebanese as

the vanguard of the Arab American community. These dual strategies in Dearborn comprise legacy mobilization.

Chapter Six focuses on elite framing and diaspora response to pivotal events in the homeland. The chapter demonstrates how social movement perspectives on frame alignment help to explain the strategies that diaspora entrepreneurs use for enhancing the resonance of their collective action frames. The two events considered in this context are the 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah. The emphasis in this chapter is on homeland events as possible triggers of conflict transportation, and whether the framing strategies employed by diaspora leaders incite physical violence or discursive confrontation within the diaspora, two of the primary indicators of conflict transportation. Such a focus helps to demonstrate how and whether diaspora elite within the host society are able to mobilize (or perhaps remobilize) identity towards conflict. Sökefeld (2006) noted that events are only critical when perceived and framed in a particular way. Consistent with this perspective, the chapter points out that it is not events themselves that carry the potential to trigger conflict transportation. It is, rather, the interpretation and response to these events that can foment tensions within the diaspora. The chapter focuses on the framing strategies employed by diaspora elite in Dearborn and Dakar, and on how they utilize frame bridging and frame extension to reach audiences within the diaspora to spur mobilization. Significantly, it also highlights the ways in which these community leaders make use of injustice frames and adversarial frames in markedly different ways than their counterparts in the homeland, demonstrating how these approaches have forestalled rather than facilitated conflict transportation.

Drawing on the findings from each of the empirical chapters, Chapter Seven outlines the primary research findings of the study, and also elucidates both limitations of the study and prospects for future research born of the study.

1.4 Note on Word Usage and Definitions

The terms *hostland*, *host state*, and *host society* imply a temporary or transitory relationship between members of migrant communities and the countries in which they live, between diasporas and the countries in which they have settled. This is not the intended case here, however, as it has been demonstrated in the scholarship that diasporas often span multiple generations and include individuals and families who have earned citizenship and resided in a particular country for extended periods of time. Throughout the thesis, however, in an attempt to avoid repetition, these terms are used to connote the diaspora country of settlement. For the purposes of this study, the term *Senegalese* is used to refer to African native citizens of Senegal who have no Lebanese heritage. This is an important distinction to make, as some within the second, third, and fourth generation of the diaspora in Senegal do consider themselves Senegalese. The term is employed in this manner simply to differentiate the black Senegalese population and the Lebanese diaspora in Senegal.

CHAPTER 2

Diasporas and Conflict, Diasporas and Transnationalism: A Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

The present study focuses on conflict transportation in diasporic space. It examines the question of whether the core conflict in Lebanon is replicated among Lebanese diaspora communities in the United States and Senegal. By employing an ethnographic methodology, this study aims to discover how the members of a transnational community are, in the words of Levitt and Glick Schiller, able to “simultaneously maintain and shed cultural repertoires and identities, interact within a location and across its boundaries, and act in ways that are in concert with or contradict their values over time” (2004, 1013). These dynamics are consistent with the notion that identity is malleable in transnational space, which reflects the constructivist perspective on diaspora identity, namely that it is a social construction and a co-constitutive process in which identity is developed through engagement of the international system (Demmers 2007). Hall (1990) echoes this perspective in his own study of the development and projection of cultural identity within diasporas. Moving beyond the essentialist interpretation, cultural identity is portrayed as the result of constitutive processes that shape a sense of self, not just in the individual context, but also for communities. This connotes an act of becoming, as opposed to a natural emergence (and manifestation) of continuities of identity within diasporas. This point is further made when it is noted that, “like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture, and power” (Hall 1990, 225). Given that this project has as its emphasis the study of imported conflict from homeland to diaspora, the two most relevant theoretical frameworks for understanding this phenomenon are diaspora and

transnationalism. Given its emphasis on diaspora conveyance of homeland conflict to the hostland, this project is necessarily informed by a range of complementary disciplines, including migration studies, conflict studies, diaspora studies, and cultural and social anthropology. This chapter thus constitutes a literature review of the theoretical contributions on which the research is drawn, and of the state of the art in the empirical literature.

2.2 Diaspora and Transnationalism

Two complementary theoretical frameworks that underpin this study are diaspora and transnationalism. While both are given to much debate in terms of their meaning and application, they have nevertheless been invaluable tools for helping scholars across disciplines develop a better understanding of the human dimensions of cross-border activities that take place in an increasingly globalized world. They emerged as a result of two developments in migration research. The ‘diaspora turn’, initiated by Safran (1991) focused on the emergence of group consciousness among communities that had been dispersed by a traumatic event and who maintained some level of connection to the homeland. The ‘transnational turn’, ushered in by Glick Schiller et al. (1992) was an attempt to move beyond the traditional notion that migrants departed a homeland, settled elsewhere, and then focused their activities and interests on processes related to integration in the new society. Emphasis was thus placed on the activities undertaken by migrants (diasporas among them) to maintain linkages – cultural, social, economic, political – to not only their countries of origin (Basch et al. 1994), but also to wider transnational social spaces. Transnationalism helps to explain the engagement practices of diasporas, namely how they establish, maintain, and perhaps broaden or deepen connections between homeland, host society, and the networked communities to which they belong. Importantly, transnationalism also redefines the “return” dimension of the “myth of return” found in the early scholarship on diasporas. In this sense, advances in transportation infrastructures and communication technologies have diminished the relevance of time,

distance and borders, making it such that the notion of return need not signify an act of permanence. Bridging the two concepts, Tölölyan referred to diasporas as being “the exemplary communities of the transnational moment” (1991, 3), reflecting the reality that they, arguably better than any other transnational social formation, embodied the human dimension driving the flows across transnational social space. In outlining the conceptual basis for the current study, this section offers a discussion of diaspora and transnationalism, and the debates that exist within the literature relative to each.

2.3 Diasporas and Conflict

A number of factors have combined to generate increased interest in the potential relationship between diasporas and conflict. The dissipation of the bipolar configuration of global geopolitics ushered in an era in which wars were increasingly within as opposed to between states, and were generally identity-based conflicts. Migratory flows out of these conflict zones, networks established between and across migrant communities, and the engagement practices of those within these networks vis-à-vis the homeland, sometimes exacerbated the conflict dynamics within these states. The attacks in the United States on September 11th, along with more recent attacks in Europe – Madrid, London, Brussels, Nice, Cologne, Manchester, Berlin – brought increased scrutiny of diaspora communities, as they were viewed as being potential incubators of radicalization. The attention of academics and policymakers has thus turned to diasporas largely because they are viewed as the embodiment of transnational, identity-based activities linking the homeland, however defined, and the country of settlement. For both of these locales (country of origin as well as host state), the concern has been the prospect of diasporas simultaneously importing and exporting conflict.

In this vein, academic scholarship has focused its attention on two principal motifs regarding diaspora mobilization and conflict dynamics, namely whether they are peace-makers or peace-

wreckers relative to the conflicts taking place in their countries or regions of origin (Smith and Stares 2007; Collier 2000; Adamson 2004; Kaldor 1999; Cochrane, Baser, and Swain 2009; Van Hear 1998; Shain and Barth 2003; Fair 2005; Koinova 2011b; Østergaard-Nielsen 2006; Baser and Swain 2008). The emphasis within this body of scholarship has been on whether diasporas escalate conflict by, for instance, providing funding and other means of support to insurgent groups or other combatants participating in homeland conflict, reflecting the long-distance nationalism invoked by Anderson (1998). Scholars have addressed whether diasporas are more likely to support conflict-resolution efforts by facilitating negotiations or helping to inform constructive foreign policy-making initiatives on the part of governments in their respective countries of settlement (Cochrane 2007). Research has demonstrated that diasporas often provide the financial support that sustains many peace processes (Brinkerhoff 2011). In this latter context, the assumption is that diasporas might engage in such activities out of concern for the security of family and others within the network who are residing in the conflict zone, or because they have been influenced by the conditions within the country of settlement and have both the means and the new disposition toward the homeland to support the peace process. Cochrane, Baser, and Swain (2009), for example, have demonstrated how members of the Irish diaspora in the United States and the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Sri Lanka have contributed positively to peace processes in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka. Shain and Barth (2003) have explained how diasporas not only promote democratization in their homelands, but also act to foment transnational ties between homeland governments and those in the country of settlement; this latter dynamic could be viewed as a precursor to conflict resolution. On the other hand, the research undertaken by Lyons (2007) offers a clear example of how members of Ethiopia's vast diaspora spurred conflict by responding to a political crisis in the homeland. Fair (2005) has also provided a vivid example of how diaspora engagement escalates violence, particularly focusing on the infrastructures of mobilization that have

empowered the Sikh and Tamil diasporas to more effectively intervene in conflict contexts. Also related to homeland engagement, the account offered by Hockenos (2003), which examines diaspora involvement in the Balkan wars, makes for a compelling read in terms of the multiple channels employed by members of the diaspora to engage and inflame homeland conflict. As these examples all demonstrate, and as Østergaard-Nielsen (2006) has shown in her analysis of this trope, diasporas can, and indeed do, often exacerbate homeland conflicts, but they also have the capacity, and have demonstrated the willingness, to facilitate peace. Determining factors of the trajectory of diaspora engagement with homeland conflict include the extent to which its members are affected by traumatic memories (Lyons 2006), the nature of the initial emigration from the homeland (either by way of direct experience or as experienced indirectly via narratives from first-to-subsequent generations), and perhaps the moderating effects of conditions in the country of settlement (Koinova 2011a).

These examples are indicative of more than simply the varied realities of the relationship that exists between diasporas and conflict. Significantly, these examples also demonstrate that the scholarship has been focused predominantly on the role of diasporas relative to the homeland context, largely ignoring or at least discounting the ways in which the core conflict in the homeland might somehow affect diaspora relations in the countries in which they have settled. More particularly, scarce attention has been paid thus far to whether the core conflict in the homeland is reproduced or somehow reoriented in this setting. A dearth of scholarship exists on whether homeland conflict is reflected in the interactions between communities in this regard, and the current study of relations within the Lebanese diaspora is situated within this gap in the existing literature.

In the Lebanese domestic context, social and political space are dominated by interlocking strands of conflict, most of which are linked in some way to identity. The boundaries between communities have developed and been sustained largely by a constellation of historical

dynamics, purposeful manipulation and instrumentalization, and the pursuit of individual and group interests.

2.4 Defining and Debating Diaspora

Over the past three decades, there has been a surge in the scholarship on diasporas (Safran 1991; Vertovec 1999, 2005; Sheffer 1986, 2003; Cohen 1997, 1996; Shain 2000, 2002, 2007; Brubaker 2005; Sökefeld 2006; Clifford 1997; Shain and Barth 2003; Bauböck 2010; Adamson 2012, 2016; Lyons 2006, 2007; Koinova 2010, 2011, 2018; Demmers 2007; Cochrane 2015; Ragazzi 2014; Adamson and Demetriou 2007; Brinkerhoff 2009). The genesis of increased scholarly consideration of diasporas was ushered in by Safran (1991) in his seminal article in the inaugural issue of the journal *Diaspora*. The framework that he outlined has served as an enduring base from which the emerging scholarship has emanated. Fissures have, however, emerged within the field. Heightened interest in diasporas as the primary drivers of transnational processes has given rise to disagreements among scholars about the application of the term *diaspora* itself. There is no real consensus on what constitutes a diaspora, or on the extent to which temporal, psychological, territorial, or mobilizational considerations should be paramount among the factors that determine whether a migrant community has, in fact, evolved into a diaspora. An additional point of contention, and it is an abiding one, is that the term is being applied so loosely and so broadly that it is losing the essence of its intended meaning, or as Brubaker (2005) notes, it has lost its discriminating power. It is now being broadened to the extent that it encompasses nearly all categories of migrant – ethnic and racial minorities who live outside of the country of their ancestry, but may have no connection, either real or imagined, to that homeland; guest workers; students studying and living abroad. Tölölyan (1996) asserts, for instance, that the discursive power of groups now claiming diaspora status has effectively modified the original paradigm. It should also be acknowledged that the term itself is homogenizing. It overstates similarities and mutual interests (Humphrey 2004), while

at the same time implying that “dwelling here assumes a solidarity and connection there” (Clifford 1997, 269). This is not automatic, but is contingent on a combination of historical, cultural, and political processes, both in the country of settlement and the country of origin.

No less significant is the disagreement over whether diaspora simply implies ethnic identity or necessitates political engagement, a dichotomy between an essentialized conception of group consciousness, solidarity, and being versus one predicated on notions of mobilization. As an appropriate point of departure for considering the varied perspectives on diaspora, it is instructive to begin with the framework put forward by Safran, as it was his article in the inaugural issue of the journal *Diaspora* that helped to launch the modern era of diaspora research. The ensuing scholarship has informed academic and policy discourses in significant ways, and the perspectives imparted by these works are discussed further in this section.

Safran (1991, 83-84) conceived of the diaspora as being one in which the members of a minority community shared six fundamental characteristics:

- had been dispersed to two or more locations outside of the home country
- were pessimistic about prospects for integration and acceptance into the host society
- shared a collective myth of the homeland
- longed for an eventual return to the homeland, which they viewed as the ideal home
- maintained a linkage with the homeland
- shared sense of commitment to support the security and economic prosperity of the homeland

There existed, then, a triadic relationship between the home state, host state, and the dispersed population. With the home state, the dispersed peoples, bound by a collective identity and a

shared sense of historical experience, maintained a connection by way of either economic linkages, or cultural and social ties. For Safran, the experience of the Jewish communities captured this best, and was thus the predominant point of reference for the early scholarship on diasporas. Traditionally, diasporas were then conceived as a people scattered as a result of a traumatic event. As seen in later works, however, this was no longer perceived as an exclusively Jewish phenomenon, but one that could also be applied to other groups, such as Armenian (Tölölyan 2000), Greek (Clogg 1999), and Kurdish (Van Bruinessen 1998), all of which shared, to varying degrees, the tenets of the model outlined by Safran. Cohen (1997) notes a duality of the diasporan reality – that its members covet the security and stability of the country of settlement, and the opportunities that can be more easily pursued in such an environment; and at the same time, they have a strong desire to maintain the ties that they have with not only their homeland, but also to others within the diaspora network who may reside in other countries. The definition offered by Swain and Phan is rather consistent with that of Safran, in that they view diasporas as “transnational communities formed when people migrate from their country of origin to live in one or more host countries, but maintain identity with the ancestral homeland” (2012, 161). The authors identify catalysts such as poverty, armed conflict, and the possibility to enhance the standard of living by relocating. Though not explicitly delineated above, one of the implications here is that these uprooted peoples, including those who did so voluntarily, not only maintained a group consciousness and shared sense of identity, but they also established communities where they settled; they actuated that sense of identity and organized around it to build communities that would help to both maintain and strengthen that identity while navigating an environment in which their identity could possibly become diluted or even obsolete due to the pressures and practices of integration and assimilation. Sheffer (1986) alluded to this when he argued that there must be some degree of internal organization,

in addition to the existence of a distinctive collective identity across international locations and ties to the home country.

Brubaker (2005) has offered a set of three criteria that he argues should be evident if a community is to be considered a diaspora. They are dispersion, the existence of a homeland orientation, and boundary-maintenance. Brubaker leaves it open to interpretation whether the dispersion should be one that is voluntary or forced, and also makes an important acknowledgement in this context, namely that the border crossing activity could, in fact, be the result of border construction as well as migratory movement. Orientation to a real or perceived homeland contributes to the development of diaspora identity. Because the act of migration itself can be such a disorienting experience, the homeland can serve as a reference point for belonging and value, particularly if those who constitute the diaspora have been confronted with discrimination, or their competencies are valued differently in the host society (Féron 2017). The third of these criteria, boundary-maintenance, refers to the maintenance and projection of a distinctive collective identity that sets the diaspora apart from the host society. Boundary-maintenance is, according to Brubaker, realized through a range of means, including endogamy or spatial separation in the respective host states in which the diaspora exists. Brubaker makes an important distinction about boundary-maintenance and its inverse, boundary erosion, noting that both processes are typically inter-generational and extended. The question of boundary erosion bears relevance in the study of the Lebanese diaspora, as the phenomenon has been witnessed in the ways in which Christian members of the diaspora often shed their Lebanese identity and adopted the identity of the host society. He further asks the question which he notes is especially germane to diasporas, particularly to what extent and in what forms boundaries are maintained by second and subsequent generations (Brubaker 2005, 7). The discussion of boundary erosion and boundary-maintenance is relevant not only to the existence of diasporas in the general sense, but especially so when considering diaspora

communities that are comprised of groups who were rivals in the country of origin. For communities emanating from fragmented homeland societies – societies in which they were rivals engaged in either physical violence or discursive confrontation – the development and maintenance of a collective identity in the diaspora presents interesting theoretical questions. How did this distinctive, collective identity (and solidarity) develop? How have they been able to reconcile competing conceptions of the homeland? This focus on the diasporization of fragmented communities is an understudied dimension in the research. The current study addresses this by examining how the social structures and terms of reception in the host society affect the mobilizing practices and social organization of diaspora communities. It elucidates, for instance, how the Lebanese in Senegal coalesced as a single ethnic group in the face of rampant discrimination and hostilities, and how this solidarity has been maintained. It further demonstrates how, in the context of Dearborn, Michigan, the diaspora has mobilized to limit conflict diffusion from the homeland and to promote peaceful coexistence among the Lebanese communities who constitute the diaspora.

Butler (2001) agrees with the view of Safran that dispersal of the community must have been to at least two states, and that there must exist some form of group self-awareness and a discernible relationship between the members of the diaspora and the homeland. She does, however, add a proviso, noting that in order to be considered a diaspora, the migrant community must span at least two generations. She argues that this temporal dimension is necessary because it “combines the individual migration experience with the collective history of group dispersal and regeneration of communities abroad” (Butler 2001, 192). This approach not only adds depth to the concept, but also provides a framework that allows a clear distinction to be drawn between diasporas and what might simply be thought of as migrant communities. For this latter category, it is not a given that its members maintain links with the homeland, or that they enjoy any degree of solidarity within their ranks. In her innovative work on Kurdish and

Turkish diaspora communities in Sweden, Baser (2015) has offered a study that focuses on second-generation members of the diaspora, and her work illustrates what both Butler and Brubaker have alluded to as a fundamental goal of such research, namely to assess generational continuation in diasporic space. In a similar vein, Hess and Korf (2014) have researched the political mobilization of second-generation Tamils in Switzerland, and demonstrated how identity and disposition toward host society engagement were transformed. Butler (2001) has further argued that diaspora should be considered as a framework for the study of a specific process of community formation, and not merely as an ethnicity. Specifically, she notes that “because diasporas have unique characteristics distinguishing them from other types of communities (i.e., nomadic, migrant), it should be possible to create a research approach applicable to any diasporan group. It is this approach that constitutes diasporan study, not the group’s status in itself” (2001, 194). To this end, she proposed a framework for diaspora research that covers five issues:

- Reasons for, and conditions of, the dispersal
- Relationship with the homeland
- Relationship with the host states
- Interrelationships within communities of the diaspora
- Comparative studies of different diasporas

She further argues that migration studies are relevant in the early phases of a diaspora’s existence, but would be less applicable over the course of that diaspora’s history because migration studies does not prioritize factors such as the relationships among diasporan communities (2001, 195). She outlines as a primary goal the development of a framework that distinguishes diaspora studies from ethnic studies. This would help to avoid reifying ethnic

groups and adopting an essentialist perspective on diaspora communities. It further helps to avoid the trap of methodological nationalism.

Cohen (1997) has offered another conceptualization of diaspora, and the typology that he outlined focuses on a comparison of diasporas by qualifying the character of each community. One of the virtues of his approach was that it offered a perspective on diaspora that moved beyond a primary emphasis on victimhood and sought to elucidate the main reasons that the initial dispersal occurred. He identified five forms of diaspora: labor (Italians, Indians, Filipino); trade (Lebanese, Chinese); victim (Jews, Armenians, those sent/brought across borders for the slave trade); imperial/colonial (British, Portuguese, Ancient Greeks); and cultural (Caribbean). It is certainly the case that the Lebanese diaspora became so synonymous with trade (particularly in West Africa) that it seemed to validate this system of classification outlined by Cohen (Arsan 2014; Bierwith 1999). Diasporas are, however, far too internally complex and too diversified in their host and homeland pursuits to fit neatly into such limiting categories. This is one reason, for example, why this study has intentionally avoided referring to the Lebanese diaspora as a conflict-generated diaspora. There are multiple, overlapping rationales and reasons for dispersal, and no single catalyst may be confidently assigned to categorize the entire transnational social formation. Moreover, group consciousness and a transnational imagination of community may not emerge until well after the initial migration. To be sure, it can be said that there are conflict-generated communities within the diaspora, but the development of group consciousness and solidarity is not assured within these communities. It requires organization and mobilization (Bercovitch 2007; Adamson 2012). The complex dynamics of diasporas are further demonstrated in the work of Vertovec (1997), who discussed best practices for both approaching the study of diaspora and recognizing trends in the field. He also analyzed what he viewed as the emerging conceptualizations of diaspora in the literature, and outlined three dominant meanings: diaspora as a social form (consistent with

and based upon the same triadic relationship offered by Safran); as a mode of cultural production (in the context of global media facilitating exposure, interactions, embraces, and adaptations of symbols and other objects that have the power to influence notions of heritage and nostalgia, and thus culture); and as a type of consciousness (awareness of multi-locality, development of a sense of identity, and an ensuing use of this cognizance to spur engagement of the public sphere in the host country). A significant point raised by Vertovec (1997) here is that diaspora phenomena need to be approached by way of both structure (historical conditions) and agency (the meanings held and practices conducted by social actors). He deems the historical perspective as indispensable to understanding how and why some diaspora communities change across space and time, as they react to not only their environment in the country of settlement, but also to events transpiring in the state or region of origin. Attuned to this perspective, the empirical chapters of this thesis, informed in part by multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork, have sought to explain, for instance, how opportunity structures and terms of reception in the host society have affected the Lebanese diaspora community. Similarly, they examine how pivotal events in the homeland can also influence the diaspora community.

This line of reasoning put forward by Vertovec brings to mind what was shared by Shain (2000) in his discussion of the evolution of Jewish identity and practices in the United States. Being in diaspora and living a successful, comfortable life in an environment of political plurality, social inclusion, and tolerance affected the nature of the relationship that many in the American Jewish community had with Israel. Though Israel was the homeland, the Jewish diaspora in the United States appeared to, as Clifford noted in a different but no less applicable context, “sustain connections with more than one place while practicing non-absolutist forms of citizenship” (1997, 9). This involved no questions of allegiance, but rather a realization on the part of America’s Jewish diaspora communities that being home could easily imply being either

in the US or in Israel. Harkening back to the work of Vertovec (1997) and his thoughts on the value of using an historical perspective to understand the social dimension of diasporic change, the 1967 shift in Jewish attitudes towards Israel and their own identity was remarkable. The Six-Day War was an unmistakable turning point for two relationships – between the American Jewish diaspora and Israel, and the relationship among those in the Jewish diaspora in the United States. It was not the war alone, itself the manifestation of yet another struggle, but rather the victory – the convincing victory – that served as a trigger to elevate the sense of Jewish national *and* diasporic pride. It was, as Shain put it, “the zenith of heroic Zionism for Jews in search for a new identity” (2000, 180). The building of synagogues, the open and proud donning of religious attire, and the celebrations of a renewed and revitalized sense of identity were all manifest in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, which provided for the Jewish diaspora in the US a renewed sense of pride in their heritage. This was not unlike the experience of the Lebanese diaspora in Senegal during and after the July 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and Israel (Leichtman 2013). A dormant diaspora community, content with a life out of the public spotlight (and conditioned to best pursue individual and collective interests that way), suddenly put aside its traditionally cautious approach to navigating social space in the country of settlement by participating, some 3,000 strong, in street protests in Dakar. In response to this conflict, the diaspora emerged as more visible and vocal, and with no inhibitions about openly professing Lebanese identity and pride in Lebanon; this was a new manifestation of collective identity and allegiance to the homeland. This response to an event transpiring in the country of origin affected attitudes and sentiments toward that homeland, as well as relations within the diaspora community in the country of settlement.

Sökefeld (2006) has lamented the dearth of scholarship on the role played by homeland events at shaping diaspora consciousness and mobilization. Addressing this need, Koinova (2018) has conducted a study of critical junctures and transformative events, and demonstrates how the

positionality of diasporas affects the ability to mobilize in response to these events. She further illustrates how these two categories of events influence diaspora mobilization differently, and shows how events taking place anywhere within a diaspora's transnational social space can catalyze mobilization. It is an innovative contribution to the field, but the theme remains understudied, which is surprising given the intimate ties that all scholars acknowledge to exist between diasporas and their real or imagined homelands. It is within this developing literature that Chapter 6, with its emphasis on diaspora response to homeland events, is situated, thus filling a noticeable gap in the literature, while at the same time offering new insights into the dynamics of a diaspora community for which no such empirical study has been undertaken.

2.5 Diaspora and Identity

The development, maintenance, and perhaps evolution of diaspora identity are integral for understanding relations between diaspora and homeland, as well as the nature of interactions that those in diaspora have with the host society and others within the diaspora network. Brinkerhoff (2008) notes that diaspora identity is defined by hybridity, which is to say that it does not fully reflect identification with the culture and values of either the homeland or the country of settlement. Hybridity implies that it is shaped by (and reflects) both the host society and the homeland, and is therefore conditioned by the encounters experienced within both contexts. Temporal and spatial distance from the homeland also has an impact on identity construction. Gayer (2007) argues that diaspora identity is predicated upon the reconstruction of homeland memories to suit the needs of the present. In this context, he views diasporas as developing a group consciousness and collective identity based on shared memories of the homeland, and argues that this collective identity is also not a mere replication of either homeland or host society. It is also possible that diaspora identity develops not as a result of nostalgic musings about a mythical homeland, but rather as a response to experiences in the host society. Taken from the transnationalism literature, the concept of reactive

transnationalism helps to explain how a turn toward in-group solidarity could potentially serve as the basis for the development of a collective identity (Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002). Negative experiences with the integration process, including systemic discrimination and exclusion are factors that prompt such a circumstance. These dynamics are particularly relevant for this study because the Lebanese diaspora is comprised of groups whose memories of the homeland are often characterized by the traumas of war or a history of marginalization. Similarly, they may encounter in their respective host states differing varieties of intolerance or discrimination; for example, targeting as a result of state securitization practices because they originate from the Arab Middle East. The research questions that underpin this study are all tied to these dynamics, as they examine, for instance, how the core conflict in Lebanon affects diaspora relations; how events in the homeland influence interactions within the diaspora; and how conditions in the host society affect diaspora organization and relations. These all speak to the potential for exogenous and endogenous factors to influence group consciousness. This study embraces the notion that diasporas (and therefore diaspora identity) emerge as a result of mobilization practices. It has been argued that diasporas result from strategic social identity construction that is undertaken by a mobilizing elite (Adamson 2012). In a similar vein, Sökefeld had argued, for instance, that there can be no imagination of community or emergence of diaspora identity without the discursive construction of that imagination of community through social mobilization (2006, 26-27). This holds implications for Brubaker's (2005) boundary-maintenance criterion, as it implies that there can be no preservation of a distinctive, collective identity without organized efforts to maintain it, i.e. mobilization. Chapter 6 of this thesis gives specific consideration to elite framing in response to developments in the homeland, and examines precisely how diaspora elite mobilize toward preserving this collective identity and the solidarity that comes with it.

2.6 Transnationalism

Migration is often the first major step in the recalibration of the relationship between individuals and the states in which they live. The scholarship on transnationalism illustrates the increasingly complex linkages (and their implications) that exist between country of residence and country of origin, and provides a framework for simultaneously considering the role of the sending and receiving communities in migrant behavior (Castañeda, Morales, and Ochoa 2014). This has proven especially relevant in the context of the increase in localized ethnic conflict and intrastate violence, and the cross-border migration that has often emerged as a result. Broadly conceived, transnationalism might be thought of as the ways in which people and institutions are linked by multiple ties and interactions that take place across national borders. Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton-Blanc (1992) launched the focus on migrant transnationalism with their attempt to reconceptualize migration and the migrant experience as being located in a “transnational social space” between origin and destination countries, replacing assimilation. Scholarship produced in the 1990s, at the advent of the transnational turn in migration research, focused initially on the social relations and other linkages that migrants established and maintained across their homelands and where they settled. In the ensuing decades, research expanded beyond homeland-hostland dynamics and began to demonstrate that the networks maintained by migrants (diasporas among them) extended beyond the homeland and encompassed kin and those perhaps of similar ethnic or religious background elsewhere (Vertovec 2009; Faist 2000; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

The transnationalism literature has helped to explain the range of linkages that have been established by various migrant communities, including diasporas. Some of the scholarship that has informed the field include those that have emphasized the political dimension (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Bauböck 2003), the cultural field (Hannerz 1996; Appadurai 1996), economic ties (Guarnizo 2003; Portes 1996); and transnational social fields (Vertovec 2009; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Faist 2000). Levitt and Glick Schiller

(2004) make a distinction between ‘ways of being’ and ‘ways of belonging’ in transnational social fields. The key in this context is consciousness, whether the migrant is actually cognizant of the transnational activities in which she is engaged. Ways of being refer to routine social relations and practices, whereas ways of belonging refers to practices that are indicative of identity and signal membership or affiliation with a particular group. The latter “combine[s] action and an awareness of the kind of identity that action signifies” (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, 1010). In essence, it is conscious identity projection.

Scholars such as Tilly (2007) have used transnationalism to emphasize the social ties that immigrants maintain and expand with their countries and regions of origin. Levitt (1998) has used the concept to explain how social remittances influence cultural change in homeland villages. She defined social remittances as “the ideas, behaviors, identities and social capital that flow from receiving- to sending-country communities” (1998, 926). Although there has been debate within the literature about whether transnationalism is indeed a relatively new phenomenon, or whether scholars have simply applied a modern veneer to a longstanding practice of cross-border engagement, research that has emerged since the 1990s has contributed a great deal to the understanding of relationships among original homeland, country of residence, and the scattered network of clans and communities that constantly navigate the physical, social, economic, and political space between the two (Bauböck and Faist 2010). Itzigsohn and Saucedo (2002), for example, focus on what they term resource-based transnationalism, a concept which holds that high levels of success abroad in both professional pursuits (the accumulation of wealth) and social integration lead to higher levels of transnationalism. These accomplishments, and the ease of being able to navigate multiple worlds, are seen by migrants as a source of prestige, both for the individuals who have achieved them and, indirectly, for the communities from which they have emigrated. In their comprehensive treatment of the American immigrant experience, Portes and Rumbaut (2006)

include a discussion of how economic success abroad can assign to members of the immigrant community an enhanced social status in the country of origin, a status they may lack or be unable to achieve in the country of residence. In the Lebanese context, inhibiting factors might include lack of access or an unwillingness to access the clientelist networks that control the distribution of economic resources. It might also involve disruptions in economic opportunity that have resulted from domestic or regional conflict. In a general sense, earning potential abroad has been much higher relative to similar opportunities in the homeland, thus affording members of the diaspora the capacity to simultaneously sustain higher standards of living and offer financial support to networks of family both in the homeland and spread across the diaspora network (Jabbra and Jabbra 2005, Abdulrahim 2009).

Another vein of emerging research on transnationalism focuses on the ways in which immigrants respond to negative experiences in their countries of settlement. Reactive ethnicity or reactive transnationalism is one concept used to explain such developments (Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002). This concept centers on the idea that discrimination, hostility, and exclusion from the majority population in the country of settlement will lead to a “rise and reaffirmation of ethnic solidarity and self-consciousness” (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 152). The authors are keen to point out that this turn toward the in-group is not a development that emanates from a willful avoidance of integration within the majority society. It is deemed to be the result of patterns of discriminatory behavior from that majority society. This could take the form of unequal access to the labor market (discrimination in hiring practices or level of salary), targeted policing (racial or ethnic profiling), or more broadly, it may involve physical or discursive confrontations aimed at intimidating or harming those who are part of immigrant populations. When the response is framed in religious terms, and is characterized by the perception of systemic social exclusion and an embrace and projection of “orthodox religiosity as a form of resistance against non-accommodating Western modernity” (Torrekens and Jacobs

2016, 326), the concept is termed reactive religiosity. More commonly, the scholarship refers to reactive transnationalism to describe the broad range of activities in which migrants engage with their homelands in response to prejudice and hostility where they have settled. In their study of migrant populations in Rotterdam, for instance, Snel et al. (2016) outline these three categories of pursuits as economic activities, political activities, and sociocultural activities, and argue that as migrants experience increasing levels of discrimination, the more transnationally involved they are likely to become in those three domains. Economic activities involve, for example, donating to charities that are based in or related in some way to the homeland, or increasing financial contributions to friends or family members in the country of origin. Economic activity might also entail buying or renting a place of residence in the home country as a way to either establish or reestablish a connection in that context. Political activities include becoming involved in organized activities focused on the country of origin, such as political parties, civic organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The sociocultural domain includes making visits to the country of origin, increasing the frequency of contacts and communication with family members and friends who remain there, following media outlets that are based in the homeland, and becoming increasingly involved in cultural events related to the homeland. Taken together, this set of activities serves to strengthen the ties between members of an immigrant community, including diasporas, and their real or imagined homeland. This becomes especially significant when considering diaspora communities that originate from homelands in which society is divided or affected by conflict. In the Lebanese context, for instance, increased exposure to homeland dynamics also means increased exposure to the actors, institutions, and framing processes that have set and maintained the boundaries between homeland communities. This could carry implications for relations within the diaspora if reactive transnationalism ultimately leads members of the diaspora to view and engage others within the diaspora through the lens of homeland conflict

narratives. The securitization of migrant and immigrant communities (including diasporas) has become an increasingly common phenomena (Cochrane 2015), particularly in the post-September 11th climate of heightened acuity towards those originating from conflict-affected states and regions. Subsequent incidents in Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany have raised the specter of radicalization and therefore of potential threats to the security of states in which migrant and immigrant communities live. The conflict in Syria has also compounded these concerns because of the foreign fighter phenomenon that has emerged in Europe. Governments have responded by targeting particular communities for enhanced surveillance. Securitization by the state and discrimination by the majority society marginalize immigrant communities and may elicit such a turn towards reactive transnationalism. In the burgeoning literature on conflict transportation, reference is made in this context to how discrimination in countries of settlement can catalyze an inward turn towards an embrace of religious, ethnic or other markers as a coping mechanism and, relatedly, to the development of interest in the conflicts taking place in the homeland, conflicts that are often born of ethno-religious fissures. A byproduct of this could be the development of tensions between opposing groups in a given country of settlement (Baser 2015; Perrin and Martiniello 2011).

But is transnationalism indeed a relatively new phenomenon? Mügge (2011) points out that transnationalism includes those cultural, economic, and social relations with the homeland that were previously researched in studies of return migration, including the sending of remittances and, in terms of political activity, the mobilization of migrants by political parties in the country of origin. And Morawska (2001), focusing on the political engagement of immigrant communities towards the end of the 20th century, argued that those diaspora groups were taking part in the same kinds of activities that constitute what scholars today refer to as transnationalism.

Regardless of whether transnationalism represents a recent or more established set of practices, most would agree that advances in technology (and the diffusion of that technology) have greatly facilitated the ease and pace with which these interactions take place, thus making it much easier for individuals to be exposed to new imaginings of identity in a transnational sense. Advances in communication and travel technologies and infrastructures have also facilitated the development and expansion of long-distance networks (Castells 1996). Globalization has been key to this evolutionary process, and because of the diminished relevance of distance and time, transnational communities continue to emerge and are far better positioned today than ever before to engage in a range of economic, social, and political activities (Mandaville 2001). And though some scholars (Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003; Smith 2000) emphasize that the modern era of transnationalism represents a break from the past, the reality is that, even if new activities have been added to the repertoire, the general objectives and motivations remain the same. The primary difference is that today, migrants and those in the diaspora are able to do more, and to do it more quickly, more frequently, and more freely, making their actions both more visible and perhaps more effective.

2.7 The Lebanese Diaspora

The literature on the Lebanese diaspora reflects the rich history of the community and its migratory movements, as well as provides valuable insights on the nature and implications of its domestic (i.e. host state) and transnational engagement practices. It is, however, limited in its scope. Most of these works offer discussion of some vein of homeland or host state relations, and in the context of the former, emphasis is typically placed on the fact that the homeland is constantly affected by some vein of conflict (typically conflict among its constituent communities). Yet very few studies have addressed whether and how this homeland conflict might reproduce itself in diasporic space, to wit: Does sectarianism travel in the diaspora? Secondly, the corpus on the Lebanese diaspora is generally focused on the period prior to the

signing of the Taif agreement which ended the long civil war, a fifteen-year war that shaped boundaries of exclusion and confrontation between Lebanese communities. This means that the majority of the existing scholarship has not considered how diaspora identity (as well as diaspora relations) might be affected by transformative events that have taken place in the homeland since the conclusion of the civil war. This is a significant gap in the research, given that attachments to the homeland (and transnational engagement with it) are important influences on diaspora identity. The current study addresses both of these gaps in the existing literature.

Broadly speaking, the existing literature on the Lebanese diaspora may be cataloged according to two major themes – patterns of settlement and terms of engagement. The first set of studies focuses on the particular regions that were chosen (or became) the initial sites of Lebanese settlement after emigration from the homeland. The emphasis in these works has been on the factors that catalyzed the dispersal from Greater Syria, Mount Lebanon, or Lebanon (depending on the period of emigration), and this body of literature addresses the interrelated questions of why (causes), where (destinations), when (timing), and who (demographics). These provide the origin story of the diaspora, how the stage was set for group consciousness and communities to develop. In this context, the scholarship has focused its attention on four primary regions: North America (Naff 1985; Gualtieri 2009; Waldrige 1997), West Africa (Arsan 2014; Winder 1962; Bierwith 1999; Leichtman 2010; Akyeampong 2006; Boumedouha 1990), South America (Lesser 1996; Knowlton 1992), and Australia (Humphrey 1998, 2004; Batrouney and Batrouney 1985; Tabar et al. 2010). The second group of studies places an emphasis on the engagement practices of the diaspora as they relate to either the homeland or the country of settlement. For the former, this entails activities such as lobbying, the sending of remittances, support for economic development, and engagement during the civil war (Pearlman 2014, Trent 2012, Hourani 2007).

The literature on the Lebanese in West Africa places an emphasis on the prominent role of the Lebanese as a so-called middleman minority, detailing the transition that many of them made from emigration to capital accumulation. Most of the works on the Lebanese diaspora in this region are focused on the colonial and early post-colonial periods. This is one of the major shortcomings of this body of literature, namely that there are few studies that offer treatment of the Lebanese diaspora in the post-civil war context. The contribution by Arsan (2014), which offers a comprehensive treatment of Lebanese engagement in the region, can be viewed as a modernization of the seminal, but dated, article from Winder (1962) that chronicled the migratory patterns of the Lebanese to the region. Leichtman (2010, 2006) has offered perhaps the most illuminating recent scholarship on the Lebanese in West Africa. Hers are not only deep ethnographic accounts of the Lebanese diaspora community; they also demonstrate the transnational dimension of the Lebanese reality. Arsan and others (Boumedouha 1990, Akyeampong 2006) have outlined important dynamics related to Lebanese positionality and group relations. Importantly, they demonstrate how the Lebanese began to not only position themselves as a “European” middle class between the colonizers and the colonized, in the region, but also as middle class to distinguish themselves from the new arrivals from Lebanon. He also notes that religious differences did not prevent Lebanese immigrants from engaging in commerce across confessional lines, a practice that has engendered an enduring legacy of cross-communal tolerance and peaceful group interaction. Akyeampong (2006) highlights Lebanese patterns of immigration and settlement, and emphasizes the localized pattern in which extended families moved from particular villages and regions in Lebanon and all settled in specific districts in West African colonies. Bierwith (1999) similarly notes how entire clans from southern Lebanon emigrated and settled in Côte d’Ivoire. The significance of these patterns is that a sense of community existed even in the early days of Lebanese settlement in West Africa. An important reality for the Lebanese in the region, however, was that many of

them were unwilling to integrate into African society, but also unable to gain acceptance into European colonial society. They remained “a group apart” (Bierwith 1999, 79). This was also outlined in the early scholarship by Winder (1962), who noted how the Lebanese found themselves in a social environment that was essentially between two worlds, neither of which was one to which they could belong. Arsan (2014) demonstrates how the Lebanese were frustrated by their exclusion and sought integration by adopting the middle-class lifestyles of the Europeans. With minimal prospects for belonging to any of the non-Lebanese communities in the West African countries in which they found themselves, the Lebanese began to increasingly invest both time and resources in their own communities. Their ascent in the realm of private enterprise alienated many of the local black businessmen, who felt as though national political leaders were showing undue favoritism towards the Lebanese, even offering them terms not available to black entrepreneurs (Leighton 1979). The endogamy of the Lebanese community and the practice of hiring mostly Lebanese labor further alienated the local black population, who already felt that by the transition period to independence, the Lebanese controlled too large a share of the national economy across West Africa. The Lebanese were already considered a cohesive community. They began to turn even further inward in the face of hostilities. It should be noted that there were clearly discernible divides even within the Lebanese community. Bierwith (1999) outlines the distinction between *les durables* and *les nouveaux*, with the former consisting of the established families who had lived in Cote d’Ivoire for multiple generations. The *nouveaux* were predominantly those who arrived after 1975, when they had fled the civil war. According to the literature, the tensions between these groups were a direct result of a lack of trust. The established families had all come together in successive waves of emigration, largely from the same villages or sub-regions and separated themselves from the *nouveau*, whom they viewed as morally tainted by internecine warfare (van der Laan 1992). Significantly, primary cleavages that did exist within the Lebanese communities in West

Africa were not based on religion, but rather on this temporal distinction of arrival before or after the civil war, and with or without kinship connections to established families. This would carry implications for the prospects of conflict transportation, yet no research has been conducted, save for the work by Leichtman (2013) on relations within the diaspora since the end of the civil war.

The Lebanese diaspora in the United States is predominantly Christian, yet the bulk of research produced on the community in the United States focuses on the Muslim community within the diaspora. These works emphasize that it had been more difficult for Muslims to integrate in the United States because many of the Muslim immigrants maintained strong Arab identity (Naff 1993), and those who arrived after the start of the civil war held strong Arab nationalist sentiments that were born of events taking place in the home region (Waldrige 1997). Elkholy (1966) drew a contrast between the community in Toledo, Ohio and in Detroit, Michigan, noting that in the latter, the members were predominantly working class laborers at the Ford Motor Company who lived close to one another, reinforcing many of the traditional religious practices and cultural norms. According to Elkholy, this did not prevent integration, but it most certainly delayed it. By contrast, the community in Toledo consisted mostly of white-collar managers, many of whom owned restaurants or other small service-oriented businesses. They engaged in frequent interaction with the host society, thus facilitating their integration. Abraham (1989) has argued that Arab American political culture, including that of the Lebanese, is dominated by contrasting integrationist and isolationist orientations. The former group consists of a professional class who was either born or educated in the United States and is eager to reconcile their identity with the dominant culture. The isolationists were predominantly comprised of relatively new immigrants who were more socially conservative and religiously devout. They were resistant to integration and to losing any core features of what they perceived as their homeland identity. Gualteri (2009) elucidates the early struggles

of 'Syrian' immigrants with the notion of belonging. She notes that some were eager to claim whiteness as a means of gaining citizenship and avoiding the racialization of Arab immigrants. Others from the initial waves of migration to the United States emphasized in-group solidarity and focusing on promoting Lebanese nationalism (or, more broadly, Arab nationalism). Much like the work of Leichtman on the Lebanese in Senegal, Khater (2001) offered a nuanced approach to his study of the Lebanese diaspora and the social implications of migration. He demonstrates how migrants returning to Lebanon from the United States acquired trappings of American social life and consumerism that were at odds with the norms in their home villages. His emphasis on the relationship between gender roles and socioeconomic status and migration was a novel approach to research on return migration, and on the Lebanese who had emigrated to the United States and South America.

The scholarship on the Lebanese diaspora has focused mainly on the geographies of settlement and on the ways in which members of the diaspora have engaged both the homeland and their respective host societies. The homeland dimension has focused predominantly on topics such as remittances and activities related to the period of the civil war. The works that place an emphasis on host state dynamics have been largely dedicated to themes such as integration, relations with the broader host society, the entrepreneurial exploits of the Lebanese abroad, and the organized lobbying activities of the Lebanese, primarily in the United States. This is to say that existing research has tended to focus on relations between the diaspora and homeland, and on relations between the diaspora and the host society. There are few studies that explicitly examine relations within the diaspora itself, and this thesis contributes to filling this gap in the literature. Additionally, the temporal frame of most research on the Lebanese diaspora is focused on the period preceding the end of the civil war and therefore does not capture the potential effects that critical events in Lebanon might have on diaspora identity and diaspora interaction. Are the boundaries between communities more porous now that the hardening

effects of the civil war no longer play on their psyches? Because diasporas are transnational identity communities intimately tied to the homeland, transformations in homeland dynamics have the capacity to influence the ways in which diaspora identity evolves and is projected. The current study addresses this gap in the existing scholarship by way of its examination of diaspora response to two major post-civil war events in Lebanon.

2.8 Lebanese Diaspora and Transnationalism

A high degree of transnational activity has long been a core feature of Lebanon's emigrant communities, and its diaspora is considered among those most intimately connected to its homeland (Tabar 2016). This is no coincidence, but rather one of the many symptoms of Lebanon's institutional development deficit. The state has proven itself unable to develop and maintain social infrastructure or to provide for the social welfare. The members of the diaspora have become indispensable at underwriting both, thereby acting as a proxy for the state in terms of providing what the state lacks the resources to finance and the capacity to deliver. It is this enduring juxtaposition of weak state / empowered diaspora that has sustained the latter as both a prominent and necessary actor in the homeland.¹ A parallel phenomenon of active participation is also manifest in the political sphere. Lebanese abroad have been especially active in the range of avocations traditionally associated with politics – lobbying, organizing rallies and campaign events, contributing money to parties and interest groups, and voting (Humphrey 2004; Trent 2012; Koinova 2011a). An abiding reality, however, is that the most effective way to influence domestic politics within Lebanon is to lobby the governments of states who exert the most influence on Lebanon's political leadership. Decisions of

¹ Those who comprise the diaspora have been a primary source of funding for the construction of schools, roads, childcare facilities, hospitals, and clinics across Lebanon. Through direct financial support to NGOs and civil society organizations – many of which are sectarian based – the diasporas have provided safety nets for the more vulnerable members of society in the homeland. The level of remittances sent by the diasporas regularly constitutes between 22% - 24% of the country's GDP. And even in the midst of the global financial crisis, the diasporas maintained their commitment and actually increased the total of their remittances each year from 2008 through 2010.

consequence are rarely the product of electoral results or grassroots pressure from citizens residing in the country. Other actors, notably Iran, Saudi Arabia, France, and the United States play a central role in this context. Paradoxically, this makes homeland politics an inherently transnational enterprise, requiring networks across the diaspora to engage Paris, Washington and, indirectly, Riyadh and Tehran, in order to influence decision-making in Beirut. Political efficacy is a function of transnational engagement. National political organs are weak by design so that influence can easily be exerted by external powers (Traboulsi 2007). This is to say that, for members of the emigrant community, transnationalism is more duty than option. The necessity of engagement makes the Lebanese diasporas a fascinating case study of transnational activity, and especially of the extent to which the tenets of this concept are applicable to a widely dispersed community that embodies its ideals perhaps better than any other.

Those who comprise the Lebanese diaspora have been a primary source of funding for the construction of schools, roads, childcare facilities, hospitals, and clinics across Lebanon. And through direct financial support to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) – many of which are sectarian based – the diasporas have provided safety nets for the more vulnerable members of society in the country of origin. The level of remittances sent by the diasporas regularly constitute between 22% - 24% of the country's GDP. And even in the midst of the global financial crisis (perhaps because of it), the diasporas maintained their commitment and actually increased the total of their remittances each year from 2008 through 2010.

Smith and Guarnizo (1998) characterize these kinds of activities as examples of transnationalism from below, which consists of the grassroots transnational practices of migrants and migrant communities to engage their countries of origin economically, culturally or politically (Itzigsohn et. al. 1999; Mahler 1998). Shain (1994) has demonstrated the role of

diasporas in lobbying their host governments, and in their countries of settlement, the Lebanese diaspora communities have also been active at lobbying, mostly with an emphasis on foreign policy towards Lebanon and Syria (Skulte-Ouaiss and Tabar 2015). This actually illustrates an interesting and enduring reality of domestic politics in Lebanon: the most effective way to influence domestic politics and decision-making in Lebanon is to lobby the governments of states who exert the most influence on Lebanon's leadership. Thus the diaspora communities routinely engage Washington and Paris as the primary conduits of interest articulation and claims making relative to Beirut. Decisions of consequence are rarely the product of electoral results or pressures from citizens residing in the country. Other actors, notably the United States, France, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, play a central role in this context.

Private citizens are not the only actors who take part in activities spanning the transnational space between the countries of origin and residence. Political parties, national governments, and religious organizations also attempt to encourage the engagement of constituencies abroad, and to channel their activity (and their resources) in such a way as to foster the interests of these domestic institutions. This is referred to as transnationalism from above (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a; Portes 2001; Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Itzigsohn 2000). In the Lebanese case, the state actively seeks to harness investment funds from the diaspora in order to support projects for which the state lacks the revenue to finance. In Lebanon, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants is aptly titled to reflect the focal points of its activity. And the diaspora communities have traditionally been so reliable and so generous in this regard that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) directly targeted the diaspora to help finance development projects within Lebanon. The initiative - *Live Lebanon* - represented a partnership between the UNDP and the Lebanese diaspora, allowing the latter to quickly and directly offer funds as an alternative to sending them directly to the state. The combination of political instability within the country, pervasive corruption, and a growing distrust of political

institutions and those who run them, has made *Live Lebanon* all the more attractive to members of the emigrant community.

Within the literature on transnationalism, there exists a discussion of what is termed long-distance nationalism. It is defined as a "set of identity claims and practices that connect people living in various geographic locations to a specific territory that they see as their ancestral home" (Glick Schiller 2004, 570). Those who engage in these practices – lobbying, voting, fighting, for example – do so out of a belief that their actions will benefit the "nation", where shared history, identity, and territory bind peoples together. This is not unlike political transnationalism, which involves regularly engaging in political activism in the host country around home country issues (Bauböck 2003; Levitt 2008; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a). While members of the Lebanese diasporas do engage in these kinds of activities, it is not the case that their actions may be viewed as manifestations of long-distance nationalism. Lebanon is a fractured state, divided along confessional lines, and sectarianism as a basis of identity has supplanted the traditional notions of nationalism as a unifying force. Confessional groups, more so than the weak state, are the object of allegiance and loyalty. The transnational activities noted above are normally undertaken in conjunction with sectarian-based organizations in Lebanon. Shia in the diaspora send funds to support the building and maintenance of Shia schools and clinics; Maronites and Sunni Lebanese in the same vein. And the Lebanese civil society organizations in the United States are normally directed by individuals who also hold leadership positions in parallel institutions within Lebanon. It might be more appropriate to label the transnational activities of the Lebanese diasporas as transnational sectarianism or long-distance sectarianism.

This is part of what makes the Lebanese diaspora such an interesting community to study. The Lebanese in diaspora act as a proxy for the state in terms of providing what the state lacks the resources to finance or the capacity to deliver. They do so sometimes in response to overtures

by the state, sometimes at the behest of political parties, and relative to the Shia communities abroad, frequently in partnership with Hezbollah. These dynamics are all explored further in each of the case study chapters, demonstrating how being in the diaspora and how transnational engagement may be affecting the interests and objectives of diaspora communities vis-à-vis their confessional counterparts in Lebanon.

According to Vertovec (1999), in order to comprehend the meaning of transnationalism, it is essential to consider the bases upon which the concept rests. He identified six: social morphology, types of consciousness, mode of cultural reproduction, avenue of capital, site of political engagement, and (re)construction of place or locality. He asserts that, relative to social morphology, the meaning of transnationalism that enjoys the most widespread support among scholars in the field is the one that emphasizes social formations which span borders. In this context, he is referring to ethnic diasporas which exist in the triadic relationship discussed earlier in the context of the Safran conception of diaspora. In this context, the development of networks among diasporas is a particularly important dimension of social formation. He rightly points out that ethnic diasporas are not the only actors accessing and engaging transnational public spheres. Criminal organizations, such as those engaged in human trafficking and the trafficking of weapons and drugs, are also actively engaged. And the same technological advances that made easier the movement and communication of migrant communities have also enhanced the capabilities of these organizations.

In focusing on transnationalism as an avenue of capital, the notion holds that the financial engagement of transnational communities via the sending of remittances has had a profound effect on not only the families who receive the funds, but also and importantly on the national economies who have come to rely so heavily on the foreign exchange. Remittances sent by transnational communities comprise as much as one quarter of the national GDP of some countries, as has been evidenced by the Lebanese diaspora and its average of \$8 billion USD

in remittances sent each year. So it is not only multinational corporations (with their complex webs of financial, manufacturing, and distribution networks) that fill this space. An important link between diaspora and transnationalism is that the former highlights the human dimension of cross-border activities taking place in a globalized world.

The emergence and expansion of a global forum for raising awareness about issues and seeking to mobilize support for those issues is what drives the dynamics of transnationalism and the site of political engagement. As is the case with the movement of people, and the transfer of funds, modern technologies, particularly in the realm of communication and social media, have expanded the reach of those making use of this venue. It is in this context that we see ethnic lobbies play an active role (Safran 2005; Chaliand and Ternon 1983; Endelman 1991), as well as international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). The political engagement of transnational actors might well be the most visible manifestation of their activity. Østergaard-Nielsen defined transnational political activity as “direct cross-border participation in the politics of their country of origin by both migrants and refugees....as well as their indirect participation via the political institutions of the host country” (2003a, 762). Anderson (1998) and Demmers (2002), however, question the audacity of distant actors inserting themselves into a political process or conflict for which they will not have to endure any consequences, and the intricacies of which they may not be fully aware. This shows that the same process that makes distant places (and institutions) more accessible can also enable groups to more readily influence policies that might not be in the best interests of the country of origin.

Transnationalism is commonly associated with diaspora, and a question that frequently arises is what distinguishes one from the other. Some assert that the terms are not easily separable, in part because of the degree of complementarity, and also because of the extent to which the dynamics (and memory) of diaspora formation shape the transnational activities of particular

diaspora groups. But much like the term diaspora, transnationalism has often been used to encompass so wide a range of activities that it loses the power and analytical value of its intended meaning.

Transnationalism has gained ground as a major area of research in migration and diaspora studies, and has become an increasingly important concept, given the blurring of traditional borders that accompanies globalization. As Faist (2010) points out, the emergent scholarship on transnationalism in the 1990s ushered in a return of migrants to the discourse on transnational activity; and this was so at a time when scholarly focus had been placed on states and institutions (MNCs and political parties) rather than on people, thus limiting examination of the human dimensions of transnationalism.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how diaspora and transnationalism exist as complementary theoretical frameworks for explaining the human dimensions of cross-border activities that take place in an increasingly globalized world. Diaspora emphasizes group consciousness and a maintenance of connections to the homeland, while transnationalism helps to explain the engagement practices undertaken by migrants – diasporas among them – to maintain those linkages to the homeland, host society and the networked communities to which diasporas belong. The Lebanese diaspora remains among the most actively engaged transnational communities, and in the context of conflict transportation, there are multiple channels through which they possess the capacity to either facilitate the importation of homeland conflict or be influenced by it. The ensuing chapter discusses the methodological approaches used to study the phenomenon, and Chapter 4 offers an in-depth characterization of the homeland frame as a point of departure for understanding the institutions and processes that have provoked and sustained communal conflict in Lebanon.

Chapter 3

Approaching Conflict Transportation in the Diaspora: Notes on a Multi-Sited, Ethnographic Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The Lebanese diaspora is widely dispersed, and its members maintain deep but varied connections to the homeland. Engaging the sites of inquiry that exist across diasporic space yields invaluable insights into the processes, actors, and contexts that help to construct – and perhaps reconstruct – diaspora identity, interests, and the trajectory of relations within the community. This chapter discusses the adoption of a multi-sited ethnographic methodology for exploring the question of whether the homeland frame continues to structure relations within diasporic space. It is comprised of seven sections. Following the introduction, the second section offers a discussion of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the research perspective, and how this has guided the adoption of a qualitative methodology, namely the use of a multi-sited ethnographic approach. The ensuing section addresses researcher access and data generation. The fourth section focuses on positionality and reflexivity. In the fifth section, I outline the strategies employed for recruiting informants for interviews and for carrying out participant observation. Section six discusses ethics in the field, and the final two sections delineate, respectively, the chosen methods for data analysis and concluding reflections on the virtues and limitations of the methodological approach undertaken for the study.

3.2 A Multi-Sited Ethnographic Approach

This study is exploratory and qualitative, and primarily makes use of semi-structured interviews and participant observation to engage the research questions. It is further informed

by the personal journals and diaries of diaspora members, as well as the personal letters that their family members shared with me during the course of the research project.

This study embraces the idea that the world is constructed, interpreted, and experienced by people in their interactions with each other and with wider social systems. For those who accept the epistemological perspective that knowledge is socially constructed rather than objectively determined and perceived, and the view that reality is multiple and relative, a research framework that allows them to capture meaning, context, and change is fundamental. It is in this context that qualitative methodologies are adopted for this study because, as Neuman (2003) observes, they employ data gathering methods that are sensitive to context. Further, qualitative approaches are particularly effective means of obtaining culturally specific information about the beliefs, emotions, opinions, and behaviors of specific populations. An explicit aim of this thesis is to understand diaspora relations from the perspective (and in the context) of the population that it involves. Such an investigation requires the adoption of a research methodology that allows for the realization of emic validity. It is for this reason that ethnographic methods have been chosen as the most effective qualitative approach for engaging the research questions.

Ethnography is often used in the study of social questions related to culture, and is argued by many (Spradley 1979; Agar 1996) to be the most appropriate method for pursuing detailed, in-depth studies of particular communities. This method of social inquiry allows researchers to explore virtually all facets of a cultural system, many aspects of which might remain hidden by survey research alone (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). At the core of ethnography is extensive fieldwork, in which researchers embed themselves within the communities under study and spend significant periods of time – typically at least a year, and normally two years or more – living in the social environment that they are researching, and developing a deep understanding of how the members of that community relate to the social world that they

inhabit. Ethnography employs essentially the same approaches used in other veins of qualitative research, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and the use of focus groups. The primary distinction, however, is the aforementioned depth of interaction between the researcher and the institutions and individuals that comprise the research environment. This level of engagement allows the researcher to develop a more holistic understanding of cultural context and meaning, and particularly of how these factors influence behavior within communities. Geertz is often identified as a key figure of the interpretive turn in social science research, and his viewpoint on social inquiry is encapsulated by a passage in his widely cited collection of essays: “Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (1973, 5)². Importantly, this perspective underpins not only the centrality of cultural awareness, but also alludes to two fundamental dimensions of constructivism, namely that identities and perceptions are socially and culturally constructed realities for members of a community, and that by participating in the social spheres of their research subjects, researchers are able to experience what they are researching.

There are a range of feasibility questions that arise relative to standard ethnography, most of which involve the prodigious amounts of largely unavailable time that researchers must devote to work in the field, particularly at what tend to be sites of inquiry that are far removed. Budgetary constraints are also a key consideration. Limitations in this regard can preclude the return to particular sites for continued work. Moreover, for doctoral researchers, undertaking

² In this work, Geertz put forward the argument that any study of culture should emphasize a focus on meaning, a meaning that can only be understood by examining the web of social relations and social contexts that individuals create for themselves in their lived environment.

traditional ethnographies is not a viable option because of teaching, tutoring or other obligations during a time-limited period.

It would not be accurate to term my research an ethnography in the strict sense of the concept. Traditional ethnographies, most often carried out by anthropologists, are less translatable to migration research that focuses on communities such as diasporas. Researching diasporas requires examining them across multiple locales in order to more effectively capture the dynamic social processes that have not only created the diaspora, but have also sustained it and catalyzed change within and across its constituent communities. The bounded site common to traditional ethnography is incompatible with research on diasporas because these communities are, by definition, transnational social formations. Because of such limitations to the applicability of traditional ethnography, other methods, such as multi-sited ethnography have emerged. Tools from this methodological approach have been employed for this study.

Multi-sited ethnography was suggested by Marcus (1995) as a way of applying the major tenets of ethnography to an increasingly globalized world. He describes the approach as one in which researchers examine how social phenomena develop in and across multiple sites, but try to establish and maintain close relations with host communities. As this thesis seeks to understand whether the conflict frames in the homeland continue to structure community relations in the diaspora, such a methodological approach offers an effective way to explore these connectivities. Marcus acknowledges the difficulty of replicating the kind of depth experienced in traditional ethnographies of a single site, a depth that provides channels for generating rich data that help to build a firm understanding of context. But he argues, consistent with the perspective of Denzin (1997), that an inherent strength of the approach is its comparative dimension, which allows researchers to draw connections between these contexts. Hannerz (2003) observes that among the virtues of this method is its capacity to make connections or note distinctive discourses from site to site. According to Nadal and Maeder (2005), the depth

of focus will necessarily vary from site to site based on problems of accessibility and the nature of the field itself, but it is nonetheless a valuable approach for studying social communities.

Criticisms of the multi-sited ethnographic approach have been well-catalogued (Falzon 2009), and often embrace the perspective that it does not really represent anything new, that it is not innovative. Some scholars take the criticism further and argue that, in practice, there cannot possibly be any such method as multi-sited ethnography. Hage (2005) offers a harsh judgment in this respect, and his assessment is premised on the conviction that the term being applied actually belies what is taking place. Hage suggests that “one site, if it is to be done thoroughly, was already an exhausting enterprise... how can [researchers] study numerous sites in such an involved way?” (2005, 466). He speaks with skepticism about both the temporal dimension of the research, as well as the depth of engagement with the communities being studied. This echoes Clifford (1997), who questioned whether such an approach was antithetical to the kind of depth indicative of ethnographic inquiry. The most provocative aspect of the Hage critique, however, is the nuanced approach to the conception of site. In his view of diasporas, the social spaces that they occupy might themselves be considered a single site, even though they entail multiple locales, spread across several national borders. Reflecting on his own experiences in the field, he questioned the veracity of labeling this kind of work as multi-sited: “I was not studying a multi-sited reality. I was studying one site: the site occupied by the transnational family” (Hage 2005, 466). The transnational social space that constitutes the realm in which diasporas exist has been elucidated rather thoroughly by Faist (1998), and it would seem intuitive that distinctions exist across this constellation of literal and figurative spaces. Capturing and understanding the contextual diversity across these sites is indispensable to comprehending diaspora behavior. Other criticisms hold that research findings will inevitably lack the richness that is characteristic of sustained ethnographic study of what is typically considered a single site (Clifford 1986), thus undermining the very rationale for using

ethnographic methods; and that the investments in cost and time of spreading research across multiple sites can be as daunting as the challenges outlined in critiques of traditional ethnography.

As a site of inquiry, Lebanon was both a necessary and appropriate point of departure for this research because it provides a baseline from which to evaluate sociopolitical dynamics in the diaspora. It would be impossible to make such an assessment without first understanding the framing that has taken place in the country of origin. What issues are prioritized? How do citizens view their role in society and their relationship within that society; and with the state? What meaning do they attach to particular events? What is the nature of relations between and within the communities? This framing has been conditioned by a range of specific actors and circumstances: family, educational institutions, peers, mass media outlets, political parties, religious institutions, and historical processes. These actors and processes have helped to shape the boundaries that condition group identity and the nature of group interaction in the homeland setting. Extensive fieldwork across Lebanon sought to understand how these dynamics affected not only emigration and the trajectory of emigration, but also the perspective that those in the diaspora held about their relationship with the homeland. The maintenance or dissipation of boundaries carries significant implications for diaspora identity (Brubaker 2005). Therefore, the goal in Lebanon was to ascertain how the homeland context framed community identity and set the parameters for group interaction. Did it give rise to violent and discursive confrontation? Did it cause members of the country's constituent communities to self-segregate? Eleven months of fieldwork was conducted across Lebanon, including Beirut (and its surrounding areas), Sidon, Jezzine, Byblos, and areas of the Bekaa Valley. University travel regulations precluded travel to certain regions, such as territory south of the Litani River³. In

³ Despite this limitation to accessing areas between the Litani River and the northern border of Israel, I was able to conduct interviews with displaced residents of Bint Jbeil, a town that suffered instability and insecurity as a result of cross-border conflicts between Israel and Hezbollah. Bint Jbeil has witnessed a significant loss of

like manner, at the time of fieldwork, instability and conflict in Tripoli and along Lebanon's northern border region with Syria and Turkey restricted access to those localities for the purposes of fieldwork.

The Lebanese diaspora exists among a universe of cases of conflict-generated diasporas that the scholarship characterizes as possessing a core set of features: forced emigration by repression or conflict; a traumatic identity; myth of return; and emotional attachment to a homeland experiencing limited sovereignty (Féron 2017; Koinova 2013, 2016). Among the diasporas included in this universe of cases are the Tamil, Palestinian, Jewish, Armenian, Bosnian and Albanian diasporas. The Lebanese case study addresses a gap in the literature relative to the connection between intra-community dynamics and the relationship to homeland conflicts and frames.

Successive waves of emigration have resulted in Lebanese settlement across a wide geographic expanse, thereby providing multiple options for comparative analysis of diaspora realities in varied domestic settings. The three primary regions of settlement are South America, North America and West Africa. Ethnographic methodology requires observing communities that live and interact regularly and in close proximity. For the purposes of fieldwork in the diaspora, there was therefore a need to choose sites of inquiry where these social and spatial dynamics manifest themselves. In many localized contexts, the Lebanese exist as an invisible diaspora, fully integrated into the host society and opting to live among the broader population as opposed to taking up residence in an ethnic enclave. This precludes the possibility of engaging in ethnographic fieldwork involving active engagement of Lebanese diaspora members either living, working or otherwise regularly interacting in close proximity to each other. In West

population as a result. Nearly seventy percent of the population emigrated to the United States (primarily to the Dearborn, Michigan area), to West Africa, or Australia. Nearly twenty percent were displaced to other parts of Lebanon, principally southern Beirut and the southern suburbs of the capital, but also to the Bekaa Valley in the east.

Africa, the Lebanese diaspora population is largely endogamous, and thus provides for an ideal setting for research and participant observation. Over 90 percent of the Lebanese diaspora in Senegal live in Dakar, and most are concentrated in areas near the city centre. In North America, the highest concentration of Lebanese Americans is in Michigan, and the diaspora is highly concentrated in and around the city of Dearborn. Dakar and Dearborn were thus selected because they each have well-established, accessible Lebanese diaspora populations. Both locales also foster strong networks linking the diaspora with not only the homeland, but also transnational social space. These two micro-cases also exhibit differences in the terms of migrant reception and incorporation, internal characteristics of the diaspora and the nature of host state engagement with domestic and transnational Lebanese political space. Studying a specific diaspora across different national contexts facilitates an understanding of how endogenous and exogenous conditions affect identity development and projection, diaspora mobilization and relations with the homeland. Comparing and contrasting these realities helps to illuminate the factors that influence conflict transportation from the homeland to the country of settlement.

3.3 Strategies for Access and Data Generation

One of the most difficult challenges faced by researchers in the social sciences is overcoming barriers to access. A major consideration thus focuses on which strategies to employ for gaining entry to organizations, communities, and to potential individual informants. Initiating and cultivating relationships with gatekeepers – those persons with the power to restrict or facilitate access to targeted populations or institutions – often proves indispensable in the context of fieldwork. No less significantly, the perception and social categorization of the researcher might elicit reticence on the part of potential informants, making them less inclined to open up and share personal histories, experiences, and other relevant insights needed to inform the research. Access is also a function of trust, making it therefore incumbent upon researchers in

the field to make the motivations and purposes of their research clear, so as to eliminate any skepticism about the intended use of information derived of documentation and histories to which they have been made privy. As this study relies heavily on the use of semi-structured, in-depth interviews and participant observation as the primary means of generating data, awareness of best practices for not only gaining, but maintaining, access has been paramount. Access alone, however, is inadequate. There must be a willingness on the part of informants to impart information and also to point the researcher in directions where additional data might be collected. Thus, it is also necessary to persuade individuals to participate by, among other strategies, convincing them of the value that they add to informing the research.

During the course of fieldwork, I have conducted interviews in both an institutional setting and in one-on-one contexts with men and women in less formal environments. Strategies for gaining entry varied depending on the nature of the organization and on the known personal histories of the prospective respondents. Following the prescription put forward by Patton (2002), I used the known sponsor approach to initially gain access to organizations in Beirut, and to some communities in the south of Lebanon. The essence of the known sponsor strategy involves highlighting the support that the researcher has received from a reputable organization, in hopes that the credibility of that institution will be projected onto the researcher, thus eliciting access and trust. There are a number of reasons that this approach was a preferred strategy at the outset of my fieldwork. Firstly, I was new to Lebanon in a research capacity, and thus had not nurtured any relationships with institutions or individuals directly related to my topic of study. Secondly, on both an individual and organizational level, the Lebanese community has typically presented itself to researchers as a relatively closed community, meaning that some mechanism of facilitation was necessary, such as a mutual personal relationship or the existence of some professional linkage with a known, reputable institution, whether it be local or from farther afield; each can have a marked impact on

prospects for access. I used my affiliation as a Visiting Researcher at the Institute for Migration Studies (IMS) at Lebanese American University as a way to introduce myself to the institutional and community-based spheres with which I hoped to interact, and that I hoped to observe. In some instances, IMS made contact with gatekeepers on my behalf, but primarily, the responsibility was my own to make the most effective use of the resources that IMS had placed at my disposal.

The known sponsor approach proved especially useful for gaining initial access to media outlets and political parties. Previous association with *The Daily Star* as an occasional foreign affairs columnist helped me to develop familiarity with some of the editorial staff of the newspaper. They, in turn, were willing to vouch for me as I sought to interview staff from other newspapers and media outlets in Lebanon, and also as I pursued interviews with officials from various of the domestic political parties. A disadvantage of this approach, however, is that researchers can sometimes be taken for extensions of the organizations or individuals who endorse them. It is in this context that I had to make explicit that none of the data generated by my research would be used for journalistic purposes.

Another strategy for gaining access to informants is to offer some measure of reciprocity (Jorgensen 1989). This could take the form of simply proposing to share the findings of the research with the informants or with the institutions with which an affiliation has been made. This approach was also part of my agreement with IMS at Lebanese American University. In exchange for institutional support and office space, I agreed to produce a paper and to give a talk at the university in which I would discuss not only my research, but also how my affiliation with IMS contributed to the completion of my research project. A similar approach was taken with the Arab American National Museum, which was my base of operation while conducting fieldwork in Dearborn, Michigan and the surrounding area. The museum houses a growing collection of oral and other archives that chronicle Arab-American (and particularly Lebanese-

American) migratory experiences to the United States, as well as experiences of life as part of the diaspora community. A drawback of the reciprocity concept is that researchers often promise too much relative to the limited time available for fieldwork, analysis, writing, and teaching responsibilities. It is for that very reason that I only agreed to share a publication and offer a talk after I have fully completed my doctoral program.

Researchers can also exploit links with institutions in the field as a means of gaining access to informants. In my case, upon first moving to Beirut in May 2014, I lived for four weeks with two friends from Virginia who both taught at a local school. They introduced me to their colleagues, and after informal interactions, many agreed to speak with me on the record for my research. They also introduced me to professional colleagues from other schools, some of whom I also interviewed. This means of gaining initial access led to the use of snowball sampling, which served as a primary means of reaching informants during my project.

Access to the primary data sources that I have used – oral archives and diaries, for example – has proven less difficult than expected, though the ease of access has been countered by the amount of time required to listen to the recordings or to have some of the printed materials translated. Some of my informants have shared with me personal writings of their parents and grandparents, and this gesture would obviously have not been realized without having been grounded on a basis of trust, a trust that was established during the phase of attempting to gain access.

3.4 Positionality, Reflexivity, and the Research Process

The dynamics of dual perception have played a critical role in my fieldwork. Every facet of the research process was seemingly affected by a combination of how I perceived my research environment and the ways in which informants perceived and then socially categorized me. This influences not only access, but if that access is gained, it also has the power to affect the

trajectory of the relationship between the researcher and informant. These dynamics can also affect data collection and data analysis. The centrality of positionality in qualitative research, and especially in studies which employ ethnographic methods, affirms the notion that meaning and the production of knowledge are constructed by the relationship between the researcher and those who occupy and inform the research environment. In short, those working from the ethnographer's toolkit actually help to construct the observations that become their data.

In the migration literature, and particularly relevant to the study of diasporas, there has been a growing focus on the insider-outsider dichotomy in field research. Generally speaking, this has traditionally emphasized two categories of researcher: the insider researcher, who is a migrant or of migrant origin and conducts research on his or her own immigrant group; and the outsider researcher, who belongs to the majority population of the country in which the study is being conducted, and examines immigrant groups with which no ethnic, national, or other heritage is shared. The underlying premise is that insiders can more easily gain access and build trust because of language skills, shared religion or ethnicity, and other such qualifiers. Scholars such as Dwyer and Buckle (2009) have rightly argued that realities in the field do not lend themselves to so neat a division. My own experiences in Dearborn, Dakar and across Lebanon reinforce this perspective. My positionality was a function of far more than my status as one of local lineage (however deep), or as a culturally detached, transient researcher. It depended on the social contexts of the interactions with the research environment. Indeed, Kusow (2003) argues that the traditional insider-outsider concept suffers from a far too simplistic reading of the relationship between cultural setting, status of the researcher, and the resulting outputs of their interactions.

In a much-needed expansion of this concept, Carling, Erdal, and Ezzati (2014), writing in *Migration Studies*, outline what they term "third positions" in this debate, and also identify a

range of markers⁴ used by informants to interpret and position researchers who enter the field. The five positions that they outline are far more helpful in not only helping researchers understand the complexities of *otherness* in the field, but also at devising effective strategies for navigating it. In considering the implications of these dynamics for research on diasporas, I also apply these concepts to researchers conducting fieldwork in the targeted informants' country of origin. The same vein of positioning takes place in the country of origin relative to the propensity of potential and actual informants to assign particular social categories to researchers based on their perceptions of those researchers.

The five "third positions" discussed by Carling et al. are explicit third party, honorary insider, insider by proxy, hybrid insider-outsider, and apparent insider. The explicit third party is a researcher who has a clearly discernible identity which indicates that he or she is a member of neither the majority population nor the migrant group being studied. One possible implication of this is that, for the researcher, informants might question the reasons for conducting such an in-depth study of a detached group. This could give rise to suspicions about hidden motives, and thus make informants reluctant to share information or grant access. For those who are part of securitized migrant populations, diasporas among them, such reservations can create barriers to access for researchers. This is indicative of a limitation of interpretivism and ethnographic research. I encountered no such problems, however, in Lebanon or in Dakar, but there were many members of the Dearborn diaspora community who indicated that they were indeed hesitant to engage some strangers to the community because of these dynamics. There are some virtues to being viewed as an explicit third party. One of the informants whom I interviewed in a Muslim-majority area of Beirut actually indicated that he respected me more, precisely because my research work had no genealogical dimension and I had no vested, personal interest

⁴ These markers, used by informants to socially categorize researchers, included gender, religion, name, physical appearance and clothing style, occupation and title, and status as a parent.

in researching the Lebanese. And I think that it was partly because of this that he was so forthcoming in both our initial interview and our follow-up session. In these contexts, it could well be the case that informants are actually more enthusiastic about interviewing because they feel empowered to impart a knowledge that the researcher may not possess and a story of which the researcher is unlikely to be aware because of such detachment from the environment. The honorary insider is one who is gradually positioned as an insider as a result of cultural fluency of the community being researched, including language ability and a demonstrated knowledge of the community's history and a long-standing commitment to that community. Marrying into the community or establishing other familial connections might be other ways of achieving this status. Researchers are positioned as insiders by proxy when they are migrants themselves, but from a different migrant group than the one on which the study is focused. This can create between researcher and informant a bond based on some sense of a shared *kind* of history. The hybrid insider-outsider is a researcher who shares characteristics with both the targeted migrant community and the majority population in the host country or country of settlement. The apparent insider is a researcher who shares the heritage of the migrant group being studied, but has followed a different – in the eyes of informants, perhaps an easier or more privileged – migration trajectory, thus casting him or her as an outsider. This assigned “otherness” can also be born of the researcher being of a particular class or gender.

To better understand and prepare for the dynamics of positionality, it was essential for me to consider these “third positions” along with the markers outlined in that same study. This helped to explain many of the experiences that I encountered in the field. Comments conveyed at the start of an interview that I conducted with an official from one of the March 8 parties help to illustrate:

Welcome, please do take a seat there. Are you nervous? You have no reason to be. Look, you are a black man. You are a black man from the south in America. I know what that means. Your

people have much in common with my people. We are not so different. We understand what it is like to be discriminated against and treated like we don't belong, even in a place where we were born. A place we helped to build. We know what it is like to have to fight. I want you to know that you should feel at ease because we really do understand one another.⁵

In this particular case, my informant perceived me not as an insider in the general sense, and did not receive me as an outsider in the traditional sense. I was not of his religious faith. I am not Lebanese, nor do I have any lineage that can be traced to the region. In addition, I am not proficient in Arabic. It was, however, the combination of my physical appearance, my social background, and the history of my ancestors that led my informant to view and treat me as an honorary insider/insider by proxy. Our exchange was a particularly long one, and was, in fact, one of the most engaging interviews conducted during the course of my fieldwork. The fact that he made me feel so comfortable and welcome also had an effect on my willingness to pose more questions than I had initially planned to ask during our session.

During my first research visit to Lebanon, I was introduced to a number of restaurants, bars, and other venues for social interaction by colleagues at IMS, by my interpreters, and also by local friends and the students from the American University of Beirut (AUB) with whom I shared a flat. Some of these restaurants and bars became places that I frequented, especially as I cultivated relationships with informants from particular communities in order to seek deeper access into those communities. One such establishment, Bedivere, was one that I began to use as what I have termed a positionality framer. I often set appointments for first meetings with informants there. I would meet my informants at the cell phone shop across the street, and we would then walk together to Bedivere. When we entered, the owner would always yell my first name rather boisterously, and then he would proceed to place a free drink and light snacks in front of me at the bar or in the booth, and would then offer the same to the person accompanying

⁵ Author interview, 28 July 2014, near Beirut, with an official from a political party within the March 8 coalition.

me. To the informants – and to potential informants who were present – this conveyed familiarity and acceptance, that I had already been socially vetted. On each occasion, I found the informants to be far more relaxed, interactive, and willing to engage with me. I employed similar strategies at Captain's Cabin, an old bar situated in close proximity to my flat. It was a cavernous space that had been visibly aged by both time and neglect. It was old and dingy, but also cheap. It was my preferred meeting point for sessions with students whom I interviewed from Lebanese American University and American University of Beirut. It was convenient to each campus, and was in fact located almost at the midpoint between the two. The owner, far more reserved than the cousins who own Bedivere, would always treat me as if I belonged, as if he, too, had developed some deep familiarity with me. It was obvious that this played positively on the disposition of the informants.

In some ways, there was parallel positioning taking place in these instances. My own approach was obviously an attempt to disarm my informants, hoping that the trust conveyed by the owners of these establishments would be enough, or at least enough of a start, to spur trust and an openness to participate in my project. This was my attempt at proactively defining the terms of my own positionality. Moreover, for those who were acting on my behalf, a similar process was being undertaken. They were seeking to counter the prevailing perceptions and understandings that they knew to be the norm relative to individuals who were black. On a lunchtime coffee break at a café near campus, a colleague from IMS explained that I should take care to not become offended if people stare or don expressions of disapproving curiosity. I was already aware of the social standing of migrant domestic workers, but my colleague wanted to share insights about the social dynamics of the city and what I might come to experience in my interactions with the local population. My colleague noted that people in the city would probably assume and ascribe a socioeconomic status and geographic origin to me, but that once they realized that I was from the United States, their disposition would be

different, and it would be easily discernible to notice the change. I found this revelation troubling. What if I had been a black researcher from somewhere other than North America, or perhaps Western Europe?

My status as a PhD student had a positive effect on positionality. It demonstrated what the literature on researcher access has termed professional suitability, which is essentially a belief on the part of informants that the researcher has developed an informed perspective and awareness of the field being researched, and is also aware of local context. This was a facilitating factor in the gaining of access to teachers, who appreciated my work in higher education, and officials from the media outlets and political parties who viewed me as possessing a cognizance of their fields and the work in which they were engaged. This made them all the more willing to suggest friends and colleagues to me as potential interviewees, facilitating snowballing.

Surprisingly, religion did not play as key a role in affecting positionality as I had expected. In the interview sessions and participant observation activities undertaken in Lebanon, no one asked me about my adherence to a religion, or about the extent to which I was a believer or one who actively practiced a particular faith. I did, however, use faith as a way of easing entry into some of the Protestant Christian communities where interviews and participant observation activities were followed. This was a useful strategy for gaining access, for example, to a church in Beirut at which I spent a considerable amount of time with members and conducted interviews. I volunteered that my step-father was a protestant minister in the United States, though I did not reveal that it has been quite some time since I last regularly attended those services.

Among the most glaring realities of my fieldwork experiences was a realization of the need to continually negotiate and renegotiate positionality. The markers used by informants and

communities vary from one social context to another, imparting different effects on the nature of the relationship that develops between the informant and researcher. Being a black PhD student from the United States while researching in Lebanon holds different implications for positionality – and thus for access, the building of trust, and data collection – than being a black PhD student from the United States researching in Senegal or the United States. In Dearborn, Michigan, I was often viewed as a hybrid insider-outsider because I am American by birth, but also a minority and one who has been living outside of my home country for some time. The readiness of many of my informants to share candid criticism of some aspects of the American experience might be attributed to the fact that, due to my extended period of residency in Belgium, they did not actually see me as American in the ways that informants in Senegal and perhaps Lebanon viewed me.

3.5 Interviews, Participant Observation and Engagement of the Field

I conducted a total of 153 interviews between May 2014 and May 2018. In addition to Dakar and the Dearborn, Michigan area, the interviews were carried out in the Lebanese localities of Beirut, Jezzine, Sidon, Byblos, and in villages situated within the Bekaa Valley. Respondents shared not only their personal insights on key questions relative to my research, some also shared the private diaries and journals of family members, as well as letters that parents and grandparents had written and sent while living abroad. A main priority throughout the process was to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality for all respondents. This is a core element of research ethics.

In Lebanon, I completed 56 interviews as outlined below. The gender distribution of interviewees was relatively equal, as was the proportion of Christian-to-Muslim respondents. Among the Muslim interviewees, 56 percent (18 participants) self-identified as Shia, and about 90 percent of the Christian respondents (21 participants) self-identified as Maronite. The age

range of interviewees was 19 to 93 years, and the majority of respondents were in the 20 to 54 year old age range. Interviews were conducted with women and men from all social classes, and respondents represented a broad cross-section of society, including those working in both the trade and professional fields. This included, among others, elementary and secondary school teachers, clergy, university students, military and security service personnel, transit operators, journalists and representatives from civil society organizations.

Lebanon	Women	Men
Christian	10	14
Muslim	15	17

In Dakar, I conducted 43 interviews with members of the Lebanese diaspora, 19 of whom were women and 24 were men. About a third were conducted in English, while the remainder were conducted in Wolof or Arabic with the assistance of an interpreter. The majority of interviewees – approximately 63 percent – were Muslim, with the Shia representing 74 percent (20 participants) of those who self-identified as Muslim. Among the Christians, roughly 68 percent (11 participants) were Greek Orthodox, with the remaining Christians respondents self-identifying as Maronite. The ages of interview participants ranged from 18 to 90 years, with the majority of interviewees in the 19 to 56 year old age range. As in Lebanon, I made a conscious effort to include women and men from different social classes, and my sample was therefore representative of broader society. Respondent backgrounds included, among others, restaurant and small shop owners, medical professionals, recent university graduates, journalists, and unemployed residents. In Dakar, I also conducted 11 interviews with black Senegalese residents who possessed no Lebanese heritage. These more informal sessions helped me to gain perspective on perceptions of the Lebanese diaspora by members of the majority population.

Dakar	Women	Men
Christian	7	9
Muslim	12	15

In the Dearborn area, 54 interviews and several small group discussions helped to inform my research. Of the interview respondents, around 44 percent (24 interviewees) were women and 30 participants were men. The age range of interviewees spanned 18 to 84 years, with the majority of respondents in the 20 to 60 year old age range. Muslims comprised the largest religious group, with 54 percent (29) respondents self-identifying as such. Of this group, 65 percent (19 participants) self-identified as Shia. It became clear that the securitization dynamics in the United States played a role in the reticence of some Shia interviewees to freely share their views on Hezbollah. This was only the case among some of the respondents whom I met directly. I had not had an introduction or recommendation by a family member or friend from Lebanon, or from a teacher, fellow student or other acquaintance in the Dearborn area. Interestingly, some contacted me for follow-up interviews after they had obviously inquired with others in the community about my background and whether I could be trusted. In the follow-up meetings, these six participants (two women, four men) were much more forthcoming about their viewpoints on Hezbollah. Overall, with the exception of the initial hesitation by these six interviewees, the Shia respondents in Dearborn were not at all reluctant to share their perspectives on the organization. This was also the case in both Dakar and in Lebanon, where open and candid during interview sessions. As in Dakar and Lebanon, I remained cognizant of class differences, and the group of participants therefore represents all social classes. Relative to their backgrounds, interviewees included, among others, university students, industrial workers, professionals working in the financial services sector, volunteers at non-profit organizations, university professors and clergy.

Dearborn	Women	Men
Christian	11	14
Muslim	13	16

While in Brussels and Berkeley, fourteen follow-up sessions were held via Marco Polo, WhatsApp and Skype. While away from the field, electronic communication was also used for

follow-up sessions with my interpreters in order to revisit certain exchanges in order to further discuss the context and meaning of some of the interview responses, and to confer on some of the texts that had been translated for me and sent via email. These cyber platforms were employed as a means of overcoming the barriers of distance and the cost of return travel to the respective sites of inquiry. In-person interviews were conducted in respondents' homes and places of employment, as well as in academic institutions, places of worship, restaurants, bars, cafés, and public parks. For the overwhelming majority of these sessions, the interviewees were allowed to choose the location of our meeting. Some informal, spontaneous exchanges occasionally took place on the bus as I traveled between Beirut and other locales in Lebanon, and others materialized in cafés near schools and universities. Though I did not speak from my interview guide when these unscheduled opportunities presented themselves, I incorporated as many of its key questions as possible, while still allowing (and encouraging) the respondents to fully share their stories. These episodes conveyed an important lesson, namely that while conducting interviews, I should follow the respondents instead of focusing so intently on following the script from the interview guide. In one specific context in Lebanon during these occasions, the use of a physical interview guide may have placed some of my respondents in awkward or uncomfortable situations, as many of them were uniformed soldiers traveling home or to their installations by bus. As a visible minority and as someone who was likely not Lebanese, enough attention was already drawn to me, despite the best efforts of onlookers to pretend otherwise. Being seen and overheard in lengthy engagements with me could have led to suspicions on the part of others who were present, raising questions about loyalty and belonging, especially because the themes of my research addressed questions of identity and perspectives on Lebanese political and social institutions. The utmost discretion was used to protect those who had expressed an openness and willingness to speak with me about issues central to my project, and to safeguard confidentiality. On these occasions, I therefore kept the

conversations general yet brief, and asked if it would be possible to meet again, and to do so at a location of their preference. Whenever an impromptu exchange took place, irrespective of the circumstance, I always made clear to the participants that the reason for my presence in Lebanon, Senegal or the Dearborn area was to undertake fieldwork that would be used to inform a doctoral thesis. My original intention had been to reflect on the experiences of each day, and to notate my impressions at the end of the evening in a daily journal. Very early after beginning my fieldwork in Lebanon, however, I opted instead to carry a small to record observations throughout the day, often between interviews or after meals. Upon returning to my room, I regularly chronicled any significant occurrences and recurring themes.

I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews that focused on five primary themes: self-identification and identity, socialization, perspectives on political issues, migration trajectory, and relations with the countries of origin and residence. For this latter vein of inquiry, the emphasis in Lebanon was on connections to family members in the diaspora. In Dearborn and Dakar, there was an emphasis on the migratory trajectory of individuals and families, and their relationship with (and view of) Lebanon. Combined with participant observation, these semi-structured interviews have allowed me to chronicle the here-yet-there dimension of the diaspora and importantly, as Levitt and Glick Schiller point out, to see how members of transnational communities “simultaneously maintain and shed cultural repertoires and identities, interact within a location and across its boundaries, and act in ways that are in concert with or contradict their values over time” (2004, 1013). This speaks directly to my primary and secondary research questions, which focus on whether and how the core conflict in Lebanon is imported to diasporic space; whether pivotal events in the homeland affect relations within diasporic space; and how endogenous conditions in the country of settlement shape relations in diasporic space.

An interview guide was used, and there was a conscious effort undertaken to ensure that certain key questions were asked. One virtue of the semi-structured interview in this context is that it does allow for flexibility, both on the part of the questioner and the respondent. I allowed my informants to be as expansive as they felt necessary in sharing their perspectives, personal histories and experiences. These sessions generally lasted for one hour to ninety minutes, sometimes longer if the meeting was held in a restaurant and we shared a meal during the exchange, or if the session involved a small group of university students. Much like the lesson learned about following my respondents and their stories, I also benefited from preliminary discussions with many of those who would later come to inform my work. At the beginning of fieldwork in Beirut, as I was engaging in background interviews and finalizing the draft of the interview guide, one student shared with me that she thought one of the questions was leading. In an earlier incarnation of the interview guide, a question relating to the theme of self-identification asked *What does it mean to be a Maronite Christian in Lebanon?* This student told me that she felt as though it was a loaded question. “You’re expecting me to say that being a Maronite is somehow different than being a Druze or Sunni”.⁶ The virtue of these background sessions and exploratory interviews afforded me the opportunity to modify that question so that the respondent herself or himself could introduce, if deemed necessary, such a dimension relative to identity. The question that supplanted this particular one: *What does it mean to be Lebanese?*

My goal was to record as many interviews as possible, but some respondents indicated a preference that I not record. On other occasions, though this was not explicitly communicated to me, the way in which the interviewee looked at the device indicated a certain level of reticence, so I only made use of hand-written notes. I transcribed and coded the recorded interviews, usually at the end of the day if conducted in English (about a quarter of the

⁶ Author interview, 23 May 2014, Beirut.

interviews were conducted in very clear English), or shortly thereafter if I used an interpreter. I always used context sessions following interviews to ask my interpreter to explain if there were any things that I might have missed – anything between the lines that a researcher not from the community might not fully understand or appreciate.

At the conclusion of my first four-month residency in Lebanon (May 2014 – August 2014), I realized just how unwieldy my data had become. It was all the more troubling given the prospect of more interviews to follow in Lebanon and also in Dakar and Dearborn. Attempting to write everything down distracted from personal engagement with the respondent, and invariably meant that something – perhaps important passages of the verbal narrative – would be left out. Transcription had proven rather time-consuming and sometimes quite frustrating because of the frequent difficulty in discerning what I had actually written because I had done so hurriedly. For this reason, I purchased a smartpen, which freed me to interact in a more relaxed manner with my informants, and to only write down observations that were made during the interview. The device not only records audio, but also written text. The text can be uploaded to an online storage platform or later transferred to a laptop via USB connection. And the program, which automatically converts hand-written passages to text, allowed me to search that text for keywords, which has also facilitated the analytic memos that I have used for categorization. This eliminated the need to manually transcribe all interviews, which saved a great deal of time in the field. At no time was the recording function enabled during those sessions in which interviewees requested that I make exclusive use of written notes.

My primary method for recruiting informants in the first instance was the use of a key informant, who would then introduce me to individuals from the population I sought. This key informant was usually affiliated in some way with an educational or research institution to which I also had an affiliation. I would then rely on snowball sampling to gain access to additional informants for interviews. After having spent some time in Lebanon and developing

a level of comfort with the environment, I used purposive sampling on my own, in an attempt to reach particular individuals for interview. For access to political parties and religious institutions, my affiliation with the Institute for Migration Studies (IMS) proved invaluable. And for access to students, I used my IMS affiliation to connect with students and then to their networks via snowball sampling. From this starting point, I developed a network of key informants across various of the institutions of higher education in Beirut.

Institutional access was also, on some occasions, realized by happenstance. During the World Cup competition that took place in the summer of 2014, many people were in search of a venue for watching the matches. All of the establishments that screened the tournament were crowded because of extremely high interest among local sports enthusiasts. Brazil and Argentina, historically two of the most successful countries in World Cup play, are home to large Lebanese diaspora populations, thus there were many supporters of these teams who had ventured out to local bars and restaurants to watch their matches. Several nights in succession, I found myself at Captain's Cabin, seated at a table and sharing space with people that I did not know. One of the individuals whom I met in this environment was actually working as an intern for one of the Lebanese broadcast media outlets. During a pause in the live action, I described my project and asked if he might be able to introduce me to someone at the television station for a possible research interview or, alternately, if he could at least get me in the door for an interview. Because of his efforts, I was able to gain access and conduct an interview with a journalist attached to the outlet. On one occasion in Dakar during the summer of 2016, I mentioned to my taxi driver that I was a PhD student and was conducting research on the Lebanese diaspora. He insisted that he take me to meet a very close friend of his, someone Lebanese that he knew very well as a result of having frequently taken passengers to and from his hotel. I agreed, and the ensuing meeting resulted in my introduction to several Lebanese families whose perspectives have helped to inform my research. As another example, in August 2014, I was

interviewed by BBC News for an article on Daesh and conspiracy theories in Lebanon. On the day that the interview appeared online, I received emails from one local newspaper journalist and an editor from one of the regional broadcast networks, asking if I would be willing to interview. I used that as an occasion to conduct an interview of my own with the former. Access to media outlets for all other interviews was gained via a key informant with whom I had previously established a professional relationship at *The Daily Star*.

An important dimension of fieldwork is participant observation. It entails a role assumption in which the researcher becomes an engaged member of the research environment, implying that he or she takes part in the life of the social setting in which the research inquiry is being carried out. This involves moving beyond the status of mere spectator and also engaging as a participant in events, practices, ceremonies, or basic social interactions in the field. In so doing, he or she is able to gain a familiarity with the communities under study that would be impossible to attain by the use, for instance, of survey research alone. Such an approach exposes researchers to social and cultural specificities of particular communities in their own natural environment, which helps researchers to better understand the linkages to be found between cultural context and the decisions and behaviors that are practiced by members of a given community. Participant observation, along with the use of data collected from secondary sources and other primary sources, is a key means of triangulating accounts shared by informants. In the information that they convey, informants can be mistaken, intentionally misleading, inclined to share a narrative that they think fits the agenda of the researcher, or simply unaware. It is therefore imperative to spend time in the field to make sense of the important distinctions that exist between explicit and tacit culture. This method for gathering data helps the researcher develop a deeper understanding of social and cultural context. It is also an indispensable tool in the methodological constellation that allows researchers to build what has conventionally been referred to as “thick description”.

I spent eleven months in Lebanon, split between living in the Hamra section of West Beirut, the predominantly Muslim side of the city; and in Mount Lebanon, where I lived in Dekwaneh, a Maronite Christian enclave considered a suburb of Beirut. On most occasions, when interviews were conducted in other locales, I made use of day trips or short overnight stays with family members of those whom I had met in Beirut. My participant observation activities were undertaken in a variety of settings, ranging from seasonal festivals and street festivals, the social activities of families, local markets, group outings of professional colleagues from academia, and colloquia at local universities and the Carnegie Middle East Center. Preparations before entering the field and consultations with local researchers helped me to govern myself in such a way as to ensure that I did not offend my hosts, disrupt the field, or otherwise adversely affect prospects for continued access to the research environment. In some cases, participant observation occurred within Protestant evangelical churches, where I attended services with a student from Beirut who now lives and studies in the United States, but is frequently in Lebanon, particularly in the summer and during university holiday periods. I attended regular services with her and her father on two occasions, and once individually during a period when she was not in the country. As the role of religion as a socializing agent is an important dimension of both the Lebanese domestic and diaspora contexts, I attended religious ceremonies and collected data from multiple sites in an attempt to develop a better understanding, by way of direct observation, of the methods used by religious organizations and their leaders to inculcate meaning to their adherents. The same approach was taken in the Detroit/Dearborn metropolitan area, where I visited two churches – Saint Peter’s Roman Catholic Maronite Church⁷ and Saint Maron Maronite Church. The aim was to examine the ways in which the socialization process in this context also took place in the diaspora.

⁷ This is actually not in Dearborn, but rather in Windsor, Ontario, across the Canadian border. Many of the members of the church live in Dearborn or Detroit, and commute for services.

Positionality is a constant consideration when conducting fieldwork. Quite often I found myself thinking about how what I had read and heard prior to arriving in the field would affect the meaning that I assigned to what I ultimately saw and heard after I actually arrived and engaged the field. Personal experience also influences perspective, and an encounter at the start of the second full month of my initial period of fieldwork gave me pause:

I was second or third in line at the Directorate General of General Security, waiting to pick up my passport, which I had left some 12 days earlier. This was to renew my visa. I noticed an armed guard walking towards us, and assumed that he was simply heading to the entrance, either to unlock the door (hopefully), or perhaps to begin standing guard in that general area. Instead, he walked directly to me and told me to “please move to the back of the line”. I politely asked why, given that he had made no similar request of anyone else. He repeated his request, and I repeated my question about the rationale for that command. I had awakened very early to get there, opting to walk instead of taking a service, and had done so early in order to beat the heat. This would give me an opportunity to observe more, and to pass through quadrants of the city not usually traversed by tourists. It was 10:20am, and the office was supposed to have opened at 10:00am. It was already hot, and I had grown a bit frustrated that the office was not yet open. The guard was intimidating, but I was not afraid. A bit nervous, yes, but not afraid. He had an automatic weapon. I’m not quite exactly sure what it was, and honestly didn’t care to think too much about the distinction. I tried not to look directly at it. It was a large gun, which was enough. Then, another individual walked over. He wore no formal uniform, at least not a complete one consisting of head-to-toe fatigues and boots. He had on a vest, and the contour of a handgun was clearly visible along his side, through that vest and partially tucked into his jeans. He asked about the situation, wanting to know if there was a problem. The first guard responded in Arabic. The second asked to see my receipt, the document indicating that I was picking up my passport for a visa renewal. I handed it to him. He looked at it, handed it back, and told me that I didn’t need to move anywhere, and that I should simply keep my place in the line. He told me to enjoy my time in Lebanon and that the office would open closer to 11:00am today. I later learned that he was from Hezbollah, the other from the Internal Security Forces (ISF).⁸

⁸ From the author’s field journal, recorded 02 July 2014, Beirut.

This incident left me shaken a bit, but I got over that fairly quickly. What lingered, however, was the question of whether there might be latent aggression or hostility towards me on the part of those affiliated with various security or policing agencies. Did he engage me in this way because I was not Lebanese? Was it racial? If I encountered trouble or personal insecurity in Beirut or elsewhere, would this experience influence my willingness to approach the police for help? Preliminary research had indicated that many viewed the ISF as a Sunni-dominated institution. Would this knowledge, coupled with what had transpired at the DGGS, affect the way that I approached or received members of the Sunni community or pursued my research in predominantly Sunni areas; or in general terms, relative to innocuous social interaction? It was perhaps a stretch, but these kinds of encounters do matter, and the meaning assigned to them will necessarily be conditioned in some ways by the social context and environment in which these events have transpired.

When I attended street festivals in the Hamra district of Beirut with informants and acquaintances from the neighborhood, I always paid particular attention to the children in order to observe how they responded to the social stimuli around them. One of the things that constantly surprised me was the lack of any real reaction to the heavy security presence in the streets, especially with regard to the personnel who were carrying weapons. The children seemed more focused on the berets and the patterns of the uniforms than on the weapons. It became clear to me that they had become conditioned to view this as normal, even if they probably could not fully understand the social and historical reasons for its necessity. In many ways, the perspectives of children are projections of the values and attitudes harbored by their parents, siblings, or other close family members. They emulate what they have seen and repeat what they have heard. At a fast-food eatery in my neighborhood, I once encountered a young boy (perhaps seven or eight years old), whose words brought these dynamics to mind. I was seated and chatting with my interpreter, waiting for our carry-out order to be ready. The

youngster was seated at an adjacent booth with his mother and another child. Several times, he would raise his head and peer over the booth, looking at my interpreter and me. His mother asked him to stop. He responded by pointing to me and asking, in very clear English, “Is he a bad guy, mom?” She scolded him harshly and offered an apology. This made me return to earlier musings about the racial dynamics in Lebanon, and how they might affect perceptions of me, possibly influence access to the social fields I hoped to enter, or lead members of society to treat me differently than they would researchers of another demographic. I began to think about whether I would need to make a deliberate effort to project a certain image of myself while in public space. The young boy’s assumption was obviously based on what he had heard, seen or learned. How pronounced was this perspective? I was very polite in my reply to the mother after her apology. Whether in this context or in another setting, this helped me realize that there are preconceived notions about those who are not from the community. Moreover, my response to how members of the community perceive me will influence what I actively looked for when they met or engaged with me.

Vestiges of the civil war era were conspicuous in Beirut, and so too were markers of more recent conflict. Thoughts about those areas were always present in the back of my mind as I observed Lebanese citizens interacting with each other in their daily pursuits. Vestiges of conflict juxtaposed with scenes of social interaction always brought to mind the question of what might spur those individuals to engage each other in either discursive or physical violence. Upon my initial arrival in Beirut, I was not quite certain what I expected to see. This was a product of my own socialization prior to entering the field. Media portrayals of Lebanon in the United States often depict more sensational episodes that involve some dimension of conflict. I had to guard against allowing that framing to influence what I was actually seeing and hearing while there. I routinely sought more ways to interact with diverse groups in a single setting in

order to see how each individual set the terms of engagement and interacted within the Lebanese social environment.

In many ways, the access dimension of participant observation is a combined function of interest and will on the part of the researcher, and of continued assistance and guidance offered by informants and gatekeepers. One such illustration of this relates to my expression of interest in meeting with Lebanese American youth in Dearborn. This was among the conversations that took place on the periphery of an interview conducted in the south of Beirut with Amir, who had previously lived in Bint Jbeil near the border between Lebanon and Israel. He had moved to the Beirut area to escape what he termed “too much time spent thinking about wars when I need to focus on raising my family”.⁹ The perspective conveyed by Amir was consistent with much of what I had gathered during my interviews with others from this community, and it helped me to understand why many of them have readily sought and turned to alternative structures of representation and belonging. Their allegiance is not to Lebanon, the state, but rather to their communities and to organizations that have been able to represent the interests of their communities and deliver basic services that the state has consistently proven itself incapable of providing. Amir mentioned that his brother and sister-in-law had moved to the United States, and that he could connect me with his nephew, who was living with them in the Detroit/Dearborn area. It was through his nephew, Sam, that I was able to initially access the Bint Jebail Cultural Center in Dearborn. I attended one event at the center. It was not an organized cultural activity, but rather an informal opening to receive donations of canned goods for the homeless and those in need of assistance. Sam asked if I would join him there the day before our scheduled interview. I agreed to do so, and purchased and donated items for the cause. Sam introduced me to some of the volunteers, and we had informal discussions about my research. They were very eager to share information about the outreach programs of the

⁹ Author interview, Beirut area, 19 July 2015.

center and the role that it played in the community. I returned in the spring of 2016, and conducted additional interviews in the community. As known and trusted individuals among local community members in the area, Sam and Amir were able to transfer a measure of that trust along to me, thereby facilitating acceptance and access.

Participant observation activities in Dearborn also included attending one meeting of the Lebanese Student Association at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. I was introduced to LSA by a professor at the university – also a member of the Lebanese diaspora – with whom I had previously conducted an interview. Taking part in the group meeting afforded me an opportunity to observe the interactions of students who represented a broad cross-section of the Lebanese social mosaic. After the meeting, one in which they largely discussed organizing tutoring groups to coincide with final exams and social gatherings to celebrate their completion, I met for coffee with several of the students (a few of whom had no Lebanese heritage but had joined because of interest in Lebanese culture). It had not been planned or organized as a focus group, but it did evolve into a session in which I encouraged the students to talk amongst themselves about what it means to be of Lebanese heritage, and how they relate to both Lebanon and the United States. Some focused on how well-integrated they view the Lebanese to be, relative to other immigrant communities in the area. Rita shared that what she valued most was having so many people in her community who could help her understand life in Lebanon. She had never been, but was planning to make her first visit as part of her graduation gift in 2018. “What I understand about Lebanon is not slanted because I listen to everybody. I only want to know more. I’m not interested in arguing about who’s to blame for stuff that happened over there”.¹⁰ Farid focused on the notion of a geographically fragmented, but socially and culturally linked Lebanese community: “I’m as connected as I need to be. The good thing about us is that we’re everywhere. If I go to Montreal, I can feel comfortable

¹⁰ Author-led group discussion, Dearborn, Michigan, 23 March 2016.

because there are lots of us there, and nobody cares if you're Christian or Muslim, either. Same with New York. Or I can go to Europe and live somewhere like Paris if I had the money. I think the Lebanese are a family".¹¹

Discussions that I shared with members of Saint Maron also generated treatment of the topic of belonging, but in slightly different contexts than what the college students had emphasized. Michael invited me to dinner with his family, and was very passionate about why he thinks there is such tension among groups in Lebanon.

"I think you have to spend a little time here to see what I'm talking about. It's different than what I saw growing up, not to say that I really knew what was going on back then. The people in my neighborhood are mostly Shia, but that's just because lots of people moved in from the same village. We get along fine with everybody. Nobody brings up the things that divide our people at home, and you know why? Because you don't gain anything from it in this country. Division is an *industry* back home!"¹²

This criticism was not isolated to my exchange with Michael, but was rather indicative of a pattern that manifest itself across respondents in Dakar and the region around Dearborn. It reflected a frustration with the pervasiveness of the clientelist system in Lebanon, a system that requires of citizens that they perform an identity and practice an allegiance in order to gain access to resources controlled by political, economic, and religious elite. Confession-based control and distribution of these resources has been among the most pronounced factors sustaining sectarianism in Lebanon. Even among the youth in Dakar and Dearborn, there was a keen awareness of how the clientelist system affected social and political life in Lebanon. Though most had not spent any extended periods of time in the country, and some had never visited, they had been made aware of the realities of clientelism by second-hand accounts of their parents and other family members. During interviews and group discussions, several

¹¹ Author-led group discussion, Dearborn, Michigan, 23 March 2016.

¹² Author interview, Dearborn, Michigan, 28 March 2016

youth indicated that, according to family, escape from the confines of such a system was among the leading rationales for emigration.

From a social science standpoint, the Detroit/Dearborn area is fascinating for a variety of reasons, but one of the dimensions that struck me during fieldwork was the noticeable presence of journalists eager to speak with Muslim Americans about their reactions to the charged rhetoric leading up to and during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign season. During this period, there were also a number of cases in which members of the Lebanese community had been arrested as a result of covert surveillance by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Some were accused of planning or taking part in terrorist activity, or of providing support to terrorist organizations. Many in the Dearborn area expressed displeasure that such operations were being undertaken in their community, and felt as though there had been unwarranted targeting because of Arab heritage. As had been the case with other social milieus, the nature of this particular setting gave rise to reflections about my own positionality, and also made me initially apprehensive about prospects for access. Would potential informants think that I was someone other than a researcher? Would they trust me? I did get the impression that residents were frustrated by the large number of journalists who were circulating in the area, but ultimately none of these realities proved to be an inhibiting factor for me. To the contrary, one of my informants, Max, indicated that he was relieved that my topic had “nothing to do with this ridiculous Muslim question. We’re Americans, you know? Isn’t that what really matters? I was born here. I love this country. All of my friends were born here, as well”.¹³

What Max conveyed to me was not at all inconsistent with other perspectives I had heard while in the field in Dearborn. In a conversation with one informant, as we drove together from

¹³ Author interview, Dearborn, Michigan, 31 March 2016. Max was born in Boston, Massachusetts, which is where his family initially moved upon emigrating from southern Lebanon in 1995. They later resettled in the Wayne County region of southeast Michigan shortly after his birth.

Dearborn to Windsor to visit the church where he worshipped, there was an extensive discussion about issues such as profiling and belonging. He indicated that his name was the only social marker of his origins, and that he had not really experienced any ill treatment or discrimination because of his lineage. I was curious to see what would happen at the border crossing, and whether he might be questioned at all. He had no problems, but the U.S. customs officer asked pointed questions about my passport, mostly focusing on why I had been to Turkey and Lebanon so frequently. I was actually surprised. Rami and I continued our conversation in the parking lot of the church, and the last thing he said before we got out of the car was that his residential neighborhood is mixed. “There are people from Lebanon, of course, but also people from Iraq, Greece, even Mexico. Some of us are Christian. Some are not. I have never asked, and frankly I don’t care. Good people. That’s all I want around me. Doesn’t matter where you come from, what you look like, or what you say if you do ever pray.”¹⁴ Inside the church, I received a very warm welcome. I was expecting there to be some measure of surprise at my presence, but for the most part, there were very few glances in our direction (or at least not repeated ones), and I was watching. It could have very well been the case that many of the parishioners were aware that I might be attending one or more of their services, since I had already engaged in preliminary discussions about my research and a possible church visit with Rami and his sons.

During fieldwork in the United States, Senegal, and Lebanon I was able to gain insight, via interviews and participant observation, into how individuals view themselves relative to both the communities in which they live and their real (for first generation members of the diaspora) or imagined (for those of the second and third generation) community and country of origin. Building trust was key, not only for the purpose of gaining access for interviews, but also for

¹⁴ Author interview, Windsor, Ontario, 26 March 2016. Rami normally attended mass on Sundays, but asked if I would join him for the Saturday mass because he thought it would be better for me, as it is conducted in English.

generating on the part of informants the readiness to embrace me as part of their social world, and to reach out to family members, colleagues, and peers to help me with additional interviews locally or elsewhere. There is, for instance, a large contingent of Shia Lebanese living in Dearborn, and many of them have their origins in Bint Jbeil in southern Lebanon. The perceived empathy that I conveyed during my time with community members in Lebanon no doubt influenced their willingness to facilitate my research in other locales. Such network dynamics are indispensable when researching diasporas. Showing up and asking questions of closed societies will not elicit the kinds of expansive, forthcoming responses that, along with rich participant observation, help to build “thick description”.

3.6 Ethics and Awareness in the Field

Researchers have a responsibility to ensure that their informants are not put at risk as a result of participating in the research process. It is equally important that everyone who participates in the project does so of his or her own free will. For this project, all informants were provided with a consent form which explained the nature and purposes of this study, and also outlined how their contribution would be used. The form served two main purposes: it acknowledged informed consent, and it guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. Accordingly, throughout the text of this thesis, pseudonyms have replaced the names of all participants, and some information has been modified to further safeguard the identity and location of particular informants.

An additional ethical consideration is ensuring that respondents are not left with emotional scars and painful baggage as a result of the research experience. As Lee-Treweek and Linkogle (2000) note, there are a range of sensibilities that researchers must consider, relative to the implications of fieldwork for their own emotional and physical well-being, as well as that of those helping to inform the study. Of particular significance is the need to manage the emotions

of research participants. Interviews can generate painful memories. Researchers should understand, based on previous interviews and awareness of the sensitivity of some topics, that there are necessary limits to probing too far.

Given the close associations that those using ethnographic methods tend to build with the communities in which they conduct research, it is critical that all parties understand the bounds of appropriate interaction, for the sake of the integrity of the research and also to protect both the researcher and the informant/interpreter/gatekeeper from being manipulated.

Moreover, while researchers obviously need to take care that they are not usurping the time of informants, interpreters, and other participants, it is equally important to be aware of attempts by gatekeepers and informants to manipulate the relationship in ways that compromise principles of research integrity or perhaps place strains on the research relationship. Two such incidents are relevant in this context. While a Visiting Researcher at the Institute for Migration Studies, there was a student from one of the department's M.A. programs who was one of my interpreters for interviews conducted in Beirut. He also drove me to certain areas that would have been uneasy to reach by service or bus, using the car of his brother, who had recently moved elsewhere in the region for work. He introduced me to members of his own confessional community, as well as to members of a different sect which neighbored the area of Beirut where he lived. He offered much and had asked for very little in return. I paid for the fuel for the car (which was cheap), and also paid for occasional meals that we shared before and after research activity. He made a request of me, one with which I had a difficult time. He asked if I would give him access to the building/department after hours so that he could work on his thesis, and also so that he could print some articles from online sources and copy others; he had no printer at home. He asked me this once, and I pretended that I had forgotten. He reiterated not shortly thereafter, and I simply did not know how to tell him that I could not do that for him. I had free access, but a condition of this privilege was that I could not be accompanied on the premises

after hours by anyone lacking those same privileges. I wanted to oblige him, but also did not want to break the rules and jeopardize my affiliation with the university, an affiliation which I was planning to use again during subsequent visits to Lebanon. It surprised me that he was so insistent about this particular request, and was so cavalier in his discourse about how the rules are never enforced for such things and that I should not worry because, in any event, no one would ever find out. This created a real dilemma for me. In the end, I did not give him my key. Instead, I offered to copy and print the items during the day while I was in the office.

Another instance occurred during the summer of 2015, after spending time with a family in West Beirut as I waited for my room in Dekwaneh (Mount Lebanon) to be ready. I conducted an interview elsewhere in the city, and during the course of our interaction, my informant asked where I was staying in Beirut. I told him, and he shook his head and said that I should not lower my standards. He mentioned that his brother owned a hotel, and that he could arrange for me to have a favorable rate there (because he did not think that it was advantageous for either my safety or health to rent a room in that area). Two days after our interview, I received a call from his brother, who told me that I could come by the hotel at my convenience to check in. He would even send a taxi to pick me up, if I wanted him to do so. He also noted that he had already spoken with members from his place of worship and could arrange for me to interview 15 to 20 of them, and that they were eager to discuss sectarian conflict in Lebanon. This also created a real dilemma for me. I did not want to offend by rejecting this offer of hospitality (though it would have certainly alleviated some strains on my research budget). And I also did not want to seem ungrateful by turning down the offer to interview several from his place of worship. It was clear, however, that a certain agenda had been set for those interviews, and I genuinely did not want to expose myself to those dynamics.

3.7 Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis in qualitative research is to impose order on the immense amounts of information that have been collected. There are a number of options available for conducting analyses, depending on the particular qualitative methodology guiding the project. There are some who rightly advocate grounded theory as a sound approach to analyzing qualitative data. Introduced in the seminal work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory is a tool whose emergence was significant for many reasons, not least because it bridges the gap between empirical data and theory generation (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Among the basic features of grounded theory are advancing the development of theory during each step of data collection and analysis; simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis; constructing analytic codes and categories from data; using memos to outline categories; and conducting the literature review after the development of an independent analysis. One of the many virtues of grounded theory is that researchers can apply *some* of its features, using them to conduct a diverse range of studies. As Charmaz (2014) notes, grounded theory should be viewed not as a rigid set of rules, but rather as flexible guidelines, as adaptable principles that can be used to complement other approaches to qualitative data analysis.

From the grounded theory toolkit, I have adopted the use of analytic memos to help with categorization (particularly with the relationship between categories). These reflections were noted throughout the course of the day while in the field, but most frequently during the periods between and after interviews. I have also followed the practice of allowing theoretical ideas to emerge from the data that have been generated. These elements of the grounded theory approach have been used to complement my principal means of data analysis, which is narrative analysis. This is particularly appropriate for research that is based on multi-sited ethnographic methods, given that it emphasizes following individuals within their environments and social systems and understanding how they construct meaning within those social worlds. Narrative is the major way human experience is made meaningful (Polkinghorne

2007), and it is an invaluable resource for understanding the relationship between individual experience and cultural context (Clandinin and Connelly 2000). As Punch (2005) points out, narratives are an integral component of building knowledge about the lived experiences of individuals and communities. Any vein of ethnographic research, whether a traditional, bounded-site ethnography or a more expansive multi-sited one, is necessarily focused on these dynamics. Analyzing those narratives allows researchers to make sense of the meaning that individuals attach to events, actors and institutions in their social environments, and also to how they view their own identity (Riessman 2008).

The typology of narrative analysis outlines four primary methods: performative analysis, interactional analysis, thematic analysis, and structural analysis. For the purposes of this study, thematic analysis was the most appropriate of the approaches because of its emphasis on thematic meaning and understanding the *point* of the narrative. Thematic analysis involves categorizing data from interviews into themes and subthemes. Ryan and Bernard (2003) provide guidance on developing themes and categorizing data. Their prescription entails mining the data in search of metaphors and analogies, similarities and differences, theory-related material, and repetitions. The use of the NVivo software program facilitated organization and management of data both in broad terms, and for these specific purposes. These four elements of categorization and theme-building are all intuitive – looking for metaphors and analogies simply means identifying instances in which informants conveyed their thoughts in this manner; *similarities and differences* involve comparing statements between informants or comparing statements that an individual informant has made during a single interview; *repetitions* simply refer to instances in which a statement appears several times; and *theory-related material* involves treating the data through the lens of theory relevant to the study, in this case conflict transportation, diaspora, and transnationalism. According to

Boyatzis (1998), thematic analysis is an especially effective tool for identifying stable features and patterns within the data.

I wanted to be confident that my findings actually reflected the realities in Dearborn, Dakar and in Lebanon. Therefore, I triangulated my interview data against other sources, including my own observations in the field (along with those during participant observation activities), archival materials, perspectives imparted during small group sessions with university students, newspaper clippings, and speech transcripts. The convergence of my data helped me to realize that I could have confidence in the credibility of my findings.

3.8 Conclusion: Reflections on Challenges and Opportunities of Ethnographic Methods

The methodological approaches taken in pursuit of this project have given rise to a number of opportunities as well as challenges. Research entails a multifaceted relationship with knowledge – acquiring knowledge of the phenomena under study, engaging in knowledge production to inform the field, and developing a deeper understanding (and appreciation) of reflexivity as it relates to both processes. Studying diasporas requires understanding the simultaneity of their lived experiences, how embeddedness in multiple sites affects the construction (and reconstruction) of their identity, relationships, and interests. Using a multi-sited ethnographic approach has allowed me to capture many of these complexities, and has facilitated access to sites across the diaspora network. This methodological approach has allowed me to gain greater depth in my comprehension of the framing that has taken place in Lebanon relative to the dispositions and attitudes of its constituent communities, and in Dakar and Dearborn for explorations of this same theme in diasporic space. This provided me with a solid point of departure from which to draw comparisons.

From a practical standpoint, there were definite challenges relative to this methodological approach. The financial requisites of a multi-sited ethnographic research can prove taxing. A

key dimension of any vein of ethnographic methodology is depth. Time is the enabling factor for the realization of depth, but a finite amount of time and a limited research budget mean that a primary challenge for researchers lies in managing these constraints so as to limit any adverse impact that these deficiencies might have on fieldwork and the research produced from the engagement of the field. In my own experience, the primary reason that I extended the period of my university registration was because of a desire to ensure that I attained the thickness and depth that I felt were required for my project. I was willing to sacrifice funding in exchange for the additional time that I thought necessary in this regard, and also for the intellectual rewards that had been attained during the course of research. It was a matter of prioritization that came with an attendant commitment to carefully manage and allocate available resources.

One of the primary apprehensions at the outset of the study involved concerns about gaining access to gatekeepers and potential interviewees, and devising effective strategies for overcoming these challenges. This was because of reflections on what I viewed as a two-fold barrier to access. Most people who conduct research on diasporas are investigating some dimension of their own heritage. For these individuals, there are inherent advantages: language fluency, including proficiency in regional dialects; a deep comprehension of social mores only attainable by few outside of long-term residents and native populations; and cultural acceptance as a result of abiding ties to communities and institutions within particular states or regions. My doubts were born of too broad an acceptance of the traditional insider-outsider dichotomy. I came to understand that realities in the field are far more dynamic and complex, both in the country of origin and in diasporic social space. In the former context, my positionality as an “outsider” in Lebanon was not as inhibiting a factor as I had anticipated it to be. To the contrary, being an outsider in the traditional sense provided certain benefits. For example, many individuals were eager to offer their perspectives (and to be expansive in doing so), believing

that they had a veritable blank slate on which to create an impression of their community or country, its history, and their place in it.

Relative to research in the diaspora, I was concerned more so in the U.S. than the Senegalese context with the challenge of gaining access to a community that had the potential for being objectified by the politics of securitization. Among the legacies of September 11th and multiple terrorist attacks in Western Europe over the last decade is state targeting of particular migrant communities for increased surveillance and scrutiny. Migration has been identified as a primary threat to state security. As a result, there are entire communities – even those recognized as established diasporas – that are now perceived as posing risks to the state. This is especially so if they originate from regions identified as major sources of conflict, instability, or the export of hostile ideologies. In Dearborn, there is a heightened awareness of these dynamics, as many within the community have shared their experiences (or stories of those whom they know) with suspicions born of their heritage. Some in the Dearborn revealed that outsiders entering the community for research may possibly be viewed with some measure of caution because of doubts about whether they are truly who they claim to be. From my perspective, being connected with diaspora members by, for instance, their relatives or former supervisors in Lebanon was a way to avoid any such misgivings and therefore ease access to the community.

This securitization of diasporas is not a phenomenon singular to the country of residence. It can occur at any site within the transnational social space that diaspora communities occupy. This is particularly significant because the lived experiences of diasporas are, by definition, shaped by constant navigation of a network of international sites in which individuals engage in what Clifford has described as “non-absolutist forms of citizenship” (1997, 9). For the Lebanese, this often entails frequent movement between, for instance, Sydney, Beirut, and Montreal; or in the case of a translocal village, recurrent travel between Zrariah in southern Lebanon and Abidjan, or between Bint Jbeil, Dakar and Dearborn. An outgrowth of this

circumstance is heightened wariness and distrust of those external to the community, as securitization of diasporas fuels internal insecurity among its members, thus creating potential barriers to access for research in the field.

It became clear that in order to overcome these perceived obstacles, I would have to devise ways to carefully manage my own positionality as a means of gaining access to the institutions and individuals necessary for informing this study. The known sponsor approach and the exploitation of institutional affiliations were two of the indispensable strategies utilized in this context. The cultivation of relationships with gatekeepers in the field, both prior to and after arrival, also proved conducive to access. Those gatekeepers with transnational reach facilitated entry to cultural institutions, and placed otherwise inaccessible audiences at my disposal for interviews. They did so by communicating across their networks of family, professional associates, and friends to advocate on my behalf. This direct and indirect management of positionality helped me to avoid many of the obstacles that tend to slow or otherwise impede the research process.

I have also become much more keenly aware of the implications of positionality and reflexivity, and it is a direct result of having chosen a research method that places me directly in the midst of the populations that are the focus of my study. The ways in which populations in the research sites perceive researchers will affect access to informants, the depth and breadth of what informants are willing to share, what other data the researcher is able to access and collect, and prospects for participant observation. I also found myself constantly negotiating and renegotiating my positionality as a result of the way I perceived the research environment; it was required, and this was so across every site of inquiry that was engaged. In this context, the relationship between researcher and field is symbiotic. I have come to realize just how critical it is for researchers to understand how their own histories and biographies can influence those dynamics. Learning first-hand that I have been responsible, in part, for creating the

observations that have become my data has been a valuable and enlightening lesson. Ultimately, despite the methodological issues and practical challenges outlined here, the multi-sited ethnographic approach has served me well and has proven to be an effective means of seeking to understand the importation of conflict from homeland to diasporic space.

CHAPTER 4

Homeland as Frame: Landscapes of Conflict

4.1 Introduction

Plagued by sustained internal conflict, destabilized by constant external intervention, and incapable of reaching a consensus on reform to prevent the recurrence of either, Lebanon has earned its moniker as the precarious republic.¹⁵ The state is comprised of a highly diverse society, and central to its collective history is the coexistence – vacillating between peace, tension, and violence – of three major confessional communities.¹⁶ Structural inequality across these communities has been an enduring socioeconomic reality, and has also served as a key source of conflict. Questions of loyalty and belonging – defined along confessional lines – have been no less endemic. And the long civil war (1975-1990), though catalyzed and driven by a complex amalgam of factors both domestic and regional, was deepened and prolonged by actors pursuing the narrow self-interests of their respective religious factions. Sectarian conflict is, at once, a principal cause and an abiding effect of the state's chronic instability. The politicization of religious identity has fragmented society and undermined prospects for national unity, leading to allegiance to confessional communities as opposed to strong identification with the state. In related fashion, the Lebanese have routinely turned to external allies as a means of reinforcing their internal status (Fakhoury 2008). The tensions that have emerged in these contexts have played a critical role in shaping the boundaries that define both group identity and the resultant terms of group interaction. This chapter demonstrates how actors, institutions, and processes in the homeland have framed the discourses and practices

¹⁵ Michael Hudson (1968, 1999) coined the phrase *precarious republic* in his work on political development in the early decades of Lebanon's history. For further treatment of this theme, see also Khalaf (1987), Traboulsi (2007), and Hanf (1993).

¹⁶ The Maronite Christians, Sunni, and Shia are the three leading confessional communities, but the Druze have played an important role since the period preceding and during the French Mandate.

that establish these boundaries. It further illustrates how this homeland frame has given rise to both conflict and avoidance among the communities in Lebanon, taking the form of physical violence, discursive confrontation, and spatial separation. The chapter argues that the constituent communities of Lebanese society are trapped in an adversarial frame that sustains conflict and hardens the boundaries between them.

For diasporas, the homeland is an indispensable element of identity. Safran (1991) has noted how diaspora members retain a collective memory of their homeland, and in outlining the three core elements that constitute a diaspora, Brubaker (2005) included the existence of a homeland orientation among these key criteria. The homeland matters, as it is the diaspora's primary point of reference for history and identity. Indeed, the country of origin has a structuring effect on both individual identity and group interaction. Gayer (2007) has referred to diasporas as self-conscious mnemonic communities. In the context of diasporas and conflict, this is particularly relevant because those within a diaspora remain intimately tied to the country of origin and are constantly exposed to factors in the homeland that have contributed to domestic hostilities and social fissures. Frequent travel to Lebanon, constant exposure to transnational Lebanese media, and the maintenance of contact via a range of communication channels all facilitate this exposure. One of the arguments of this thesis is that conditions in the country of settlement matter in the context of shaping group interaction. They do not, however, determine the trajectory of those relations alone. It is the interplay of those factors with conditions in the homeland that helps to explain conflict transportation. It is in this context, then, that understanding the homeland frame and its structuring effects is critical. This chapter explores the homeland frame and demonstrates how it has set, hardened and reproduced cleavages within Lebanese society. The operative question is whether the boundaries set by the antagonistic frame erode in the diaspora. It is impossible to gauge this without first understanding the conditioning that has taken place in the homeland.

Consistent with the overall vantage point of this study as it relates to identity, this chapter rejects the assumption that sectarianism is born of innate cultural incompatibilities and can thus be explained from an essentialist or primordialist perspective that presents conflict as a natural outcome of religious or ethnic differences. It views Lebanon's communal conflict as a socially constructed phenomenon, one resulting from a broad combination of historical, political, and economic decisions and processes that are mutually reinforcing. It incorporates the instrumentalist notion that the elite within society play a critical role in influencing these dynamics, both as purveyors of communal conflict and as stakeholders in the system that sustains it. This chapter therefore views sectarianism through the constructivist lens on identity formation (Chandra 2006), considering it to be both a political strategy and a sociopolitical system, not a natural outcome of cultural, religious or ethnic differences.

The chapter is informed primarily by ethnographic fieldwork carried out across Lebanon (including the Beirut area, the Bekaa Valley, Mount Lebanon, Byblos, Sidon and Jezzine). This empirical work was undertaken in order to develop an understanding of how the core conflict in Lebanon manifests itself in both group interaction and individual perspectives about state institutions and the communities that comprise Lebanon. A primary aim was to use this understanding as a basis of comparison for observations in Dakar and Dearborn, so as to better ascertain whether and how conflict transportation has taken place in those respective contexts. It is impossible to either determine or explain conflict transportation without first understanding how the core conflict in the homeland has been framed, and what factors maintain it.

The chapter is organized thematically into seven sections. Following from this introduction, the second section outlines the historical processes that have set the stage for the core conflict that currently manifests itself in the domestic context, including early decision-making in the planning and execution of the state-building project. The third section discusses the relationship

between conflict and the projection of identity, and the implications this has held for Lebanese society. The ensuing section discusses the institutionalization of sectarianism in domestic politics and the system of clientelism that has emerged as its core feature. Section five demonstrates how the domestic education system reproduces rather than diminishes sectarianism. Next, there is a focus on the role played by the mass media in fomenting communal conflict. Section seven offers treatment of the ways in which sectarianism has affected security and defense. Section eight focuses on geopolitical rivalry in the region, and how this has fueled conflict and political instability in Lebanon. Lastly, the conclusion summarizes and assesses the impact of this constellation of institutions and processes on the homeland frame.

4.2 Historical Landscape: Setting the Conflict Frame

It might be said that the origin of boundaries may be found in the early decisions and historical processes that led to the founding of modern Lebanon. Once a semi-autonomous province within the Ottoman Empire, Mount Lebanon – the precursor of the modern state – was comprised of a population that was overwhelmingly Maronite Christian.¹⁷ Greater Lebanon, conceived by Maronite leaders and facilitated by their French patrons, was created in 1920. The conversion from the former to the latter carried with it significant implications. With an ultimate goal of independent statehood in mind, the Maronite leadership appealed to France for the creation of a state that covered more territory. Among the foremost arguments put forward was that they lacked sufficient fertile land for agriculture and possessed no access to ports in order to carry out trade; thus Mount Lebanon would never be viable (Hudson 1968; Traboulsi 2007). It was out of necessity, then, that the geographic expanse had to be widened to incorporate adjacent territory. Greater Lebanon now had ports (Tripoli to the north, Beirut

¹⁷ The Maronites are a religious community that recognizes the supremacy of the Pope, but maintains its own rituals and uses Aramaic as the language for the liturgy.

along the central coast, and Sidon and Tyre in the south). It also now had a fertile region in the east (the Bekaa Valley). Importantly, this transformation added far more than merely farmland and infrastructure for commerce. Greater Lebanon, unlike its predecessor, was not a Maronite-majority territory. This metamorphosis created a social and political space in which the Maronites would, for the first time, have to coordinate a shared existence with sizable Sunni and Shia populations.¹⁸

All of the new regions that were added to create Greater Lebanon were inhabited by Muslim communities. Sidon, Beirut, Tripoli, and the Akkar – the northernmost district of modern Lebanon – were Sunni areas. The Bekaa Valley was largely a mix of Shia and Sunni communities, but is today predominantly Shia. And all territory from Tyre to the south was overwhelmingly Shia. Moreover, the Sunnis were vehemently opposed to inclusion in Greater Lebanon, preferring instead to remain part of Syria.¹⁹ The Greek Orthodox were skeptical, at best, largely because they realized that they would be among the small minorities in Greater Lebanon, but would be the largest Christian community in Syria. Many within the Greek Orthodox community preferred that Lebanon join Syria, where they would likely enjoy a better chance of assuming positions of leadership. This marked a rather inauspicious beginning for the nascent state, and did not bode well for prospects of successful nation-building (Zamir 2000; Traboulsi 2007).

¹⁸ Prior to the creation of Greater Lebanon, the Druze and several Christian minority groups (primarily Greek Orthodox) had lived on the territory in and around Mount Lebanon. During this period, the Ottomans ruled through the most powerful Druze families. By the mid-1800s, as Ottoman control waned and fierce rivalry between the Maronites and Druze became more violent, the Maronites, as the major Christian community in the region, were under the protection of the Europeans, primarily the French. There existed a bi-communal system of representation between the Maronites and Druze.

¹⁹ These sentiments were strong, and came to the fore in 1958 in a crisis that provided the first real test for the young republic, which was only 15 years removed from independence. Egypt and Syria had merged into what was dubbed the United Arab Republic (UAR). Sunnis in Beirut and the coastal cities expressed support for pan-Arabism and called for Lebanon to join the UAR.

No single community formed a majority in Greater Lebanon, so there remained the question of what kinds of constitutional arrangements should be devised for satisfying the oft-conflicting interests and demands of the various communities, and for distributing political power. The national idea for Lebanon originated with the Maronites, and they felt as though it was their place and purpose to lead mandatory Greater Lebanon and, subsequently, any independent state that emerged from the state-building project they had initiated. The Sunnis were not at all enthusiastic about their inclusion in Greater Lebanon, and feared that they would ultimately be dominated by the Maronites²⁰, which is but one reason why, even in 1926 when the first constitution was promulgated, they still desired to join Syria. The Shia were more ambivalent. They were wary of joining Syria, which would have meant continued subservience to Sunni rule, but were cognizant of the fact that Greater Lebanon might offer a measure of autonomy in areas where they were highly concentrated.

The communal power-sharing framework that was agreed during this period helped to establish official recognition of equal legal status for each of the communities.²¹ Significantly, it set in motion a succession of agreements that created and sustained a weak central government and made communal interests – and the institutions that managed them – paramount (Hanf 1993). This is evidenced by the fact that the constitution provided the communities with the purview over matters of personal status – e.g., marriage, divorce, alimony, custody, inheritance, and also property. By giving the communities the right to legislate matters of civil status, the constitution placed distance between individual citizens and the state, thus forestalling the development of strong links between the two. Equally important, each of the communities was given the right to its own educational system, subject to state supervision. This further

²⁰ To allay these fears, Charles Debbas, a Greek Orthodox lawyer from Beirut, was chosen as the first President of Lebanon.

²¹ There are today 18 officially recognized sectarian communities in Lebanon: Shia, Sunni, Druze, Alawite, and Isma'ili; Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholics, Assyrian, Roman Catholic, Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, Chaldean Catholic, Syriac Catholic, Syriac Orthodox, and Coptic Christian.

strengthened the relationship – the attachment – of individual to sect, as opposed to building on any rationale for allegiance to the state. Representation in the Chamber of Deputies, the forerunner to Parliament, was established based on the proportional strength of each sect. It was established that the presidency would be held by a Christian, and the premiership by a Sunni. No national post was initially set aside for the Shia, who were not consulted in the negotiations and felt as though they were being marginalized. They instead began to lean heavily on their own institutions (Weiss 2010a). These measures helped the Maronites to realize one important goal of their state-building project – to bring on board the various sects as actively engaged stakeholders in Greater Lebanon; this would undermine Arab nationalism. This was accomplished, in part, by providing them with greater autonomy over their own affairs. In so doing, however, they undermined the long-term prospect of fomenting national – as opposed to sectarian – identity and allegiance.

Structurally, the political system is based on the National Pact, an unwritten power-sharing agreement reached in 1943. It legitimized sectarianism by institutionalizing it, dividing political power among the sects (El Khazen 1991). The agreement was reached between the Maronite and Sunni elite, with the Shia having muted input in the formulation of the accord. The framework, which set the structural parameters of Lebanese politics, established that the presidency would be the reserve of the Maronite Christians, the speakership of the Parliament would be set aside for a Shia leader, and the post of Prime Minister would be held by a member of the Sunni community. The Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Speaker of Parliament would always be Greek Orthodox. The presidency was the dominant post, and held a sweeping range of powers, with little accountability or oversight. Key posts in the bureaucracy were also allocated based on sect. In Parliament, representation was set according to a Christian-to-Muslim ratio of 6:5. This favored the Christians, given that the Muslim allocation of seats had to be split. This configuration of the system also meant that the Christians exercised relative

hegemony, with control over not only the powerful presidency, but also the central bank, the Army, sensitive security posts such as the heads of military intelligence and state security services, and a majority in the legislature. The National Pact was an attempt to resolve existing power inequalities by endorsing the principle of shared ownership of the country by all confessions, but it institutionalized a hierarchically organized sectarian democracy, one in which political equality was expected within, but not among, confessions (Moaddel et. al. 2012).²² These discrepancies in power distribution and representation proved to be a major point of contention for the Sunni and Shia communities, emerging as a grievance that fueled resentment and generated tensions between the Muslim and Maronite Christian camps.

The Taif Agreement, reached in 1989 to end the civil war, modified the precepts of the National Pact in an attempt to establish a new consociational power-sharing framework. Taif adjusted the Christian-to-Muslim ratio in Parliament to 1:1, and diminished the powers of the presidency. Executive power was thus shifted from the presidency to the Council of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister, who emerged as the most powerful member of the executive. It represented, however, yet another agreement largely concluded between Sunni and Christian leaders, but affecting the whole of Lebanese social and political space. The Shia felt excluded once again, not only because of the nature of the decision-making process, but also because the newly-codified political arrangement precluded the possibility of a Shia leader ever holding a major executive post. There are continued grievances on the part of the Shia community about equal participation in executive government. Although Taif marked the end of a 15-year civil war, it maintained a political system that was sectarian in nature and fomented sectarianism in society (Hajjar 2009). A critical flaw was its failure to acknowledge the demographic changes that had occurred within the country over the preceding two decades, and to modify the parameters of the political system accordingly (Hudson 1999; Saseen 1990). The National Pact

²² See also Gordon (1980) and Hudson (1968).

had been based, in part, on the census of 1932, which indicated a Christian majority in Lebanon. Among the three major sects, by the conclusion of the civil war the Shia were by far the largest, and the Maronite Christians the smallest, yet the political framework still called for the Maronites and Sunnis to control the most powerful sets of state institutions. The demographic realities were a complete reversal of what was manifest at the founding of the state and at the time that the National Pact was agreed. No census has been taken since 1932. As importantly, the responsibility of interpreting and implementing the tenets of Taif was left to Syria, thus preserving the ability of external actors to influence the domestic politics of Lebanon. In this context, the institutional pathways were clear: Saudi Arabia, a Sunni majority state, exerted its influence via the Sunni Prime Minister; Iran and Syria exerted their influence via the Shia Speaker of the Parliament; and France and the United States attempted to wield their influence via the Christian-led presidency.

This meant that Lebanon continued, even after the civil war, to exist as a country where regional rivalries and antagonisms were played out on its territory, and particularly through the official channels of state. The power-sharing formula devised in the Taif agreement has only aggravated sectarian grievances over the distribution of executive authority. It excludes all but the three major sectarian communities from participating at the highest levels of politics, and prescribes unequal participation among those three. Lijphart (2004) placed an emphasis on representation in fractured communities, and theorized about suitable methods of power-sharing such as coalitions, the allocation of seats based on ethnic, religious, or other demographics, the use of coalitions, and the granting of group autonomy. It is clear, however, that the incarnation of the corporate consociational model in Lebanon has only entrenched and institutionalized competition and conflict based on sectarian identity (Hudson 1988). Simply allocating seats along ethnic lines is an incomplete and insufficient design of power-sharing. A system that is legitimately democratic and stable requires the genuine participation of

significant ethnic and confessional groups within executive power. The system continues to cultivate communal resentment and instability, as well as tensions between the main political representatives of the Sunni and Shia communities (Kerr 2006; Harik 1998). And whereas a consociational political system is supposed to make politics more stable and democratic, in Lebanon it has accomplished neither. The combination of political design and geographic consolidation has clearly resulted in the emergence of social, political, and cultural boundaries that normalize spatial separation and facilitate division and tensions based on narrowly defined group identities.

Taken together, this set of circumstances has forestalled rather than facilitated national unity, making it an increasingly elusive goal. The independent state emerged from compromises between the local elite and French mandatory authorities; it did not emerge, for instance, from a collective rejection or struggle against colonialism. Furthermore, few decisions could have been more paradoxical than trying to build national unity in a multi-religious state by making religion the most important public attribute (Makdisi 2000). These historical processes and decisions have created an opportune context for predatory approaches by the elite. They have also made Lebanon vulnerable to interventions by external (particularly regional) actors seeking to exert influence and, significantly, have heightened deeply-rooted grievances about unequal power-sharing and political participation. This has created political instability and enduring tensions among the major political parties, their leaders, and the adherents who support each.

4.3 Political Landscape: Hardening the Frame

In August 1982, at age 34, Bashir Gemayel was elected President of Lebanon. Within three weeks, he was dead, killed by a bomb attack while giving a speech to the party faithful. In November 1989, René Moawad was elected President. Within three weeks, he was dead, killed

by a bomb that targeted his motorcade as it passed through Beirut. In February 2005, in what has arguably been the most consequential assassination in Lebanon to date, former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was killed when a car bomb exploded as his motorcade passed through Beirut. Ten months later, Gibran Tueni, a Christian member of Parliament and outspoken critic of Syria's role in Lebanon, was killed by a car bomb, also in Beirut. In September 2006, Lieutenant Colonel Samir Shehadeh, an intelligence officer investigating the Hariri assassination, was wounded by a remote-controlled bomb as his convoy passed through southern Lebanon. He survived and moved to Québec. One month later, Pierre Gemayel, the Minister of Industry and a nephew of the assassinated President Bashir Gemayel, was himself assassinated by gunmen, just outside of Beirut. In June 2007, Walid Eido, a Sunni member of Parliament, was killed by a car bomb in Beirut. Three months later, Antoine Ghanem, a Christian member of Parliament, was also killed by a car bomb, just outside of Beirut. In December of that same year, Brigadier General François al-Hajj was killed by a car bomb in Beirut. This was highly unusual, as the Army has generally been immune to such targeting. In January 2008, Captain Wissam Eid, who had been investigating several leads related to previous assassinations, was assassinated, killed by a car bomb in Beirut. General Wissam al-Hassan, intelligence chief and head of the Information Branch of the Internal Security Forces (ISF), had been scheduled to accompany former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in his motorcade on the day that the latter was assassinated. An active member of the country's Sunni-led political alliance, he explained that his absence had been due to a university exam he took on that day, and at that particular time. In October 2012, he was killed by a car bomb in Beirut. In December 2013, Mohamad Chatah, a Sunni politician who had been the Lebanese Ambassador to the United States, the Minister of Finance, and a close advisor to Rafik Hariri, penned an open letter to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. In it, he implored Rouhani to withdraw support for Hezbollah because the group's involvement in the Syrian crisis was, in his opinion,

pushing Lebanon to the brink of civil war. Within a week, he was dead, killed by a car bomb in Beirut.

These accounts depict a striking, but enduring, feature of conflict politics in Lebanon, and represent not only the intensity of the acrimony that often exists between rival factions, but also the propensity of these groups to resort to extreme violence as a method of instrumentality. Political violence of this kind has become one of the defining characteristics of the Lebanese political landscape. Targeted killings and more limited uses of violence have routinely been used to silence critics and to demonstrate what kinds of behavior in the public sphere, by public officials, are deemed acceptable. It might be expected that such tactics would drive citizens away from the system and from those who lead its constituent institutions, particularly political parties. In Lebanon, however, party affiliation and electoral support have very little to do with an endorsement of a specific legislative program. Religion and patronage overlap to create and sustain a system that reinforces sectarianism, fuels corruption, and diminishes citizen linkages with the state.

Support for political parties is not a function of electoral preferences. Because the Lebanese state suffers from a severe institutional development deficit, others organizations are left to fill the void and provide basic social services. The lack of a strong and effective regulatory regime means that these institutions have largely governed themselves. These are largely confession-based parties and religious charities.²³ Schools, clinics, and hospitals are among the numerous institutions that are funded and administered in this context. Roughly half of the country's schools are operated in this fashion, and the overwhelming majority of institutions providing health care provision are controlled by political parties or community organizations (Cammatt and Issar 2010). The sectarian-based parties are able to mobilize support based on their ability

²³ The diaspora also plays a vital role, providing significant funding to underwrite the operations of these institutions.

to deliver these key services, and also on their ability to facilitate access to jobs and resources (Johnson 1987; Baumann 2016). An entrenched system of clientelism has thus emerged from these dynamics, and is a core feature of the domestic sociopolitical system. Prior to the civil war, it was a structure of power (Gilsenan 1996). During the civil war, the militias provided social services within their respective territories. When the civil war ended, the militias transitioned into political parties with fully functioning social service and political wings (Cammett and Issar 2010). The system has endured, and has been strengthened by the combination of a weak state and the growing power of the major political parties. In other systems, parties are established by their leaders in order to compete in elections as a means to ultimately control the legislative agenda. In the Lebanese system, parties are created as a means of mobilizing resources for sectarian constituencies, and most of the parties are, in any event, devoid of any identifiable ideological orientation. The elite manipulate sectarian identity and use kinship and sect to build patron-client relations. Loyalty to sect is deemed tantamount to loyalty to party, and both are used as preconditions in the distribution of public expenditures and the allocation of positions in government.²⁴ The configuration of the political system ensures that the ability to access social services (even public ones) does not depend on connectivity to the state, which has porous boundaries with society, but rather on the relationship to a political party or with members of a party who might have access to political elites, who are themselves sometimes imagined as the state itself (Hermez 2011). In addition to promoting widespread corruption, clientelism has heightened reliance on sectarian organizations and sharpened individual allegiance to particular sectarian parties, further distancing citizens from the state.

Every religious community in Lebanon has a party of the same orientation that represents and protects its interests, or at least promotes itself as doing so. All of the major parties (and

²⁴ See Hamzeh (2001) and also Cammett (2014).

virtually all of the minor ones) have leadership and membership that are based on religious affiliation, and these parties function as an extension of power of the confessional elite (Geha 2016). Most of the Sunni population supports the Future Movement, a party founded and previously led by former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The Shia divide their support primarily between Hezbollah, led by Hassan Nasrallah, and Amal, led by Nabih Berri, the Speaker of Parliament.²⁵ The Druze support the Progressive Socialist Party, which is led by former warlord Walid Jumblatt.²⁶ The Maronite Christian community is split. Most support the Free Patriotic Movement, a party led by General Michel Aoun, the current president of Lebanon. Others lend their support primarily to the Lebanese Forces (LF), led by Samir Geagea, and also to Kataeb, the Lebanese Phalanges Party, which has been led by the Gemayel dynasty.²⁷ There are a number of smaller parties, but the political landscape is dominated by the aforementioned organizations. Unlike parties in most systems, those in Lebanon do not generally subscribe to or promote particular stances on key issues such as taxation, women's rights, environmental protection, education, criminal justice, or transportation. Instead, they have usually been defined by their advocacy for a given sect, and by their respective stances on Syria's role and Israel's presence in Lebanon (Traboulsi 2007). As importantly, their function as purveyors of services to their constituents is as pronounced as their electoral one. With the exception of the Future Movement, most of the political parties in Lebanon originated as militias, but transitioned to party status after the conclusion of the civil war (El Khazen 2003). Those who

²⁵ The Amal Movement is the older of the two, having been founded in 1974 by Imam Musa al-Sadr. Hezbollah was officially established in 1985, though operations had begun as early as 1983. Support for Amal has traditionally come from the middle class, and the strongest support for Hezbollah has traditionally come from the poorer communities of the south, Bekaa Valley, and the southern suburbs of Beirut. Over the past decade and a half, however, support for Hezbollah, vis-à-vis Amal, has increased significantly. Many attribute this to frustrations with corruption within Amal, to the role Hezbollah is perceived to have played in the Israeli withdrawal from the country in 2002, and to Hezbollah's successes against Israel in the 2006 conflict between the two.

²⁶ Reflective of the norm of clan-based politics, Jumblatt is the third generation leader of his sect. His father, Kamil Jumblatt, and grandfather, Fouad Jumblatt, preceded him as leaders of the Druze. Both were assassinated. Likewise, Saad Hariri, son of Rafik Hariri and the current Prime Minister, is now head of the Future Movement.

²⁷ The party was founded by Pierre Gemayel in 1938, and has been led by Bashir Gemayel and Amine Gemayel, both of whom were elected President of Lebanon.

led the militias remained as leaders of the parties. In several interviews, respondents pointed to this as being among the primary reasons for their frustration with national politics and a leading factor for their disinclination to participate. Young professional females from Beirut emerged from the analysis of this interview data as the demographic most likely to express frustrations with the political system. Yasmine, for instance, who will soon be moving abroad, noted that her lack of participation is born of displeasure with the system:

This is why I've never voted. It's not because I don't care. What I understand is that we really cannot change anything. The people from the 70s are still on the scene trying to fight some different kind of war. I wasn't even born in the 70s. Imagine that. It's so strange to me. Sometimes it seems like the country is stuck in a time warp, and nobody wants to let it wake up. I'm not connected to this, and I don't think I can be. I love my country, but this system is ridiculous. How can that motivate young people? It doesn't, so we get on with our lives. We have enough to think about. Maybe if we had some new faces, that would change. Maybe it would change Lebanon. I have no connection to these politics.²⁸

This outlook is reflective of the widespread frustration of the youth and young professionals with the entire political system. Although they readily expressed pride in their heritage, fieldwork revealed that the youth were much less likely to ascribe blame to members of other sects, and were inclined instead to blame the political system and those who lead it, regardless of the party or religious community to which those leaders belonged. A common theme among all youth interviewed for this project was an expressed need for comprehensive reforms that would rid the country of its current political system, especially the use of religion as a primary organizing principle and clientelism as the principal means by which key resources and services are distributed. Ziadeh, expounding upon shortcomings of this system, surmised that “between the ‘hell’ of car bombs and the ‘paradise’ of peaceful marches, there is the ‘purgatory’ of communal squabbling about the election law, about parliamentary seats and governmental posts and vociferous reclamations of unfulfilled communal rights in order to mobilise the

²⁸ Author interview, Beirut, 04 June 2015.

electorate behind a communal elite” (2006, 6). This speaks to the staying power of the system, and a broad acknowledgement – also conveyed by a majority of respondents – that Lebanese leaders have actively sought to not only perpetuate a system that many find unacceptable and unsustainable, but that these leaders routinely take measures to safeguard their preeminent role within that system as arbiters of state resources. This is part of the political economy of Lebanese sectarianism.

The Garbage Crisis of 2015

In follow-up interviews conducted via Skype and Marco Polo, respondents all pointed to the garbage crisis of 2015 (and its aftermath) as a classic illustration of why they have felt disaffected by the political system and its leaders. On 17 July 2015, the Naameh landfill site, the largest in the country, shut down. It had originally opened in 1997 as a temporary site intended to hold a maximum of two tons of garbage. By 2015, eight years beyond its designated span of operation, it held fifteen tons. National authorities were aware of the impending closure, but had made no viable plans to identify and procure new sites to replace the one at Naameh (Abu-Rish 2015). In response, the waste management company responsible for collecting garbage in Beirut stopped collecting it because there were no alternate sites where it could be deposited. As a result, bags of trash accumulated in public space, lining the streets of Beirut, decomposing in the summer heat, and raising serious concerns about risks to public health. For many, the cause of the crisis was symbolic of broader issues related to a sectarian political system that could not manage to ensure the allocation of even the most basic of public services. Widespread protests emerged, starting with the *You Stink* movement, which was led largely by the youth and young professionals, culminating in thousands of citizens taking to the streets to express their frustrations with the political class. These protests focused on what its participants viewed as the primary symptoms of Lebanese sectarianism: systemic corruption, clientelism, and passivity of the political establishment in the face of pressing issues. Thus the protests,

sparked by the garbage crisis, became an anti-government, anti-corruption, anti-system movement. At the time the crisis began, the country had already been without a president for some thirteen months because of sectarian wrangling over a choice of successor to the previous president, Michel Suleiman.²⁹ Respondents who took part in the protests recalled how political leaders used their media outlets to try to discredit and delegitimize the protests. One of the major developments to emanate from the garbage crisis was Beirut Madinati (Beirut My City), an organized attempt to create a response to the sectarian parties and sectarian politics that had long defined the political landscape. Beirut Madinati contested the 2016 municipal elections in Beirut, hoping to capture the lingering frustration of the garbage crisis and the longstanding discontent with the entirety of the political system. In response, however, six of the major party leaders created a single, unified list, consisting of a coalition of erstwhile rivals who had never before entered into such an electoral pact. Their Beirut List was comprised of the Future Movement, Amal, the Free Patriotic Movement, Lebanese Forces, Kataeb, and the Progressive Socialist Party. The Beirut List won all 24 seats on the municipal council. When asked why the Beirut Madinati movement did not fare better in the election, the majority of respondents tended to point to three key reasons: The working class was still largely reliant on the patronage of party leaders and thus continued to give them support, viewing Beirut Madinati as merely a fleeting movement. Secondly, had the major parties contested the election separately, Beirut Madinati would have likely experienced marked success. Respondents perceived that the establishment felt threatened and therefore agreed to coalesce into a single list so as to counter what appeared to be growing support for Beirut Madinati. That the established parties entered into a pact only reinforced the notion among some respondents that their primary aim was to stay in power, not to provide for the citizens. This has had the effect of heightening distrust of

²⁹ In the Lebanese system, the president is not elected by popular suffrage, but indirectly by members of parliament.

the parties and the system. A third reason was related to the electoral law. Voters must be at least 21 years of age, which prevented many of the university students from being able to cast a vote in the election. They had been among the most vocal and active participants in the protests. The electoral law also restricted participation by those living in Beirut. Residence in Beirut did not necessarily equate to eligibility to vote there because the electoral law requires that individuals vote in the city or village of their family's origin (Harb 2018). This further reduced the likelihood that the emerging popular discontent would translate to accordant electoral outcomes. A prominent theme that emerged from interview data was the singling out of this political system and the conflict it generates as the two primary catalysts for emigration. There was a near consensus among university students, for instance, that they preferred to pursue their livelihoods elsewhere so as to avoid having to navigate such a system. They also expressed a strong disinclination to expose their children to this kind of environment, should they eventually start a family, as most indicated was the preference. Among those who lived through the civil war period, there were also expressions of frustration with the system, but many were more likely to assign blame to specific leaders or to certain political parties as a cause of instability and conflict rather than cast aspersions on the entire system. Their main argument centered on two main beliefs: first, that some leaders were not sufficiently receptive to compromise; and secondly, among a majority of Christian respondents in this group, that leaders were taking their cues from elsewhere, and thus not pursuing policies that were fully in the interests of Lebanon.

The Assassination of Rafik Hariri as a Transformative Event

The most pivotal event in post-Taif Lebanon was the February 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, who was killed in an explosion in downtown Beirut. Hariri had twice served as Prime Minister, first from 1992 to 1998, and then again from 2000 to 2004. His

murder came as a shock and led to a period of political instability, heightened sectarian tension, a succession of political assassinations, and real uncertainty about how Lebanon's citizens and leaders might be able to move the country out of this period. There were also concerns about whether these reactions might somehow reignite the cleavages from the long civil war and lead to a new one.³⁰

That a politician was either targeted or killed was not a novel feature of the political landscape. It was the combination of scale and symbolism that made this such a jarring event for both Lebanon and the region. Twenty-three people were killed and scores injured in a blast that left a massive crater in the center of Beirut, a blast that either destroyed or severely damaged a number of adjacent properties. Testimony by expert witnesses indicated that it would have taken approximately 300 kilograms of high-grade explosives to render such damage, but the final report sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council concluded that at least 1,000 kilograms had been used. The force of the explosion was so powerful that it was recorded by seismic equipment nearly 100 kilometers away. Vestiges of the destruction remain to this day.

From a symbolic perspective, the significance was profound. Hariri was the unchallenged leader of the Lebanese Sunni population.³¹ Within its ranks, his murder was viewed as an affront to the community. He had created and led the Future Movement, a political party and affiliated set of institutions that included print and broadcast media outlets, and a network of healthcare and social service organizations. His eponymous foundation provided scholarships for students of all demographic backgrounds (both at home and in the diaspora) so that they might be able to pursue university education, helping to create a new middle class in a country

³⁰ See Safa (2006) and Harris (2007) for thorough treatment of the domestic and regional implications of the assassination. See also Nizameddin (2006), who speaks more specifically to the role of Hariri at attempting to re-establish Beirut as the regional hub of the financial and service sectors.

³¹ After his death, his son, Saad Hariri assumed control of the party apparatus and the family's corporate portfolio. He has twice served as Lebanese Prime Minister, first from 2009-2011, and again from December 2016 to the present.

where upward mobility had long been experienced more so through the lives of emigrants than by those residing in Lebanon. And critically, it was his stewardship that rebuilt the capital city in the aftermath of the civil war. Hariri was more than simply the embodiment of the Sunni community. In a far more expansive sense, he was *the* symbol of Lebanon's post-civil war reconstruction and renewal. Although his party was a Sunni organization and its adherents overwhelmingly Sunni, Hariri's approach to governing and to the reconstruction of Beirut was largely secular. His murder was thus viewed by Sunnis, as well as by many non-Sunnis, as an attack on Lebanon.

In the immediate aftermath of the assassination, tens of thousands of citizens converged on central Beirut in a massive wave of protests. Many feared that the assassination would push Lebanon closer to a new civil war. Their demands focused on calls for a secular political order and full sovereignty. Relative to the former, those taking part in the demonstrations made clear that they no longer wanted to be governed by a system that legitimized sectarianism, requiring that the president be Christian, the Prime Minister Sunni, and the Speaker of Parliament from the Shia sect (Geha 2016). These spontaneous demonstrations generated other protest activities, some organized by party factions, some by students. Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, called for a rally on 08 March, and asked its supporters to offer a show of support for Syria, framing it as a necessary show of solidarity. Over half a million Hezbollah and pro-Syrian partisans turned out to participate. Saad Hariri, who succeeded his father as head of the Future Movement, called for a rally on 14 March and it, too, witnessed support in the hundreds of thousands. Its rallying cry, as framed by Hariri, was the complete withdrawal of Syria from Lebanese territory, the disarmament of Hezbollah, and a full investigation into the Hariri assassination. These protests took place on a daily basis, with the epicenter of activity being Martyrs' Square in the center of the city.

The major development resulting from this collective outcry was the official withdrawal of

Syrian troops on 30 April 2005, after nearly twenty-nine years of occupation and interference in internal Lebanese politics and security. Many point to what has been termed the Cedar Revolution as having been the real spark of the Arab Spring. It marked the first time in the region that non-violent protest had led to the peaceful resolution of conflict. The protest movement was framed and undertaken as an inclusive mobilization that was deemed legitimate across a broad cross-section of society, thus enhancing its chances for success (Loizides 2015, 145).

These were important developments, to be sure, but the events of 14 February carried additional, and significant, implications. Hezbollah, a Shia organization, was largely blamed for the assassination, with other theories placing culpability with Damascus. Though there was a complex set of shifting alliances before, during, and immediately after the civil war era, sectarian conflict in Lebanon had always been defined largely along Christian-Muslim lines. The assassination of Hariri changed these dynamics completely. It redefined sectarian conflict in Lebanon, shifting the locus from Muslim-Christian to Muslim-Muslim, namely Sunni versus Shia (Geha 2016, Blanford 2006).

This event was a pivotal one, in both real and symbolic terms. It had a clear impact domestically, and these effects reverberated across confessions. It precipitated the withdrawal of Syria from Lebanon after nearly twenty-nine years of occupation. It led to the resignation of a government. It brought millions into public space to protest, and to do so peacefully. And it reordered sectarian conflict in Lebanon. Consistent with the social movement theory literature on transformative events, the assassination marked a turning point for multiple social movements within Lebanon and led to increased mobilization for all of them: the anti-Syrian movement (embodied by the March 14 coalition and comprised of a majority of those in the Lebanese Sunni and Christian communities) and the pro-Syrian (consisting predominantly of the Shia community, and a large contingent of Christians from the Free Patriotic Movement).

Recent scholarship by Koinova (2018) has distinguished between transformative events and critical junctures, characterizing the former in a way consistent with the existing work on social movement theory, and expanding understanding of the latter by pointing out how it embodies much broader transformations in society and perhaps the international system. In this sense, the Hariri assassination may indeed be viewed as a transformative event that itself triggered, for example, the Cedar Revolution, a critical juncture that has led to protest movements that have reshaped citizen-state dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa. Although significant as a point of departure and a possible model for other protests in the broader region, Kurtulus (2009) rightly points out that the Cedar Revolution, while achieving the official withdrawal of Syria, has changed little of the systemic conditions that perpetuate communal conflict within Lebanon.

An official from one of the March 8 parties acknowledged that 2005 was a turning point for Lebanon, and not just for its politics:

It was big. All the movements across the region in these last years have been far-reaching. The history books will record the story as if it started in Tunisia with that fruit vendor. It did not. It started right here in Lebanon, not in Tunisia, and I'm proud of that. In the end, it's all a process. My hope is that this will help Lebanon to finally be itself. We don't really know what that means here because this has always been France's Lebanon or Syria's Lebanon. It's time for Lebanon to finally be Lebanon, it's the only way that makes sense.³²

Multiple informants echoed this sentiment, and viewed the close relationships between Lebanese state actors and many of their international counterparts as a detriment to genuine development, and as a barrier to not only political reform, but also to an economy not defined by corruption. They expressed a belief in Lebanon possessing a tremendous potential, but that these possibilities for advancement were being blocked – some respondents used descriptors

³² Author interview, Beirut, 30 May 2015.

such as *sabotage* and *hijacked* – by external actors and a domestic elite who preferred to operate within a system that preserved their own centrality. A recurring theme that emerged from formal interviews, and also from what was verbalized by others during participant observation, was a strong desire for political reform. The system was a non-responsive one, and those who led it were also deemed unaccountable.

General Election of 2018

In many ways, the general election of 2018 was symptomatic of the range of implications that sectarianism has held for Lebanese politics. The election was originally scheduled to take place in June 2013, but was postponed multiple times – first in 2013, then again in 2014, and lastly in 2017. Prior to May 2018, when the election was finally held, voters had not had the opportunity to cast a ballot in a national election in Lebanon for a period of nine years. During this prolonged interval, members of parliament extended their mandate twice, further alienating voters who had already expressed increasing frustration with a political class that they felt had grown indifferent to expressions of popular will. There were several interrelated reasons for the postponements: inability of the incumbents to agree on necessary regulatory reforms for elections; inability of the parliament to choose a president, due to disagreements between the March 8 and March 14 coalitions (and their regional patrons) over suitable candidates; and the problematic security situation emanating from the ongoing crisis in neighboring Syria. The electoral reforms that were finally agreed, though inclusive of the adoption of proportional representation, created new districts based on confessional demographics and were drawn in such a way as to facilitate electoral success for individual parties corresponding to particular religious factions. This strengthens both the notion and practice of Lebanese democracy being driven not by competing ideological programs, but rather by two processes: first, by contests within a religious community for the support of its adherents (Amal and Hezbollah for Shia support; and the FPM, LF, and Kataeb for support from the Maronite population), and

secondly, by contests across religious communities, via their leaders, for access to state resources. These realities combine to deepen the sectarian dimension of national politics. The failure to choose a president, which left the country without a head of state for over two years (24 May 2014 - 31 October 2016), was itself born of disagreements over whether the preferred candidates of each coalition were either too or insufficiently close to Hezbollah. In the end, Hezbollah ally Aoun emerged as the new president after Saad Hariri and his Future Movement abandoned opposition to the Aoun candidacy.

In addition to recalibrating the domestic voting process, the new electoral code introduced two major changes to the relationship between the diaspora and electoral politics. First, with the 2018 general election, the country's vast diaspora was finally allowed, by law, to vote. Secondly, as of the next general election in 2022, there were to have been six seats in parliament reserved exclusively for the diaspora. Prior to 2018, Lebanese citizens residing abroad were required to travel to Lebanon if they wanted to cast their votes. This gave rise to allegations of corruption and vote buying because political parties routinely organized and sponsored the travel of their supporters. Allowing the diaspora to vote from abroad was seen as a way to stem this practice, to encourage diaspora participation and, together with the allocation of legislative seats, to recognize the central role the diaspora has played in the economic, social, and political life of Lebanon as a transnationally engaged community. The debate over implementing this change took place along sectarian lines. As the Christians are the largest group within the diaspora, estimated at roughly seventy to seventy-five percent of the global diaspora, all of the Christian parties strongly supported granting the right of suffrage from abroad to those of Lebanese heritage. Hezbollah had expressed strong opposition to this measure because it argued that its supporters would be disinclined to either vote for the party or to openly express support while abroad because of surveillance and the pressures of securitization in many national contexts, particularly in the United States. In the end, as part of the compromise to

surmount the impasse that had long delayed the country's general election, Hezbollah agreed to endorse this change.

Although there was a fifteen percent increase in eligible voters from 2009 to 2018, there was a roughly five percent decrease in voter turnout in the election. This reflected continued disillusionment with the political system and a shared opinion that any electoral exercise, regardless of its new packaging, was likely to return the same group of individuals to power. During fieldwork, this perspective was consistently revealed across confessional groups and sites of inquiry, and was expressed most frequently and most strongly by those under 32 years of age. In reality, the results of the election partially upheld this vantage point. Despite his party losing one-third of its seats, Saad Hariri was once again selected to lead government and serve as Prime Minister, largely because the Future Movement remains the largest Sunni bloc and the post of Prime Minister is set aside for a Sunni leader. The parliamentary speaker, Nabih Berri, retained a post he has held since 1992. There were a number of developments that did emerge from the election and point to potential change, however incremental, in Lebanese national politics, at least in politics of an electoral nature. A total of 113 women registered as candidates for the 2018 general election (a record high), and eighty-six made it onto the final electoral lists to compete in the election (also a record).³³ At the conclusion of the balloting, the number of women in parliament ultimately increased from four to six. When the government was formed, there was also a record number of women chosen to serve in the cabinet, with four women having been assigned portfolios. Significantly, one of the new female members of parliament was an independent candidate. In addition to increased participation of women as candidates, the election ushered in a record number of independent lists and candidates, demonstrating an increased willingness on the part of civil society to contest what

³³ See National Democratic Institute (NDI) Lebanon 2018 Parliamentary Elections Final Report.

is often viewed as a closed system; and a willingness of voters to lend their support to alternatives to traditional sect-based political parties.

These are among the defining and evolving characteristics of the political sphere in Lebanon. To varying degrees, each reinforces the other, but sectarianism may be the most entrenched of them all. According to Deeb and Harb (2013), the system is best viewed as a political and juridical reality that emerged through a complex history of the gradual alignment of politics with sectarian identities. There is a consensus among scholars that from the founding of the state in 1926 to the National Pact of 1943 and the Taif Agreement (1989) that ended the civil war, successive official actions have only served to reinforce sectarian identity instead of building national unity across multi-confessional lines (Zisser 2000, Hudson 1999). Thus, the political system and the institutional actors who comprise it have contributed to both the creation and the maintenance of boundaries between Lebanese communities.

4.4 Identity Landscapes: Internalizing the Frame?

As Posner (2004) points out, identities are both multiple and contextual. Individuals often tend to more strongly identify with and project one particular dimension of this sense of self – Belgian, but Flemish; American, but from the South; Lebanese, but Maronite; Irish, but Protestant. For some, it is easy to navigate between the projections of these multiple identities. For the Lebanese, historical processes and the landscapes of conflict have had a profound effect on both identity development and identity projection. In the relatively young history of the state, there have been multiple conflicts among its constituent communities, and when actuated during periods of armed confrontation, these have hardened the boundaries that communities have established between them. The identity card murders provide a telling case in point. During the era of the civil war, identification revealed not just the name of an individual, but

also his or her confession.³⁴ Individuals, included among them innocent civilians, were killed by militia merely for adhering to one confession and wandering into territory controlled by the militia of another. Lack of involvement in the civil war bore no relevance. Even though their only perceived transgression was being a Muslim in a Christian area, or vice versa, this was sufficient to warrant a death sentence. Some were shot on the spot. Others were tortured and then killed (Hanf 1993, 327). There was palpable fear of leaving familiar surroundings. Militias began to exercise governmental, policing, and other functions over their territory, and through ethnic cleaning sought to ensure demographic homogeneity within those territories. The resulting effects on identity development and projection were profound, as individuals were under pressure to define themselves according to very narrow and limited conceptions that conformed to the dogma of the militia. What is more, the practices of the militia did not merely demand and normalize segregation. They were engaging in “memoricide, the eradication of all memories of coexistence and common interests among Lebanese” (Traboulsi 2007, 233)³⁵. This had the effect of reinforcing the geographic boundaries within which confessional communities situated themselves, as *same* became increasingly synonymous with *safe*. This perpetuated and strengthened the territorial dimension of sectarianism, evinced by social and spatial segregation. One notable exemplar of this phenomenon was the demarcation of Beirut during the civil war into West (Muslim) and East (Christian), each with its own militia.

Episodes of this nature might be seen as a validation of the primordialist view as it relates to such ethnic conflict. According to this perspective, tensions and even violent conflict are inevitable because of the irreconcilability of divergent belief systems, of seemingly divergent

³⁴ It was not until 1989 that this practice of requiring a disclosure of confession on identification cards was discontinued.

³⁵ Here, in the use of the term *memoricide*, Traboulsi cites the Spanish poet and novelist Juan Goytisolo, who employed the term to refer to the burning of the Sarajevo Library by the Serbs. Goytisolo deemed this an attempt to build a new national mythology by erasing the collective memory of the Bosnian Muslim people by destroying the Persian, Ottoman, and Arabic manuscripts that were in the collection.

cultures (Smith 1998; Connor 1993, Horowitz 2000). The traits that underpin those belief systems only become further ingrained over time, making it even more difficult to negotiate conciliation between two communities that view their orientations as incompatible (Hammond and Axelrod 2006, Glazer 1986). A question arises, however, relative to attempts to apply the primordialist frame to the Lebanese context. If innate characteristics make conflict unavoidable, why had there been such an extended period of relatively peaceful coexistence among the sects in the years preceding the start of the civil war and in the years immediately thereafter? Some have argued that ethnic conflict is driven more so by elites stirring the emotions of their adherents than by any kind of primal impulse. Varshney points out that a primary facet of the instrumentalist perspective is that ethnicity is “neither inherent in human nature nor intrinsically valuable”, and that it “masks a deeper core of interests which are either economic or political (2009, 282). Instrumentalists posit that leaders can and do politicize identity in an attempt to mobilize it for their own benefit, especially in the context of perceived inequality or where concerns about (in)security may be present. Brass (2003) has demonstrated how struggles for political control in South Asia have led the societal elite to manipulate cultural symbols in order to mobilize identity. Consistent with the predominant instrumentalist perspective, the elite are able to use linguistic, religious and other differences as fodder for the fomentation of conflict. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) have pointed to how grievances – articulated and emphasized by the elite – can give rise to ethnic conflict. Posen (1993) also demonstrates how perceptions of insecurity vis-à-vis the “other” can play a role in this context. Conflict, therefore, emerges when other factors arise as a product of deliberate strategies on elite to strategies conflict such as Chandra (2004). The constructivist perspective holds that ethnic identity is socially constructed and fluid, and that conflict results from historical processes that give rise to divergent ethnic identities and hostilities between them (Demmers

2007). From this perspective, each society has an historically constructed master cleavage that the societal elite can manipulate.

Multiple university students, most of whom were Maronite Christian, lamented the endurance of political leaders whom they felt were responsible for slowing the development of strong national identity by intentionally playing on the parochial sentiments of some within Lebanese society. One of the predominant themes shared by these students was a view that the current state of affairs could have been easily avoided, but that political leaders are only interested in self-preservation, even if that comes at the expense of domestic stability and peaceful relations among the Lebanese. They expressed particular frustration with the fact that many of those who led militias during the civil war are still central figures in national political life. These students routinely emphasised being Lebanese, and rarely made reference to their religious orientation when referring to their role or their place in society. One student among the group summed up the collective perspective rather well, arguing that citizens need to “start acting like Lebanese instead of pigeons...but if we do, these guys will fade away and be forgotten and they’ll never let that happen. That’s why we have sectarianism. It’s stupidity. We are Lebanese”.³⁶

This vantage point was an explicit rejection of sectarianism in terms of its social dimensions and its application in the political sphere. During my interview sessions in Lebanon, this was a prominent theme across communities, regardless of regional locale or religious affiliation. According to this perspective, the culpability for communal conflict in Lebanon lies with the country’s leaders, who have manipulated identity for political purposes and, as a result, have driven a wedge between communities. The argument here is that Lebanon needs to work towards building a truly national identity as opposed to one that is sect-based and fragmented.

³⁶ Author interview, Byblos, 26 June 2014.

This view was also encapsulated in the perspective shared by Amir, who has lived in West Beirut for twelve years and rejects the idea that those from his community are somehow less Lebanese or less developed than other social groups:

Look at these keys. This says Mazda. There is no donkey outside waiting to take me to work, and I don't draw water from a well to drink it, or collect it with tin receptacles. I buy it like everybody else here. You heard me say work, yes? We are professionals. We *work*. We have businesses here and a lot of places. We don't sit around waiting for someone to stuff our pockets with Saudi money. We don't pretend. We're a genuine people.³⁷

Ironically, though eager to refute a stereotype of his own community, he nevertheless uttered a reinforcement of one often held of the Sunni community in Lebanon (mostly of those in Beirut), namely that they take direction from Saudi Arabia, mostly through affiliation with the Future Movement. This was also a reference to the widespread practice of clientelism that is a core feature of Lebanese politics, and is practiced across all confessional communities.

For some, questions of identity are complicated not by their own internal deliberations, but rather by the feeling that there is a constant need to prove whom or what they are not, or to dispel notions held by others which are not consistent with reality. Several respondents, when reflecting on the acceptance of identity and on the projections of others, emphasized that they felt as though non-Muslim Lebanese citizens pre-judged those who were Muslim and considered them less civilized. One such interviewee noted that he considered himself Lebanese first and Muslim second, and was proud of his nationality and of the diversity of the country. He spoke of Lebanon as a special place and added that “anyone who revokes his identity is an ignorant person.”³⁸ This was a rejection of sectarianism and an embrace of a national idea. The respondent perceived that others held a negative view of his community, and

³⁷ Author interview, Beirut, 29 May 2015.

³⁸ Author interview, Beirut area, 17 June 2015.

this was a mindset most prominent among respondents who were from the southern region of Lebanon or from the Bekaa Valley in the east.

Empirical evidence has shown that events can not only activate or reactive sectarian cleavages within society, but that they can also affect identity. On multiple occasions, interviewees shared their personal experience with such dynamics. They pointed specifically to the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, who was killed in February 2005. Two especially poignant examples illustrate just how powerful events can be. Imad shared the following perspective and experience:

Lebanese people had a sense of nationalism, of belonging to Lebanon. Now, we have a sense of belonging to a religion, and it is a fragmented religion, at that. This is something that did not exist back then. The obstacles we are facing now, they simply were not there. After 2005, there was more tension. I was 14 years old when they got Hariri. It changed everything. I am Shia, as you know, but I am a Shia who is around other people. Where I grew up in Baalbek, it was mostly Shia, just like my school. But there were other kids in the neighborhood, and we all played together and our families knew each other, with no problems. After they got Hariri, my parents started asking me *why do you have a friend named Omar?* I must tell you that Omar is a common name for Sunni boys here. These questions were never asked before. I didn't know what to make of it. I didn't tell Omar.³⁹

For Samer, this event did not lead to a problem of his parents questioning his circle of friends. Instead, it adversely affected relations between his parents, and it also transformed his own self-awareness:

Everything is religious-based in Lebanon. Everything. Actually, my parents are not religious. I mean they don't pray. It's a bit personal, but I don't mind saying this. My parents got a divorce based on some religious issues. You know, back in 2005, you started seeing this division in Lebanon about the Muslims – the Shia and Sunni. So basically my mom was Sunni and my dad was Shia. And they always had these fights about 'the Shia are right, no the Sunni are right'. You know, they had these fights, and it was nothing, but then they got a divorce, and now my mom is Christian. It was right after the Hariri assassination. Before

³⁹ Author interview, Beirut, 03 June 2015.

Hariri was assassinated, I remember no one in Lebanon ever spoke about Shia or Sunni. I knew I was Shia after 2005 because we never questioned this until then. We never even tried to question this. You're a Muslim and you're a Christian. That was the only case.⁴⁰

While he never expressed hostility towards any particular group, Samer, like a majority of Beirut respondents, identified a frustration with the fact that everyday life is so broadly affected by some dimension of religion. From my interview data, those who were born after the end of the civil war or who lived abroad during the conflict were much more likely to express disapproval of the pervasive role of religion and the prominent use of religious identity within Lebanese society. Samer was also alluding to the fact that in the post-2005 era, the Christian-Muslim divide has been supplanted by a burgeoning animosity between the Sunni and Shia of Lebanon. This is also reflective of a wider trend in the region, and was heightened by reactions within Lebanon and elsewhere to Hezbollah's out-of-area operations in Syria to support the regime of Bashar al-Assad, and to both Iran and Saudi Arabia assuming a more assertive, competitive and increasingly expansive role in the Persian Gulf (Abdo 2013).

There are many factors that influence conceptions of identity, and notions of belonging. The national idea – the state idea – is sometimes predominant. At other times, individuals choose to project their identity via language, or perhaps even ethnicity. Institutions and events can have a marked effect on identity, and in Lebanon, the media, education system, political system, and security and defense apparatus have all had such an impact on identity and on the ways in which citizens develop a view of their appropriate relationship with the state, with their own communities, and relative to relations across both the Lebanese social mosaic and the region.

⁴⁰ Author interview, Beirut, 28 May 2015.

4.5 Education Landscape: Reproducing the Frame

Like most aspects of life in Lebanon, the education system is both a product of sectarianism and a factor that sustains it. There have traditionally been wide disparities in access, achievement, and resources invested in education, with the imbalance being manifest along regional and confessional lines. Among the primary reasons for these divergent patterns are two key realities. First, under both the mandate system for Mount Lebanon, and later for Greater Lebanon, the religious communities had the right to their own social institutions, including schools. This meant that the quality of education would depend on the level of commitment of each of the communities, and on the resources available to each to fund schooling. In the peripheral areas, there were hardly any schools at all. By the end of the 19th century, for example, the Shia were the only sect lacking educational institutions of their own.⁴¹ Secondly, Christian missionaries had concentrated their activities on Mount Lebanon and Beirut long before the establishment of Greater Lebanon, investing heavily in schools and teaching in those areas. With the support of the mandatory authorities, these missionaries had, for all practical purposes, the monopoly over education. Christian schools, started already in the 19th century, expanded substantially, thereby allowing the Christians to surpass other communities in terms of education, and to accumulate an important cultural capital which turned them into the undisputed elite of the country (Longva 2007). This no doubt had a pronounced effect on the proportion of Christians who held positions of prominence in enterprise vis-à-vis Muslims, who held a higher percentage of positions in the industrial working class.

According to Bourdieu (1990), the education system punishes students from lower socioeconomic status who lack cultural capital that is deemed valuable, and rewards those who

⁴¹ Compounding things further, they also had access to neither the schools run by Christian missionaries, nor to those established by other confessional communities.

possess it. This is consistent with the tenets of reproduction theory, which holds that, in any given state, the education system reproduces inequalities and perpetuates the prevailing power structure (Morrow and Torres 1995; Hill, Greaves, and Maisuria 2009). It is in this context that schools tend to reproduce the skills, values, attitudes, and social relations of dominant groups (Gramsci 1973). This is significant, particularly in the case of Lebanon, because inequalities and their reproduction can, and very often do, foster social divisions and increase the odds of tension and violence. Human capital theory, on the other hand, argues that education serves as a progressive force in society, increasing economic growth and reducing marginalization and tensions. The seminal work of Schultz (1961) predicts that inequalities will decline over time as ascribed family characteristics lessen in importance and meritocracy increases. In Lebanon, however, access to quality education remains restrictive because of cost (the best schools are private), and because of location (these schools also tend to be in Mount Lebanon or Beirut). Education in Lebanon is, in many ways, a tale of two systems and of two societies. There is a private system, which has become renowned region-wide for the quality of its instruction, particularly at the post-secondary level, but caters almost exclusively to the more affluent within Lebanese society. Moreover, there is the public system, which is underfunded, with low teacher morale, and is viewed as a perpetuator of inequality.

Sect-based tension does not feature at the primary and secondary levels of education, but at the tertiary level, it has been replicated in a pronounced fashion. University elections – those for student officers – have become not only politicized, but serve as a key illustration of the instrumentalization of confessional identity within educational institutions. These elections are viewed as a barometer of levels of party support prior to local, and especially national elections. The major parties lend their support to particular candidates, and students lend their support to candidates in ways that mirror the demographic allegiances seen in general elections – the Shia divide their support between Hezbollah and Amal, the Sunnis largely support the Future

Movement, and Christian students allocate their votes across various of the major parties. Much like the national level, the post-2005 coalitions are also a dominant feature of campus politics, with March 8 and March 14, not individual parties, often emerging as declared winners or losers. It is not uncommon to witness a heavy presence of security on campuses during elections, as riots have previously broken out between students. These clashes were based on dynamics related to their respective orientations towards the March 8 or March 14 bloc. In 2011, the Army responded to a riot at Lebanese American University, where tensions had reached a boiling point during a ceremony commemorating the birthday of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. According to some students, however, these incidents should not be seen as harbingers of how student participation in politics will evolve. During interviews, many expressed optimism that students have now begun to look beyond the imposition of sectarian politics on campus, and to begin establishing secular parties and candidacies for student elections. In addition, these students, representative of nearly all of the confessional groups in Lebanon, indicated that their generation is the only one that is beginning to eschew sectarian scapegoating, and to instead openly condemn the government and its leaders for Lebanon's political, economic, and social shortcomings. Despite these expressions of optimism, the fact remains that higher education has also become part of the landscape of conflict in Lebanon, where physical violence and discursive confrontation have affected relations between and among students of divergent political orientation; and these orientations are typically tied to one's faith. Furthermore, the educational system, in general, reproduces social divisions that often lead to conflict within an already fractured society.

4.6 Media Landscape: Spreading the Frame

In the literature on political culture, much emphasis is placed on political socialization and its effect on values, orientations, and beliefs.⁴² The media might well be the most powerful of all the agents of political socialization at shaping a society's knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes towards its system (institutions, leaders, public policy) and, ultimately, towards the state and the national idea that serves as its foundation. Various of the agents of political socialization tend to be most influential at certain stages of the life cycle – parents and schools in the formative years; peers and schools in adolescence; and in the decades which follow, it is the media to which individuals are most constantly exposed, thus making it an especially pervasive institution at shaping beliefs and knowledge. In Lebanon, much like the political and education systems, the media is marked by sectarianism, and has thus been a facilitator of homeland conflict. Given this reality, an important question to consider is whether these media outlets – easily accessible in the diaspora via online platforms and by way of satellite broadcasts – also contribute to the importation of homeland conflict in the countries of settlement.

Aside from public television networks, which are secular, Lebanon's private broadcast stations are divided primarily into two camps, one allied with the government, and the other with the opposition. Supporting the March 8 alliance are a range of broadcast outlets: Al-Manar TV is run by Hezbollah, is pro-Shia, and presents a consistently favorable perspective on Syrian government policy, especially as it relates to the Syria-Lebanon nexus. The National Broadcasting Network (NBN) is also a Shia-led outlet. It is affiliated with the Amal movement, and is run by Nabih Berri, the Speaker of Parliament. OTV, among the more recently-

⁴² The seminal work of Almond and Verba (1963) explored the relationship between the development of a political culture and the emergence of feelings of either allegiance to or alienation from the government and state. Occupying the space between a nascent culture and entrenched orientations were the agents of political socialization; these were the institutions, individuals, and events that not only shaped attitudes and preferences, but also passed them on to successive generations.

established satellite channels⁴³ is the station of the Maronite-dominated Free Patriotic Movement (FPM). The two main outlets of the March 14 bloc are Future Television (Future TV), owned by Saad Hariri, who is the son of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and the head of the Sunni-led Future Movement; and the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBCI), which has its roots in the Lebanese Forces and is the largest (in terms of viewership) and oldest of the major broadcast networks. Murr TV (MTV) is owned by Gabriel Murr, a Greek Orthodox politician who has been roundly critical of Syria; the news coverage of the network is consistent with his views. Though it reemerged several years later, the government forced MTV to cease operations in 2002 because of its staunch criticism of Syria. The narratives and images imparted by each of these networks further entrench the perceptions (and misperceptions) that adherents of one sect tend to harbor about those of another. Viewers, for instance, of March 8-affiliated programming are regularly subjected to pejorative imaging of March 14-affiliated leaders and initiatives. And not surprisingly, issues and events are editorialized in such a way as to promote the sectarian outlook and agenda of the party/alliance which owns the channel.

There is a similar dynamic at play with the print media, although it must be noted that the newspapers have traditionally been far more open in their criticisms of both the government and opposition. This is due, in part, to the fact that most of the newspapers in Lebanon are independently owned, not officially linked to either of the major parties or party alliances. *Al-Mustaqbal* is owned by the Hariri family and conveys a strong pro-March 14, anti-Syrian viewpoint. *Al-Akhbar* is a daily whose editorial bent is strongly pro-Hezbollah, though it has no ownership links to the organization. Although it has normally been seen as a paper with pro-Syrian sympathies, it has frequently published articles questioning the manner with which the regime of Bashar al-Assad responded to protest movements in the country. And unlike many

⁴³ Its founder, General Michel Aoun, also leader of the FPM, was in exile in France from the end of the civil war in 1990 until his return to Lebanon in 2005.

of its counterparts in the Lebanese and Arab press, *Al-Akhbar* has offered regular coverage of issues related to the promotion of not only women's rights and gay rights, but also the rights of migrant domestic workers, who are often the victims of abuse by their Lebanese sponsors. The only English-language daily in Lebanon is *The Daily Star*, which has been balanced in its treatment of March 8 and March 14 activities, and also in its coverage of the conflict in Syria, particularly as it relates to the involvement of Hezbollah. There have been editorials critical of Hezbollah's actions, and articles and editorials casting a vantage point deeming those actions necessary for safeguarding state security. *As-Safir* and *An-Nahar* are the two most widely read Arabic language dailies in the country. Both are independent, and both have a readership that largely spans the ideological and sectarian spectrum, though the former has tended to follow a pro-Hezbollah line in its coverage, especially in the last decade.⁴⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour* is a French-language daily and is widely read by the country's Christian population, which is more likely to be conversant in the language because of some combination of education, heritage, and having lived in diaspora in a francophone country. Though unaffiliated with either March 8 or March 14, its editorial tendencies have been more sympathetic to policies advocated by the Christian parties of each alliance.

The newspapers in Lebanon present a diverse mix of faction-owned and independent outlets. It is from these sources, particularly the latter, that citizens become informed about pressing issues, and have their views shaped and reshaped over time. The Lebanese are a widely read people, with a literacy rate that is consistently among the highest in the region, particularly for women (UNESCO 2013); the quality of the newspapers reflects this. One of the editors of a leading newspaper helped to put this in perspective:

⁴⁴ This is part of an easily discernible trend across Lebanese media, and indeed across society, in general. Since 2005, allegiances have become more concrete, as individuals and groups coalesce around either March 8 or March 14.

We have a critical audience, so we also have to be critical. You see, the Lebanese take their news seriously, very seriously. Sure, they watch TV, but that's mainly for soaps and series or entertainment. They come to us for real journalism, and by *us*, I mean not just our paper, but many of the others, as well. They see through all the propaganda on TV. We want to match their expectations. Here, we want everybody's readership. We are not a sectarian paper. We will always be separate from that game. We are not afraid to be critical of everybody. Unfortunately, because of the climate here, we do have Samir Kassirs which occur, but we cannot let that stop us from giving the Lebanese what they expect and what they deserve, which is honest, critical reporting.⁴⁵

Individuals opt for particular broadcast channels or newspapers because they desire, in part, to expose themselves to programming and content that reinforce what they already believe. It is in this context that the leaders of the political movements in Lebanon, via their associated media outlets, are able to instrumentalize sectarian identity for political purposes.⁴⁶ They effectively reinforce sectarian identity and allegiance at the expense of national identity. For the most part, the print media acts as a bulwark against the kind of sectarian saturation that permeates the broadcasts of the satellite channels. The former functions as a necessary filter between events/issues/policies/ideas and the interpretation of those phenomena as presented by party-owned or affiliated outlets. Broadly, however, the media continues to contribute to the maintenance of boundaries between communities because of the way it is oriented toward adversarial framing tied to ethnic identity.

⁴⁵ Author interview, Beirut, 24 July 2014. During the interview session, the editor spoke multiple times about Samir Kassir, noting that he was not only a respected journalist, but also a close friend. Kassir was a well-known journalist in Lebanon, and was assassinated by a car bomb in June 2005. Most believe that he was targeted because of the strongly anti-Syrian views that he expressed in his public talks and editorials, most of which were published in the *An-Nahar* newspaper.

⁴⁶ Nötzold (2009) offers a comprehensive study of the triadic relationship between television, political elites, and nation-building in Lebanon. More recently, Khatib, Matar, and Alshaer (2014) have written on the ways in which Hezbollah has used its media assets to carefully control and promote its image in an attempt to appeal to a broader cross-section of Lebanese society.

4.7 Security Landscapes: Preserving the Frame

During the civil war, militias defended and exercised authority over fixed territorial expanses, areas within which lived particular confessional communities. These militia performed a range of functions which mirrored the responsibilities of police forces and national armies. Over 150,000 people were killed during the fifteen-year conflict, which spawned resentment across confessional communities, vestiges of which continue in varying degrees to this day. The national defense and security infrastructure was also vulnerable to the strains of the internal conflict. During the war, sect-based factions broke away from the Army, creating smaller mini-armies that joined militia and other groups to serve as part of the fighting and defense forces for various of the sectarian communities and the coalitions those communities had joined. Among these were the Army of Free Lebanon (AFL) and the Arab Army of Lebanon (AAL). The AFL was predominantly Christian, and the AAL predominantly Muslim. These groups possessed a range of weapons that were consistent with those held by national armies, and this was the case largely because they had secured their weapons – tanks, field artillery, mortars, etc. – from the cache of the Army (Picard 1999). At the conclusion of the civil war, one of the most pressing needs was the formation of a strong, cohesive national army. This would not prove an easy task, however, because of the fierce rivalries and entrenched confessional loyalties that had come to permeate virtually all aspects of life during the civil war. By the time the war had ended, defense and security had become highly sectarianized.⁴⁷

Today, there is a great deal of overlap in the roles and responsibilities of the organizations that comprise Lebanon's defense and security apparatus. This has often led to sectarian tension and conflict because many of the institutions are still stamped, to varying degrees, by lingering

⁴⁷ This was evidenced by the split that existed between Christian and Muslim factions within the Army. Emile Lahoud, who later served as President of Lebanon from 1998-2007, led the Muslim branch (under Syrian tutelage), and General Michel Aoun led the Christian bloc.

confessional loyalties; or in the case of Hezbollah, overt sectarian identification. The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) – the Army – is the one truly national institution in Lebanon. Its membership spans the entirety of the Lebanese social mosaic, and it enjoys broad support because it is independent and focuses on national rather than communal interests. Its internal dynamics, however, have tended to reflect the fractured realities of broader society. Before the outbreak of the civil war, the officers were overwhelmingly Christian (mostly Maronite), and the troops were comprised predominantly of Shia from the Bekaa Valley and the south. The head of the Army has always been a Maronite Christian. The Internal Security Forces, or ISF, is charged with safeguarding public order and providing for stability and security via policing and its special forces units. It has traditionally been controlled by and affiliated with the Sunni, and has suffered from a longstanding inadequacy of training and funding, much like the Army. Especially since 2005, the ISF has been criticized for taking a decidedly biased approach in its policing. Specifically, it has been accused of being overly aggressive in the surveillance and arrest of those within Shia communities. The March 8 coalition considers the ISF the armed wing of March 14. The General Security Services are dominated by the Shia, and are responsible for internal security, intelligence gathering and analysis, and the oversight of policy related to migration and immigration. It is widely acknowledged that the most effective defense and security organization within the country has been the military wing of Hezbollah (Norton 2014; Harik 2005; Nasr 2007). Its Shia orientation and linkages with Iran and Syria have generated consternation among other sects, and even among some Shia who feel as though Hezbollah's actions – particularly in the Syrian conflict – sometimes exacerbate insecurity rather than mollify it. It remains, however, the best-equipped and best trained of the security and defense organizations. In 2007, a roadside bomb planted by Fatal al-Islam,⁴⁸ a Sunni

⁴⁸ For background on Fatah al-Islam, see Saab and Ranstorp (2007), and for an account of this incident in particular, see especially Norton (2007, 484-485).

militant group, killed six soldiers attached to the UNIFIL mission in the south. In response (and because they were limited by their own mandate), UNIFIL commanders turned to Hezbollah, not to the Army or ISF, to ask for help in tracking the group (Norton 2007). The paradoxes of this episode provide some perspective on the complexities of the organization's relationship with Lebanese society and its role in regional security.

Hezbollah is also largely viewed as the only Lebanese institution with the capability to deter Israel. The dynamics of its 2006 conflict with Israel proved a telling case in point. While many in the Christian and Sunni communities blamed Hezbollah for instigating a conflict that led to over 1,200 civilian deaths and untold levels of property destruction in Lebanon, the ability of Hezbollah to withstand the Israeli response actually validated in the minds of most its preeminent place within the state security structure. This has given rise to an increased level of support for Hezbollah, not just among citizens residing in Lebanon, but also for Shia in the diaspora. Byman (2014) has noted that there are some in the Christian community who have either begun to support Hezbollah directly, or who have openly acknowledged its capacity to protect the state from potential incursions by Sunni extremists among the rebel fighters in the Syrian conflict.

Even though the Army and ISF have mandates that encompass the entire country, Hezbollah has exercised relative control over security in southern Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley region in the east, and the southern suburbs of Beirut. There has been a great deal of cooperation within the security sphere, however. The Army and Hezbollah have engaged in joint operations to counter the threats posed by militant groups based in the south, most notably those operating from the Palestinian refugee camps. And the ISF and Army have also done the same in the north of the country, particularly around Tripoli and the Akkar. More recently, collaborations between the Army and Hezbollah have been seen in efforts to protect Lebanon from incursions by the so-called Islamic State.

In the aftermath of the civil war, it was viewed as an imperative to disband and disarm all militias and to strengthen the Army as a means of ensuring stability and, importantly, to secularize security (Picard 1999; Karamé 2009); this was one of the precepts of the Taif agreement. The demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration of those who had been members of militias became a priority, but was not easily realized. Only ten percent of former militiamen were reintegrated into the Army, and of that ten percent, Muslims were the overwhelming majority. This was partly due to the Lebanese Forces – a Christian militia – having been banned from participation in any state institutions because of its vehement opposition to Syria's occupation of Lebanon.⁴⁹ This limited Christian representation in the post-civil war Army and ISF. The DDR program was also obstructed by the fact that many of the militia organizations sold their weapons to groups fighting in other regions of the world, mostly in southeastern Europe (Picard 1999).

The reintegration and reform of the armed forces is ongoing, and many states have prioritized increased funding to the Army as a way of helping to facilitate the secularization of national security. As importantly, strengthening the Army entails strengthening the only institution in Lebanon viewed favorably by all communities. As a symbol of the state and of the state idea, its successes could help to build a stronger sense of allegiance with the state. It remains to be the case, however, that the security sector in Lebanon both reflects and sustains dimensions of the core conflict within the society. This is witnessed, for instance, by the fact that Hezbollah is able to usurp state monopoly over defense and security in particular regions of the country.

⁴⁹ By 1991, when the DDR initiatives were announced, Syrian intelligence and security were deeply embedded in Lebanon and controlled many aspects of life in the country. Politically, all Cabinet ministers could only ascend to their posts with the consent of Damascus. The same held true for President and Prime Minister. Many Christians – and this was especially the case among the youth – were reluctant to serve in an Army that they viewed as being under Syrian direction. Christian youth were not enlisting, and in many instances, opted instead for emigration.

4.8 Regional Landscape: Rivalry and the Conflict Frame

Throughout its history, Lebanon has witnessed conflict among its sectarian communities, conflict and fissures within sectarian communities, and shifting interests that have led to alliances between erstwhile rivals. Its domestic politics and social realities are intimately tied to the broader sectarian conflicts affecting the region, notably the Saudi-Iranian *pas de deux* for influence. The traditional character of Lebanon's sectarian conflict, long defined by discord between the Muslim communities and the Maronite Christians, has now become defined more so by increasing tensions between the Sunni and Shia communities (Nasr 2007; El-Khazen 2003). These tensions have been exacerbated by proxy wars in Yemen, Syria, and elsewhere in the region, and by continued attempts to manipulate Lebanese domestic politics.

The November 2017 resignation of Prime Minister Saad Hariri,⁵⁰ which he announced while in Riyadh, exemplifies how regional competition for influence has affected outcomes in Lebanon. His televised announcement, which included a denunciation of Hezbollah and Iranian interference in Lebanese affairs, was viewed by many in Lebanon as having been forced by Saudi Arabia as part of a broader strategy to increase its influence in a Lebanese political space seen as becoming increasingly dominated by Hezbollah. The strategy ultimately proved counterproductive, as the Hariri-led Future Movement and its coalition lost considerable ground to the Hezbollah-led coalition in the 2018 general election, signalling further Iranian ascendancy through its relationship with Hezbollah. Many in Lebanon regarded the 2017 incident in Riyadh as an affront to Lebanese sovereignty and used the polls to exact punishment on Saudi Arabia indirectly by penalizing its primary client, the Future Movement. In the aftermath of the election, both Iran and Saudi Arabia dispatched emissaries to Beirut in an attempt to influence the course of negotiations over the formation of the next government. The

⁵⁰ The resignation was later renounced after his return to Lebanon following two weeks in Saudi Arabia. He continues to serve as Prime Minister.

cabinet that was eventually formed, much like the election that preceded it, reflected stronger positioning of Hezbollah and its allies vis-à-vis the Future Movement and its allies.

The protracted conflict in Syria, complicated in its own right by the machinations of regional and international actors, is also indicative of the reverberating effects of crisis and competition in the region. Hezbollah, with material support from Iran, has played an active role in supporting Bashar al-Assad in his battle against insurgent movements. Saudi Arabia has also engaged this theatre by underwriting some of the elements of the Syrian opposition. Assad has survived, thanks in part to a constellation of intersecting factors including Russian intervention, U.S. indecision, and an oft-disjointed opposition. Regime change has not been realized in Syria, thus weakening the position of Riyadh in Beirut relative to that of Hezbollah and Iran. In the domestic political sphere, Hezbollah was able to couple its successes in Syria with its performance in the 2018 election as leverage in seeking concessions from the Saudi-backed coalition in the negotiations over the formation of the cabinet. The result was a government dominated by the Hezbollah-led coalition, the implication of which was a further diminution of Saudi influence in Lebanese political space.

The War Between Hezbollah and Israel as a Transformative Event

Tying together the discussions of regional dynamics and questions about the domestic dynamics of defense and security, the recent conflict between Israel and Hezbollah may be seen as an especially salient episode. On 12 July 2006, the military wing of Hezbollah launched a surprise attack across Lebanon's southern border with Israel, capturing two soldiers from the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), killing eight others, and provoking a response from Israel that led to a conflict which spanned thirty-four days. The level of destruction on the northern side of the border was such that it was viewed as having erased fifteen years of post-civil war reconstruction and rehabilitation. Nearly 1,300 people were killed and an additional 4,000

injured, the overwhelmingly majority of whom were civilians. Of this number, the vast majority of casualties (roughly 1,200) were Lebanese. Nearly one quarter of Lebanon's population – approximately 900,000 people – was displaced. In Israel, half a million were displaced, most of whom had lived in the northern region of the country, in the area in and near Haifa. An estimated 15,000 homes were either damaged or destroyed in Lebanon, and the destruction of Lebanese transportation infrastructure brought mobile life to a veritable standstill across much of the country. Seventy-eight bridges were either damaged or destroyed, with additional damage done to over 1,000 miles of roadway (BBC News 2006). A primary target for Israel was the passage between Beirut and Damascus, which was seen as the primary transit route for weapons from Syria to Hezbollah. The Hariri International Airport, named for the assassinated former Prime Minister and located in the southern suburbs of Beirut, was also affected. All three runways were heavily damaged by Israeli airstrikes, and the fuel storage facilities were also attacked. Planes could not take off or land, and none could refuel. The airport was rendered useless.

Much has been written about the tactical approach taken by Hezbollah in launching its operation, and on the strategies that underpinned Israel's response.⁵¹ This event marked a turning point in the relationship between Hezbollah and Israel, but also relative to the status of the former as a resistance movement. It is clear that the Israeli response was meant to clarify the terms of that relationship by ending it, specifically by destroying Hezbollah. The aftermath of the thirty-four day confrontation ultimately weakened the prestige surrounding Israel's vaunted military capability and enhanced that of Hezbollah, the latter having accomplished a feat that no state military in the region had realized to date: engaging in war with Israel and not losing. The conflict also generated questions centered on two main themes: the

⁵¹ Cordesman (2007) and Sobelman (2017), and Gabrielsen (2006) are strong points of departure for further exploration of this topic.

disproportionality of the Israeli response, and the appropriate role for Hezbollah in Lebanon's sociopolitical and security architecture. Mobilization and rhetorical posturing in the two countries, as well as abroad, reflected this dual emphasis. Much like the assassination of Rafik Hariri, this event is consistent with the definition of a transformative one in that it served as "a crucial turning point for a social movement that dramatically increase[d] or decrease[d] the level of mobilization" (Hess and Martin 2006, 249). In the Lebanese domestic context and in the diaspora, this was so for both Hezbollah and those movements which opposed it. Because of its centrality in this context, a brief discussion of Hezbollah is instructive.⁵²

The dexterity of the organization gives it political reach and social relevance. Its adaptability has given it staying power, both domestically and regionally. Its consistency – vis-à-vis its opposition to Israel's foregoing presence in southern Lebanon – has provided it with a base of support unmatched by any other party in the country. And its defense of the regime in Damascus has signaled the pursuit of a far more expansive role than most would have predicted. Hezbollah is complex. Its history makes it difficult for many to move beyond the usual tendency to portray it as a band of religious and ideological zealots whose skill set is limited to martyrdom and anti-Israeli rhetoric. Such a highly superficial reading fails to capture the depth of an organization possessing the power to determine political outcomes in Lebanon, security realities in the Levant, and the survival of the Assad regime in Syria.

To be sure, Hezbollah has been viewed as a pariah by much of the international community, and criticism has primarily been based on the tactics used by either its military wing or by the disparate elements that later coalesced into its current structure as a unitary actor. In this context, it has been blamed directly or indirectly for a spate of terrorist attacks, including the 1985 hijacking of TWA Flight 847; separate 1983 attacks in Beirut on US and French military

⁵² A detailed history is not warranted here. For further treatment of the organization, see Norton (2014), and Harik (2005) for authoritative accounts of its origins and evolution.

barracks, killing 241 Americans and 58 French soldiers; and, as noted in the previous section, the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.⁵³ This is the face of Hezbollah that is most widely reported, and that most people know. It is also an incomplete one.

As can be seen in the Syrian crisis, Hezbollah moved out of area, ostensibly to support the Assad regime. This assumption of a transnational mandate has led some to question whether the group was pushing the limits of its domestic support, and whether it had engaged in overreach. It is clear that in the lead-up to the summer 2006 conflict with Israel, there were major miscalculations on the part of the organization's leadership, particularly in not anticipating the fierce and comprehensive nature of the Israeli response. There is a concern among some segments of Lebanese society that a similar miscalculation may have been made in the decision to enter the Syrian imbroglio, and that the precarious security situation in the north and east of the country was a result of Hezbollah's engagement in Syria.

The debate on the role of Hezbollah, both at home and within the diasporic sphere, is an enduring one. The 2006 conflict with Israel marked a major turning point for the organization, in the sense that it enhanced its levels of support within the diaspora and within some quarters of the Arab world that had not previously been sympathetic to the organization (including non-Shia members of these communities). The war with Israel also repositioned, and in some ways legitimized, Hezbollah's claims of both relevance and necessity as a resistance movement.

Realities such as these tend to support the perspectives of Al-Qarawee (2015) and Hashemi (2016), who have argued that state actors play the most important role in politicizing identity

⁵³ See the testimony of Byman (2016) before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa (US House Committee on Foreign Affairs).

and using it as an instrument of conflict and influence, and do so particularly as a means of preserving their own rule.

4.9 Conclusion – Diaspora Landscape: Escaping the Frame?

This chapter has sought to outline the primary features of the conflict landscape in Lebanon, and in so doing to illustrate the historical processes, elite strategies, and domestic institutions that have influenced the development of identity and the emergence and maintenance of boundaries between Lebanon's constituent communities. It demonstrates how historical decisions, made in the formation of Greater Lebanon in 1920 and compounded by later accords such as the National Pact of 1943, set the stage for the institutionalization of sectarianism and its standardization as the organizing principle of social life, and for the entrenchment of identity-based politics as the basis of civic engagement. The chapter further demonstrates how the geopolitics of the region, particularly the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia, have exacerbated sectarian tensions in Lebanon and adversely affected its national politics, as well as relations among Lebanese communities. The education system and media landscape have also made it difficult for citizens to escape the trappings of the core conflict in the homeland. The media reinforces it by hardening perspectives and attitudes via outlets that are owned and controlled by confession-based parties and movements, while the education system has tended to reproduce inequalities that limit social mobility.

Structural inequality between communities has long been a source of conflict and contention. Relative to the role of the political system, the chapter has shown how the elite within society, via their control of key institutions, have undertaken strategies to deliberately politicize identity and manipulate existing social and political cleavages, for the purpose of consolidating their hold on power, and thus their control over an array of state resources. State institutions in Lebanon are weak by design, which forces citizens to turn to alternative structures of

representation, and to state and municipal-level proxies for the distribution of basic services. These alternative structures are controlled by confessional elite, who, according to Humphrey, have been particularly adept at exploiting members of society “by making them clients, not citizens” (1998, 62). By politicizing identity and creating distance between citizens and the state, the elite are able to create and expand constituencies. At the same time, they actively block or stall the implementation of any reforms that would recalibrate the system toward one that is more democratic, more responsive to pressures from below, and secular. They have a vested interest in ensuring that no viable challenges emerge to the existing system. Clark and Salloukh make a compelling case when they argue that:

the sectarian elites’ control over state institutions and resources, their alliance with the country’s economic elites, and their substantial clientelist networks allow them to co-opt . . . challenges and normalize the permeation of sectarian ties and interests. This, in turn, serves to reproduce sectarian identities and a general postwar ‘culture of sectarianism’ that enables sectarian elites to safeguard their political power and socioeconomic interests. (2013, 744)

This constellation of factors has had a profound impact on the socialization of those exposed to them, affecting nearly every facet of political, economic, and social life. The homeland frame is an antagonistic one, and it perpetuates societal conflict.

In the domestic Lebanese context, it has been shown that the clientelist system and the manipulation of social and political cleavages have produced at least four major effects: conflict in the form of both physical violence and discursive confrontation; distance between citizens and the state; the promotion of the socially constructed boundaries to which Barth (1998) alluded in his study of ethnic groups, boundaries that lead to sect-based identity projection and exclusion, including spatial separation and social avoidance; and emigration. In this latter context, a question thus becomes how these conflict dynamics might play out in a sociopolitical environment devoid of the structures and processes found in the homeland

Lebanese context. Would the homeland frame travel in the diaspora under such a set of circumstances?

It is not possible to understand the nature of conflict transportation by focusing exclusively on conditions in the country of settlement. One of the primary characteristics of diasporas is that they establish a range of linkages with the homeland, and this transnational engagement of the homeland implies that, even though they have settled elsewhere, they nevertheless remain constantly exposed to the same tensions and conflict dynamics that played a critical role in shaping not only their identities, but also the nature of group interaction. This means that in addition to considering the potential effects of hostland conditions on conflict transportation, it is also necessary to examine how conditions and developments in the country of origin factor into the importation of conflict from homeland to diasporic space. The empirical expectation is that conflict will be replicated in the diasporic space where these communities have settled. This is due, in part, to frequent travel to Lebanon, regular exposure to the country's fragmented media outlets, and the constant communication with family members and associates who reside in the country and are themselves directly experiencing the socializing effects of these institutions and processes. This has not been the case for the Lebanese diaspora communities in Dearborn and Dakar, and the reasons for these dynamics are both explored and explained in Chapters 5 and 6. These chapters demonstrate how both conditions in the country of settlement and conditions related to the homeland determine whether conflict transportation takes place. The current chapter serves a necessary point of departure for exploring whether the boundaries between Lebanon's constituent communities are more porous in the diaspora.

CHAPTER 5

Filters of Conflict Transportation? Diasporic Space and the Retention,

Remission or Reorientation of Homeland Fissures

5.1 Introduction

The sociopolitical and economic implications of migration are manifold, affecting not only the livelihoods and human security of those who migrate, but also their societies of origin and destination. Migrants often find themselves negotiating questions of identity and belonging, while simultaneously attempting to adjust to the social and cultural challenges of living in a new environment. Host societies often question the loyalties and motivations of both new and settled arrivals, wondering if they have perhaps brought with them not only a seemingly incompatible culture, but also certain ideologies and worldviews that might be deemed at odds with the status quo, and sometimes even suspected of bringing conflict. For diasporas – particularly those emanating from countries affected by ethnic conflict to which they have been a party – it is precisely conditions in the country of settlement that can influence the prospects of that conflict being reproduced in the new setting. The nascent literature on conflict transportation within diaspora communities has shown how conditions in the country of settlement can affect the importation of core conflicts from the homeland. The social context, political environment, and economic opportunity structure are all circumstances that can play a role in this regard. These endogenous factors have the capacity to influence the trajectory of the relationship between groups that were adversarial in the country of origin, bringing about either increased or diminished prevalence of some combination of the indicators of conflict transportation: physical violence, discursive confrontation, social avoidance and spatial separation. This speaks to a socialization of diasporas that reinforces, reduces, or reorients adherence to the elements that constitute the core conflict in the homeland.

Chapter 4 examined the structuring of the core conflict in Lebanon, and outlined how identity and intergroup interaction have been framed, instrumentalized and internalized. Chapter 6 offers treatment of a key exogenous factor, and considers whether a pivotal event in the homeland – an event itself reflective of and tied to the core conflict – might trigger conflict transportation in countries of settlement. The current chapter focuses on the aforementioned endogenous factors that have contributed to the evolution of diaspora identity among the Lebanese in Senegal and the United States. It demonstrates how this constellation of factors has forestalled rather than facilitated the importation of the core conflict from Lebanon to diasporic space. It argues that reactive transnationalism, which developed in response to discrimination during the colonial and early post-colonial era, drove disparate Lebanese communities closer together in Senegal, precluding a replication of the core conflict that defines relations in the homeland. It further argues that in Dearborn, the Lebanese diaspora has pooled its social capital in a conscious effort to build a cohesive, inclusive community, and to preserve Lebanese status as the vanguard of the Arab American immigrant community. In the Dearborn context, this legacy mobilization has thus far prevented the importation of the homeland frame. In short, there are two different endogenous factors playing a role, but in both cases, conflict transportation has not occurred. The chapter is divided into five sections. Following the introduction, the second section discusses the link between endogenous factors, the socialization process, and diaspora relations. The third section discusses conflict transportation and diaspora interaction. The fourth and fifth sections are informed by empirical work undertaken in Dakar and Dearborn, respectively, and demonstrate how conditions in these two sites of inquiry have altered the conflict frame established in the homeland and reoriented relations in the diaspora, precluding the importation of conflict to the host state environment. Section five offers concluding reflections on the Lebanese diaspora in Dearborn and Dakar, and the implications that these two hold for conflict transportation. The chapter draws on the

literature from transnationalism, diaspora, and immigrant socialization, and the empirical dimension is further informed by extensive fieldwork in Dakar, Dearborn, and across Lebanon.

5.2 Endogenous Conditions and the Socialization of Diasporas

Implicit in the framework for studying conflict transportation is the notion that “places of origin, personal trajectories of migration, as well as the contexts of reception are all likely to structure the socialization process (Portes and Rumbaut 2006, as cited in Liu and Gastil 2014, 246). As part of this framework, emphasis is placed on how endogenous factors complement conditions in the homeland to influence diaspora relations (Perrin and Martiniello 2011; Baser 2015; Féron 2013). Insufficient attention has been paid to the centrality of the host state in the development of identity and its effects on mobilization. Identity is a product of the construction of narratives. These narratives are shaped by a range of actors and processes that intersect in the shared social space where members of diaspora groups have settled. These hostland conditions therefore contribute to the social construction of diaspora identity, and the outcome of this process might be manifest as clashes based on perceived incompatibilities and an embrace of longstanding antagonisms, or as a recognition of mutual interests and the development of a disposition towards reconciliation. Koinova (2018) notes that whether diasporas retain antagonisms or shed them can be attributable, in part, to the environment in countries of settlement. This is so because these conditions “provide opportunities and constraints to mobilise to memorialise past atrocities from local to global levels of engagement” (Koinova 2018, 1253). In her work on Kurdish and Turkish diasporas, Baser (2015) conceives of the hostland as a prism refracting light. It is an instructive analogy. Diasporas coming from conflict-affected areas no doubt bring with them their own figurative baggage (in the form of conflict narratives, entrenched cleavages, and personal and group traumas), framed and perhaps hardened in the homeland. The new environment – this prism – might act as a filter, absorbing and reconditioning through its web of social structures, institutions, and norms.

In his study of reconciliation between Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs in Sweden, Hall (2010) points out how interethnic relations are affected by hostland conditions such as access to higher education, level of attainment within the higher education system, access to the domestic labor market, as well as the legal status vis-à-vis the state. He argues that the social position that comes with this elevated status socializes diaspora members away from preoccupation with the conflict narratives of home. Koopmans (2004) also demonstrates how political opportunity structures influence relations between ethnic groups in countries of settlement. He surmises that “citizenship and integration regimes play a crucial role in shaping political contention, debates, and outcomes in the field of immigration and ethnic relations” (Koopmans 2004, 451-452). Relative to the former, scholars have shown that the political environment can have an impact on diaspora relations in a number of ways. For example, if there are institutional channels through which diasporas may engage in lobbying activities that focus on contentious issues in the homeland, this engagement may contribute to a continuation of conflict in the country of settlement if these groups begin to mobilize along ethnic or religious lines in ways that mirror their interaction in the homeland (Al-Ali et al. 2001).

Discrimination in the country of settlement is one of the social realities considered among the endogenous factors that influence diaspora behavior. This discrimination might take, for example, the form of denied access to social and economic resources such as employment and housing. It might also manifest itself in terms of harassment in a school or work setting, or more broadly in shared social space in the host society. In response to systemic discrimination, those within the diaspora tend to redefine themselves in ethnic terms, and also to begin identifying and engaging more closely with the homeland, even if they had not projected such an identity (or interest) in the past. This is an example of reactive transnationalism (Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002; Snel et al. 2016; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). What is significant in this context, but understudied in the literature on diaspora and transnationalism, is that reactive

transnationalism can lead to divergent paths of diaspora interaction in the host society. On the one hand, it could lead members of the diaspora to identify more intimately with their in-group, as it is defined in the homeland (e.g. Sunni, Shia, Christian). If, in the homeland setting, there are conflictual relations between this in-group and others who have also settled in the host society, this could (re)generate tensions between these groups in the country of settlement, thus eliciting conflict transportation. This stands to reason, as increased exposure to the conflict frame in the homeland may adversely condition perspectives and attitudes toward perceived out-groups. Conversely, exposure to hostility, social exclusion, and discrimination in the host society could prompt the development of ethnic solidarity among those in the diaspora, even in the context of a diaspora comprised of communities who were at odds in the homeland.

The emerging scholarship on conflict transportation has shown how the dynamics of the host country can affect the propensity of migrant communities – and particularly conflict-generated diasporas – to renew unspoken vows of continued hostility outside the homeland. The context in the host state is central because “core conflict divisions in the country of origin can become key structuring elements of group and individual identities” (Féron 2017, 365). The theoretical framework of conflict transportation helps to explain the conditions under which the structuring experienced in the homeland might be broken or reoriented in a new environment. This is, above all, a process of construction and reconstruction – whether the host society provides an environment that promotes a (re)definition of identity that spurs or curtails animus between erstwhile rival communities. The literature on immigrant socialization complements this framework and asks whether immigrant orientations are more resistant or receptive to change based on the combination of dynamics to which they have been exposed in the respective countries of origin and settlement. Though such studies have traditionally focused on partisanship and levels of political engagement, the premises on which they are founded are nevertheless relevant to conflict transportation. This is so because they also speak to factors

which might shape intergroup relations between migrant communities, and particularly for communities whose relations were contentious in the homeland. There are three primary theories for explaining the socialization of immigrants: resistance theory, exposure theory, and the theory of transferability (White et al. 2008). Each views socialization as a cumulative, lifelong process that imparts beliefs, norms, and values. The differentiating factor, however, is the perspective that each of these theories holds on which stage of the life cycle is most determinant of immigrant disposition, namely time in the homeland or length of residence in the host state. Resistance theory argues that framing and conditioning in the country of origin take precedence, and will play a dominant role in shaping any orientations and outlooks that are exhibited in the country of settlement. According to this perspective, experiences and influences in the new environment are depreciated as they are filtered through the homeland frame. This implies that early orientations have become hardened to the extent that it is difficult for immigrants to shed them and internalize new norms (White et al. 2008). This carries significant implications for conflict transportation, as it suggests that ethnic groups who were at odds in the homeland are more likely to continue being so in the diaspora setting. The exposure and transferability theories hold that orientations are malleable and adapt according to context. The former posits that increased exposure to the host state environment will lead immigrants to display the dominant values and orientations of that environment, irrespective of what may have transpired in the country of origin. The transferability perspective acknowledges that immigrants draw on prior learning and socialization, and it assumes that they apply those cues within the parameters of the new environment. The links between conflict transportation and immigrant socialization are clear. The socialization of diaspora communities, like all immigrant groups, takes place in a context of acculturation, which Marin and Gamba define as “a long-term fluid process in which individuals simultaneously move along at least two cultural continua (or dimensions) and whereby individuals learn and/or

modify certain aspects of the new culture and of their culture of origin” (1996, 297). Following from the perspective of Levitt and Glick Schiller, the ethnographic approach of this study has allowed for an understanding of how hostland, homeland, and the transnational engagement of the diaspora community have precluded the importation of Lebanon’s core conflict to diasporic space. These dynamics are outlined in the sections which follow.

5.3 Conflict Transportation and Diaspora Interaction

Although empirical research on diasporas and imported conflict is limited, there is consistency across the emerging scholarship on those key elements which serve as the indicators of conflict transportation (Pupcenoks 2016). In this context, the perpetuation of tensions between groups who were adversarial in the homeland is manifest by a tripartite set of conditions. Physical violence includes actions such as direct clashes and the destruction of property. Discursive confrontation takes the form of verbal assault, derisive caricature of the other community in the public sphere, and the desecration of important symbols of ethnic, religious, or national heritage. Lastly, social avoidance and spatial separation involve conscious, deliberate decisions to limit interaction with the other community, whether it be on a personal or professional level. Separation and avoidance are indicative of a sense of cultural superiority and the notion that perceived rivals are, for example, unsuitable as neighbors and coworkers, and inappropriate for deeper relations such as marriage. Evidence of conflict transportation need not entail the existence of all three of these factors. Physical violence in this context often generates the most notoriety, but such clashes between ethnic and other communities in the countries of settlement tend to be the least pronounced of the three aforementioned indicators (Baser 2015; Féron 2017).

In 2008, a world values survey was conducted in Lebanon. It was the first such survey undertaken to gauge the attitudes of each of the communities, and it addressed a range of

questions related to identity and intergroup perspectives, the political system, and foreign intervention. In general terms, the findings revealed a strong degree of intra-confessional trust, but far less trust exhibited toward those of other orientations. For example, 72% of the Shia expressed a great deal of trust in other Shia, but these respondents indicated that this same level of trust was only held for 21.7% of Maronites and 16.9% of Sunnis. For the Sunni respondents, 83.2% indicated a strong degree of trust in other Sunnis, 32.5% in the Shia, and 31.7% in Maronites. The Maronite respondents expressed a great deal of trust in 58% of other Maronites, 18.2% trust in the Shia, and 13.8% in Sunnis (Moaddel et al. 2012, 21). It is important to note that the diminished level of trust among Maronites is reflective of the fragmented nature of the Christian community within Lebanon.⁵⁴ This divide is embodied by the longstanding rivalry between the leaders of the largest Christian parties in Lebanon, Samir Geagea (Lebanese Forces) and Michel Aoun (Free Patriotic Movement). The Maronites spread their support across these two major parties, along with Kataeb, the Phalanges Party. Distrust is further conditioned by lingering memories of the intense conflict and bloodshed that erupted between the forces of Aoun and Geagea during the civil war. There are, to be sure, deep fissures that exist within the Christian community, but there is also strong Christian-to-Muslim and Muslim-to-Christian wariness in Lebanon. Malik (1997) has referred to this as an asymmetry of fears, and explains how Christians emphasize insecurity and survival due to the demographic shift that has diminished their comparative numbers and given rise to what they perceive as an increasingly pervasive Islamic culture in a state whose origins lie in Christian Mount Lebanon. Rooted in historical grievances, Muslim fears focus on apprehensions about continued economic disadvantage (particularly for the Shia) and political marginalization within a system that still reserves the presidency and most of the sensitive security posts for Christians, who

⁵⁴ El-Khazen (2003) offers a thorough analysis of the social origins and political implications of this split. See also Picard (2002) and Traboulsi (2007).

are by far the smallest of the major communities. The civil war marked a conflict fought over a range of overlapping grievances, some cutting across confessional communities, others within.⁵⁵ Three decades since the conclusion of the civil war, many within their respective communities continue to perceive the “other” as posing threats to their own interests, as well as to their physical security and survival (Haddad 2007). These suspicions and misgivings underpin the persistence of geographies of sectarian conflict, a phenomenon which continues to promote segregation and avoidance. They have also led to discursive confrontations and the eruption of violent clashes in the homeland setting.

An empirical expectation is that members of the diaspora will maintain this vein of antagonistic relations because the homeland frame has become so deeply rooted (Lyons 2007). Contradicting the resistance theory of immigrant socialization, the Lebanese in both Dakar and Dearborn have emerged as transnational communities who coexist peacefully in their respective countries of settlement. The indicators of conflict transportation do not define the parameters within which the communities relate to one another. Socially, there is a great deal of voluntary interaction and cooperation. Discursive confrontation, an enduring feature in the homeland environment, has been supplanted by demonstrations of mutual respect in both Dakar and Dearborn. In this context and as revealed by fieldwork, artefacts of imported conflict such as derisive graffiti and other expressions of contempt which target the “other” have not been the standard. Moreover, violent encounters have also been extraordinarily rare, and they have been limited in such a fashion as to signify that they are indicative of personal disputes, and represent neither a symptom nor a pattern of broad, intercommunal discord that replicates the core conflict divisions in Lebanon. This is a marked departure from the social dynamics on display in the country of origin, and raises an important question about the sustainability of the homeland frame as a determinant of attitudes and dispositions among those who have

⁵⁵ See Fisk (2001), and also Salibi (1988)

emigrated from conflict environments in which their ethnic, religious, or national communities were party to the conflict: How have endogenous conditions in the country of settlement affected the transmission of the core conflict from Lebanon to the diaspora?

In examining the effect of the hostland setting on diaspora disposition, prospects for mobilization, and the potential to influence diaspora relations, this thesis argues that five primary factors play an essential role: internal features of the diaspora, migratory trajectory, mode of immigrant incorporation in the host society, political and discursive opportunity structures, and economic opportunity structures. Migratory trajectory refers to the temporal and contextual path taken in the move from homeland to host society. It can help to explain attitudes and levels of attachment that members of the diaspora harbor toward their places of origin. If, for instance, they were forced to flee the homeland because of ethnic or religious conflict, they may harbor antagonistic orientations toward other ethnic or religious groups from the homeland and seek retribution in the country of settlement. The terms of reception in the homeland are also an important dimension of migratory trajectory, as the initial positionality of new arrivals has the potential to influence notions of identity and the ways in which diaspora members relate to the homeland, and to each other. Intolerance and widespread discrimination in the host society are often associated with denied or uneven access to economic opportunity. This can lead both new and long-settled arrivals to turn more so toward their ethnic in-group and to reinvest in homeland identity, which can potentially place them at odds with other ethnic or religious groups from the homeland or home region who are also residing in the host society. Political and discursive opportunity structures can also play a role. If these opportunity structures are more open and permissive, they may enhance prospects for identity mobilization by the diaspora elite. The content and trajectory of these mobilizing strategies and efforts can influence the embrace or the rejection of the homeland conflict frame, including how members of the diaspora respond to events which take place in the homeland. Internal features of the

diaspora also carry potential effects on the importation of conflict. In this context, the size and degree of uniformity within the diaspora can also play a role in affecting the emergence of conflict transportation. For example, is the group relatively homogenous or internally divided along ethnic or religious lines, with constituent communities within the group viewing their respective identities and interests as conflicting and competing? The time of arrival in the country of settlement, which reflects distance from the core conflict in the homeland and greater exposure to conditions in the host society, may alter conceptions of group identity and thus reorient projections of identity, affecting how groups construct or reconstruct the boundaries between them. In the section which follows, these features are combined into migratory trajectory, internal features of the diaspora, and opportunity structures to help assess the patterns of group interaction within the respective diaspora communities in Dakar and Dearborn, and to demonstrate how these features have helped to deter the importation of homeland conflict in these settings.

5.4 The Lebanese Diaspora in Dakar

Fieldwork undertaken in Dakar revealed that the boundaries between Lebanese groups do not reflect the configurations found in the homeland. These boundaries – fictive markers of belonging, hierarchy, and exclusion – have been supplanted by the emergence of a single Lebanese ethnic group. Homeland conflict has not been transported to diasporic space. The primary divisions within the Lebanese community in Dakar exist along class and temporal lines, and are not constructed according to either religious orientation or homeland region of origin, which are the fundamental dividing lines in Lebanon. The temporal dimension refers primarily to whether members of the diaspora community arrived in Senegal before or after the start of the civil war, and secondarily to whether they arrived prior to or after July 2006, which marked the hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel. In this context, members of the diaspora expressed concerns about whether the psychological baggage and traumas of conflict would

make newer arrivals more prone to ethnic, identity-based politics, which the established diaspora community in Dakar has sought to avoid, both to maintain internal cohesion within the diaspora and to avert any potential conflicts with the broader Senegalese society. The comprehensive reorientation of Lebanese diaspora relations was the result of reactive transnationalism during the colonial and early post-colonial eras, and has been maintained by the efforts of the primary diaspora entrepreneurs in Dakar. In the homeland context, historical processes and elite strategies have conditioned identity and the setting of boundaries in such a way that foments group conflict. In this particular diasporic space, historical processes and elite strategies have reconstructed identity and the setting of boundaries, leading to group solidarity among the Lebanese in Senegal. This reinforces the notion that diaspora identity is not fixed, but is, instead, rather contingent and malleable, defined in part by boundary-maintenance (Brubaker 2005). Prospects for conflict transportation are a function of conditions in both the homeland and the country of settlement, and incorporate diaspora group views of their relationship with both. In the following sections, A brief outline of the migratory trajectory and local context is followed by a discussion of patterns of group interaction.

5.4.1 Migration Trajectory

The Lebanese diaspora embodies many of the features delineated by Cohen (1997) in his typology of these complex transnational communities. Its history has shown it to be either – or at once – a victim, labor, trade or cultural diaspora, depending on the region from which emigration was launched, the era in which it took place and the specific country of settlement. Regarding this classification scheme, Cohen acknowledges that many of these categories should be considered transitional. This is an important proviso. The time and sociopolitical interactions that occupy the space between the initiation of the migration process and the development of a group consciousness make it such that latent diasporas can, and often do, move from one of these classifications to another. During this period, much can change in terms

of identity, interests, and the relationship that emigrants possess with the homeland and the host society. In Dakar, and more broadly in Senegal, the Lebanese were considered, above all else, a trade diaspora. On the one hand, this afforded them an opportunity to begin developing deeper relationships with the black Senegalese population, a community that preferred interacting with the Lebanese as opposed to the French colonial administrators. During the post-colonial transition to independence, however, and the early post-independence period, being a trade diaspora became synonymous with being an exploitative immigrant community. The black Senegalese population grew increasingly frustrated with what they viewed as an unfair level of Lebanese control over the Senegalese economy (Boumedouha 1990), and the distribution of jobs. In this latter context, hostile sentiments resulted from the fact that the Lebanese tended to rely on broad, interconnected family networks as a source of labor rather than offer employment opportunities to the black population. This reinforced the turn towards reactive transnationalism as a mechanism of coping and support. Though a relatively small community, the Lebanese were nevertheless the most visible migrant community in Senegal.

Relative to the migratory experience and the development of dispositions, two revealing tendencies emerged from my empirical work. Those who originated from southern Lebanon were much more vocal in their rejection of the homeland frame, even if they had been victimized in Lebanon or elsewhere because of their regional origin or religious orientation. They also emphasized that isolated incidents by wayward individuals should not be viewed as characteristic of an entire demographic. The overwhelming majority of these respondents in Dakar expressed a strong rejection of sectarianism, and highlighted their own personal encounters (or those of their families) as experiences they did not wish upon any Lebanese community. The Shia from southern Lebanon are by far the largest Lebanese group in Dakar (and in Senegal). This prevailing attitude has facilitated a blurring of the socially constructed boundaries between Lebanese groups in the city, as the smaller Maronite and Greek Orthodox

communities did not express the kinds of perspectives noted in the 2008 world values survey. The level of trust that the constituent communities of the diaspora expressed in one another was in sharp contrast to the points of view shared in Lebanon, both as reflected in the aforementioned world values survey and my own empirical work. Moreover, those who left Lebanon post-1975 (after the start of the civil war) and post-1982 were far more likely to be viewed as potential threats to cohesion and peaceful relations within the diaspora community. Many shared that they felt compelled to actively demonstrate their commitment to both Senegal and the Lebanese community.

As Bruneau (2010) points out, migratory trajectories play an important role in the ways in which members of diasporas approach cultural and social unity. Migration is a disruptive and challenging process and can affect attitudes towards both the homeland and the country of settlement. For the Lebanese in Dakar, the social conditions that confronted them helped to set the stage for a strengthening of in-group solidarity.

5.4.2 Internal Features of the Diaspora

Although there are no official and reliable statistics measuring the current Lebanese population in Senegal, it is widely accepted that they number between 30,000 - 35,000, and are concentrated primarily in Dakar. This is among a total Senegalese population of roughly 15 million. They are predominantly from Tyre in southern Lebanon, and transnational links with the city have been consistently strong and well-maintained. The same can be said of Qana and other villages in the south from which the diaspora community is drawn. This makes the diaspora particularly sensitive to events transpiring in southern Lebanon or indirectly affecting the region. Internally, the diaspora is overwhelmingly Shia (approximately 90%), with Greek Orthodox comprising the largest of the Lebanese Christian communities. The established families within the diaspora tend to primarily speak Wolof and French, which sets them apart

from the more recent arrivals from the homeland. Among the non-African migrant community in Senegal, the Lebanese and French are the largest groups. Multiple interlocutors shared their suspicion that there are a large number of Lebanese who are identifying as French, particularly French-Lebanese who have returned to Dakar after having worked or studied elsewhere.

5.4.3 Opportunity Structures

The Lebanese occupy a privileged position within the local economy, but a precarious one politically. During the transition period from colonial rule to independence, Lebanese businessmen began to diversify their portfolios and to engage in a wider variety of professional pursuits, moving away from an emphasis on the peanut trade and activities tied to agriculture. It was a deliberate strategy, as being a trader had become increasingly racialized and stigmatized. The Lebanese had become so intimately tied to trade that the ascription of ethnicity became defined more so by their vocation than their country of origin. Indeed, being Lebanese in Senegal – and in West Africa, in general – was associated most often with trade, echoing an element of the diaspora typology put forward by Cohen (1997). This has resulted in the Senegalese economy now being dominated by Lebanese capital across all sectors. Frustrations with economic prospects in Lebanon and a desire to start a family in a locale that is affordable have led many Lebanese to emigrate to West Africa. Many of the subsequent arrivals have often been able to open small businesses of their own, frequently with the assistance of a loan from Hezbollah, an extension of credit granted without regard to religious orientation or expressions of support for the organization. One point of contention between the Lebanese and Senegalese communities is the ease with which Lebanese immigrants are able to secure employment – often due to facilitation by the local Lebanese – while young Senegalese, especially recent university graduates, encounter far more difficulties.

The Lebanese have not sought to parlay the rewards of their commercial aptitude into an

equally pervasive engagement of the political landscape. Consistent with approaches taken during the colonial era and also during the transition through the independence period, the Lebanese have preferred to exercise discreet support and influence through local and national political actors. The marabouts continue to be viewed as the primary political brokers in Senegal. According to several respondents, including business owners, the Lebanese do not want to disrupt the longstanding relationship they have developed over time with the marabout. Therefore, the Lebanese exercise self-censorship in their political engagement of the public sphere, careful not to raise sensitive issues; instead, the focus is usually on broad themes such as environmental protection or human rights. The Lebanese have been especially careful to avoid homeland issues. They are extremely wary of providing a platform to post-civil war and post-1982 members of the community, fearful that they will use such a platform to engage in ethnically charged identity politics. This is not to say that the Lebanese have not been actively involved politically, in the broad sense. They have held elected and appointed posts as both the local and national levels, and have held leadership positions within Senegalese political parties. As an example, the current mayor of Dakar – the first female to hold the post – is of Lebanese heritage.

5.4.4 Patterns of Group Interaction

Instead of focusing principally on the environment in Dakar, most respondents were expansive in their discussion of why they had emigrated. The prevalent viewpoint was that corruption and competition in Lebanon made it a frustrating environment. They seemed, however, to make a clear distinction between the state and economy on the one hand, and Lebanon as an idea, on the other. They had extraordinarily low opinions of the government and of the way the economy has been managed, but expressed fondness for Lebanon. Interacting with other Lebanese in the local Senegalese context was, for them, a way to gain a measure of indirect access to Lebanon. Multiple interlocutors also shared that the endogamy of their community was not a reflection

of any feelings of superiority toward the Senegalese. Constant group interaction was simply a way to connect with Lebanon. These perspectives were, however, inconsistent with many of the reflections shared by Senegalese respondents. Conversations in this context revealed a growing annoyance with the way that many of the Lebanese acted toward them, which the Senegalese viewed as being driven perhaps by equal parts egotism and racism. They were further nonplussed by what they perceived as Lebanese pity for them, when in fact, as one Senegalese student shared, “They are the ones who have been fleeing their country. Maybe we should feel bad in some kind of way for *them*?”

Among the Lebanese, multiple respondents from all religious backgrounds shared that their experiences with Shaykh Abdul Mun’am al-Zayn has had a major influence on the way they viewed their own community. Shaykh al-Zayn, originally from southern Lebanon and sent to Dakar in 1969, is the religious leader of the Lebanese Shia community in Senegal⁵⁶. The predominantly Shia orientation of the West African Lebanese diaspora, and the lack of any local institution to serve their spiritual needs in a Sunni-majority country like Senegal, led to the decision to establish a mosque in Dakar. According to interlocutors who either do not observe the Shia faith or are not practicing, al-Zayn has had a moderating effect on those who arrive from Lebanon. His emphasis has been on Lebanese solidarity as opposed to parochial, sect-based allegiances, thereby contributing to the boundary-maintenance that currently defines peaceful coexistence among the Lebanese in Senegal. For those who have attended the Islamic Institute, the Shia mosque in Dakar that he leads, his emphasis on cohesion within the community and his encouragement to fully engage Senegalese society have helped them to positively assess and navigate their position in both Senegalese and Lebanese society. The majority of these interviewees shared a view that the more devoted they have become to their

⁵⁶ Leichtman (2010, 2018) offers extensive treatment of al-Zayn and his relationship with the diaspora and the broader Senegalese community. Further discussion of al-Zayn is offered in Chapter 6 as it relates to elite framing and diaspora response to homeland events.

faith, the more Lebanese they feel. This is a reflection of the approach undertaken by Shaykh al-Zayn, an approach which, according to interlocutors, has emphasized that faith and an inclusive Lebanese identity are not mutually exclusive. This is in stark contrast to the dynamics that were revealed during empirical work in Lebanon, where multiple respondents expressed frustration that their religious identity had become commodified for political purposes, and was being used to drive a wedge between different segments of Lebanese society. This sentiment was most pronounced among the youth and young professionals, who routinely expressed strong and pessimistic attitudes about the ways in which societal elite and local leaders controlled resources and sustained a system that essentially forced citizens to perform an identity in order to gain access to economic resources and basic services.

Relative to the divisions that do exist within the diaspora, no reference was made to recurring violence, but roughly a quarter of those interviewed shared that intense verbal confrontations have often taken place. The arguments have generally focused on language as a sign of being Lebanese, with some feeling as though the inability to speak Arabic made claims to being Lebanese less legitimate. Other discursive confrontations have frequently taken place when someone from one of the more established families admonishes a more recent arrival for the ill treatment or verbal abuse of local Senegalese. Interlocutors indicated that this was a frequent occurrence. There is also broad spatial separation between these two groups, the long-established families and economic elite on the one hand, and the poorer and more recent arrivals from southern Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut on the other. Interviewees portrayed this as a function of both preference and circumstance. New arrivals from southern Lebanon have more limited housing choices because of income. And they do not possess the disposable income to patronize the social venues that many of the more established members of the diaspora tend to frequent. There has emerged, then, a social separation within the diaspora based along class lines. Those from areas beyond Tyre, Qana and the broader southern Lebanon

region were far more likely to express pejorative sentiments about those among the Lebanese who were of a lower socioeconomic strata. This was also reflected in the perspectives shared by second, third, and fourth generation members of the diaspora whose families have origins in southern Lebanon.

While there are competing narratives to explain precisely how and why the Lebanese ultimately arrived and settled in Senegal (and more broadly, in West Africa), it has become increasingly clear that the circumstances in which they found themselves were transformative. Originating predominantly from southern Lebanon, the poorest and most underdeveloped region of the homeland, Lebanese immigrants have been able to realize for themselves and their families a level of professional success and economic status unattainable in the home region. These successes were (and remain) conspicuous not only in the villages from which the Lebanese have moved, but also within the new society that they had recently joined. Relative to the former, it fueled increased levels of emigration, as the higher levels of transnational engagement with the homeland (including financial support via remittances and the spate of new homes built in southern Lebanon) encouraged others to join so that they, too, could pursue opportunity and therefore support their families in Lebanon and start their own in Senegal. This is reflective of resource-based transnationalism, a phenomenon in which sustained engagement of the homeland is more likely when those with strong links to their country of origin have accumulated relative prosperity abroad (Tamaki 2011; Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002; Portes et al. 1999). Relative to the context in the country of settlement, the success and increased migration rates of the Lebanese often fueled resentment, particularly in the postcolonial era when the black population sought greater influence in the management of the local economy, which they viewed as having been largely coopted by the Lebanese diaspora.

The Lebanese population in Senegal is a community that has found it necessary to constantly negotiate and renegotiate its insecurities, and to do so in no less than four distinct contexts: in

relation to the French colonial authorities, who viewed them as a potential threat (Arsan 2014); in relation to the Senegalese population, who viewed them not only as outsiders, but as having unfair access to capital and a disproportionate level of control over much of the economy (Boumedouha 1990); in relation to small-scale French traders, who resented them because they posed formidable competition and were, in fact, preferred by the larger European companies (Boone 1990); and lastly, in terms of their own self-identification, which entailed viewing themselves as being distinct and apart from the two societies with which they were most closely identified, that of the homeland and of Senegal. Taken alone, this set of realities carried profound implications for the Lebanese in Senegal, often leading to disconcerting questions about belonging, while also giving rise to domestic tensions. This was, however, part of a more complex sociopolitical milieu. Because they occupied the space between colonizer and colonized, the Lebanese enjoyed far better relations with the former and latter than the Senegalese and French enjoyed with one another. This helped to abate the difficulties that the Lebanese had experienced in the broader societal context. Internal to their own community, although the Shia were the overwhelming majority, there existed a diversity in terms of rationales for emigrating to Senegal, migratory trajectories to the region, and also resource endowment and socioeconomic status.

For the Lebanese in Senegal, both identity projection and diaspora relations have traditionally been characterized by secular nationalism, not by the dynamics of sectarianism as witnessed in the homeland. Archival evidence suggests that among the early arrivals to Dakar, many of the Christians sought to distinguish themselves from their Muslim counterparts, assuming that this would garner them favor from the French colonizers much in the way that they enjoyed preferential treatment in Mount Lebanon when it was under French mandate. This does not characterize the pattern of self-identification in the current era. Lebanese Christians and Muslims have long enjoyed harmonious relations in the country, and they actively promote it.

Cross-confessional marriage is common, and members of all the Lebanese communities regularly interact in social space, paying no regard to religious orientation. Muslim students attend Christian schools, and Christian children are enrolled in Muslim schools. Likewise, the communities routinely join in celebrations and the observance of holidays, irrespective of whether the event is held in a church or mosque. Reflecting these realities, political leaders who visit Senegal from Lebanon do not engage in the kind of divisive rhetoric often employed in the homeland. This is a recognition of the solidarity that exists within the diaspora.

This solidarity has been conditioned, in part, by a common experience during the French colonial period, a time when the Lebanese were neither trusted by the French (who suspected them of harboring anti-colonial sentiment and likely to spread it), nor fully embraced by the Senegalese (who often viewed them as an exploitative class, likely to continue the practice). Negotiating social relations between the local Lebanese and the host society has been a delicate undertaking from the beginning. Temporal and physical distance from the civil war has also limited the diffusion of the homeland conflict from Lebanon to Senegal, and contributed to a reality in which the Lebanese diaspora community has not demonstrated a readiness to categorize their compatriots according to notions of faith; neither do they shun or discriminate against them based on those same considerations. The civil war had lasting effects on Lebanese society. Reinkowski (1997) has argued that during the conflict, the Lebanese suffered simultaneously but not together, and that this had a marked effect, after the war, on sustaining sectarian identity rather than facilitating the development of a national one. In Senegal, however, the sociopolitical dynamics have combined to help condition secular nationalism precisely because the Lebanese communities – Shia, Sunni, Christian – suffered together as the targets of hostilities, tensions, and discriminatory practices. Under these circumstances, they turned to in-group solidarity and integrated as a single community.

As an endogenous factor of conflict transportation, the sociopolitical environment in Dakar has

contributed to the reorientation of diaspora identity and, as a result, of diaspora relations. The racism, discrimination, and hostility toward the Lebanese during the colonial era and in the period of post-colonial transition facilitated a shift in Lebanese assessment of boundary-maintenance. Furthermore, the opportunity structures within the country have made it possible for the Lebanese to maintain this solidarity. The core conflict in Lebanon has not been replicated in diasporic space. The tensions within the diaspora community exist along class and temporal lines, not based on confessional identity, which is the organizing principle of boundary-maintenance in the homeland.

5.5 The Lebanese Diaspora in Dearborn

Fieldwork conducted in Dearborn revealed that the boundaries separating Lebanese communities have become more porous in the diaspora. Collective violence has not been a feature of intradiasporan relations, and neither have discursive confrontation or social avoidance. There has not been an importation of the homeland conflict to diasporic space. There is evidence of spatial separation, but interlocutors shared that this was primarily a function of class, not of religious orientation or region of origin in the homeland. There are several factors that have contributed to the dissipation of the hardened boundaries that have become so easily instrumentalized in the homeland context. On the one hand, the Lebanese have been drawn closer together as a result of both the discourses and the practices of U.S. securitization of diaspora communities who are of Arab origin. As the first (and the largest) Arab American community in the United States, the Lebanese have taken the lead in coordinating efforts to mobilize support against securitization and criminalization of the broader Arab American diaspora community. Diaspora has become, in this sense, a site of resistance to the securitizing practices of the host state government, and also a social space of interaction, realization of mutual interests, and reconciliation. Throughout southeast Michigan, Lebanese diaspora leaders have been actively engaged in mobilizing what they perceive as

systemic racism based on Arab heritage. Under the umbrella of Arab American unity, Lebanese American unity has become much more realizable. Secondly, the Lebanese diaspora has engaged in what this thesis terms *legacy mobilization*. This is organized activity, conceived by the diaspora elite and undertaken by both the elite and members of the diaspora community, to actually prevent homeland conflict from emerging in the diaspora setting.

5.5.1 Migratory Trajectory

The Greater Detroit area has long been the epicenter of Lebanese and other Arab immigration to the United States. The early arrivals of the late 19th century were predominantly men who arrived alone and then sent for their immediate family members after having worked initially as peddlers and later as shopkeepers. The major turning point for the Lebanese immigrant community in the area was access to employment at the Ford Motor Company. Ironically, discriminatory practices at Ford precluded the hiring of African-American workers during this period, but further enhanced employment and other economic opportunities for a range of immigrant communities. This not only provided Lebanese immigrants with a level of economic security that allowed them to send for other relatives from the homeland, it also marked the beginnings of a community based around the Ford manufacturing plant in Dearborn. As standards of living rose, resource-based transnationalism became more prevalent, and it played a dual role. It supported local villages in the homeland, and contributed to the establishment of a burgeoning Lebanese American enclave in the Detroit-Dearborn area.

The Lebanese did encounter discrimination. In confronting this discrimination, they faced an internal question about how to best position themselves in the host society environment. Should they make stronger efforts towards assimilation into mainstream American culture, or should they withdraw and seek support from within the Lebanese or broader Arab community? The early patterns were easily discernible. Lebanese Christians chose to Americanize, and did so in

an attempt to demonstrate not only that they belonged, but also to set themselves apart from Muslim immigrants. Many emphasized (and often feigned) a Christian orientation to explicitly distinguish themselves from other Arab communities that had been stigmatized by Americans precisely because they were Muslim. This is similar to patterns outlined in the Lebanese diaspora scholarship, which indicated that the Lebanese in Australia often stressed their whiteness in response to local discrimination against immigrants and immigrant communities from the Arab Middle East.

Unlike the dynamics facing the Lebanese in Dakar, the Dearborn context presented an environment in which the question of integration and belonging did not refer exclusively to adjustment to a new national setting. Importantly, it also involved integration within a local Arab American community that was steadily growing and included Palestinians, as well as immigrants from states such as Iraq and Yemen. Different waves of migration also brought with them different attitudes on the part of new immigrants. According to multiple respondents, the Lebanese thus found themselves in a position of responsibility to help maintain the status quo in the Dearborn area of peaceful interaction within the Arab immigrant community, and to help ensure that newer arrivals offered non-threatening engagement of the public sphere.

5.5.2 Internal Features of the Diaspora

In Dearborn, Arab Americans comprise over 40% of the population, and the majority are of Lebanese heritage. It is estimated that the Lebanese population in Michigan, mostly concentrated in the Wayne County area that includes Dearborn, is roughly 120,000. Most scholars of the diaspora, as well as local officials, argue that there has long been an underrepresentation of the actual size of both the Arab American population and the Lebanese American diaspora. This is partly because Arab Americans are not counted as a separate category for census purposes, and therefore the true numbers remain obscured. Nevertheless,

they remain the largest Arab American community in the region, and project a strong sense of Arab American pride. Even those displaced by conflict in the homeland do not consider themselves refugees. On multiple occasions, interviewees made it clear that there was no temporal limit to their ‘American’ status, and none of the first-generation respondents expressed a desire to permanently return to Lebanon.

Because of the patterns of migration and settlement, the social milieu for the Lebanese diaspora in the Dearborn area situates them among a broader Arab American society, including families of Iraqi, Yemeni, and Palestinian heritage. The Lebanese are predominantly from southern Lebanon, and the majority are from Bint Jbeil, a village that has experienced regular waves of emigration as a result of conflict, most frequently involving Israel. It is also one of the poorest villages in Lebanon. Transnational linkages help the Lebanese diaspora community in the Dearborn area to maintain strong bonds with Lebanon, particularly with the villages or cities from which they (or their parents or grandparents) emigrated. They consider themselves to be members of multi-sited, extended families, and they use transnational networks across social and economic space to maintain access to information and resources at various sites across the network. News of events flows easily, and engagement by the diaspora is rapid in response to events or outcomes that are perceived to jeopardize security and stability in areas where kin and economic interests are located.

5.5.3. Opportunity Structures

The Lebanese occupy the middle class in the United States, and this is also largely reflected in the socioeconomic standing of those in the Dearborn area. Data from the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, carried out by the U.S. Census Bureau, showed the Lebanese to have a median household income of \$67,264 (U.S. Census Bureau 2013). This was the highest of all Arab American immigrant communities, and more than \$10,000 higher than the overall U.S.

average. Lebanese Americans own a large proportion of the small businesses in Dearborn. Lebanese Americans also occupy a range of professional fields across all sectors of the economy. They also enjoy a high degree of social mobility because of high levels of educational attainment.

Functioning within a multicultural environment and an open political opportunity structure, the Lebanese have established a number of institutions, some acting as social service organizations, others emphasizing the professional, religious, political or cultural interests of the communities they serve. Some are civil society organizations that represent Lebanese and Lebanese American causes, as well as issues focused on the broader Arab American community and the regional dynamics of the Middle East. Included among these institutions are local branches of Lebanese political parties and movements, such as the Future Movement. Among the prominent local institutions are the Lebanese American Heritage Club (LAHC), the Center for Arab American Philanthropy (CAAP), the Arab American Civil Rights League (ACRL), the Congress of Arab American Organizations (CAAO) and the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS). Other institutions such as the American Task Force for Lebanon (ATFL), the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), and the Arab American Institute (AAI) are headquartered in Washington, D.C., but maintain ties to the Dearborn area by way of frequent events held in the city. The leaders of these institutions have acted as the primary diaspora entrepreneurs in terms of framing events, socializing constituents, and attempting to condition mobilization.

5.5.4. Patterns of Group Interaction

Interviews in the Dearborn area revealed strong attitudes about the United States. The overwhelming majority of respondents said that they were proud to be American, and that pride in being Lebanese was equally strong. They felt it a duty to make sure that they represented

Lebanon well because they wanted to counter the images of Lebanon that most Americans associate with their country. Their concern was that any negative activity by someone viewed as being Arab American would be associated with the entire community.

The overwhelming majority of interlocutors acknowledged participating in protest activity in Dearborn or in Detroit. Many of them mentioned that they had also traveled to Washington to participate in rallies that had been organized in response to the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. Most of these respondents expressed a belief that such activity further strengthened the bonds that already exist among the Lebanese, and that it helps to strengthen bonds across the Arab American community more generally.

Visits to several Maronite churches and interviews with those who regularly attend local mosques revealed that the leaders of the faith community in Dearborn have contributed to the peaceful relations within the diaspora. Almost all respondents indicated that they believed the Lebanese religious leaders were making a conscious effort to bridge any divides that existed within the community. Those who attended the Islamic Center of America were particularly positive about Imam Mohammad Mardini and his approaches to intradiasporan relations. The prevailing sentiment among these interlocutors was that all of the Lebanese leaders in the Dearborn community approached issues as if they were Lebanese or Arab issues and did not view them through a sectarian lens.

Several interlocutors shared that they had been the subject of profiling by police or had relatives who had similarly been securitized because of their appearance or their name. Seeing members of the diaspora from all Lebanese communities protest these kinds of official actions made many of these interviewees feel much closer to them. There were often social gatherings among them either before or after rallies or other events, and they now maintain steady relations with one another.

Among the first generation respondents, many pointed to emigrating for the sake of providing an environment for their children where there existed a wider variety of opportunities for education and for employment. Regional conflict and tension were also identified by multiple interviewees as reasons for making a decision to leave Lebanon and move to the United States. Also among this group, the overwhelming majority indicated that, in Lebanon, they had not interacted regularly with individuals of divergent religious orientation (by choice), but that they do so now in Dearborn and many of these individuals are friends.

Within many of the local organizations, the leaders, staff and volunteers expressed satisfaction with the nature of relations within the Lebanese community and felt optimistic that no tensions would develop between the Lebanese. They intimated that the incentives for animosity and conflict within the Lebanese community do not exist in the diaspora, whereas they do in Lebanon.

Local university students who took part in interview sessions expressed a strong sense of Lebanese pride, and indicated that they had no desire to ever move to Lebanon. Although most of them had traveled to visit family who remain there, and some have had opportunities to work for family members who own businesses in Beirut, the preference was to remain in the United States. "Dearborn is very Lebanese", as one put it. The students also indicated that their circle of friends consisted of Lebanese Americans of all backgrounds, and that they could not imagine feeling hostility toward another Lebanese (or anyone else) simply because of religion or ethnicity. Many stressed the hardship of their parents or grandparents before arriving in the United States, and expressed how thankful they were to have the opportunity to live in the United States.

There were no references to patterns of physical violence or clashes occurring between Lebanese Americans, and none were observed during fieldwork. Respondents noted that the

Dearborn area often becomes the target of extremists because of its demographic profile, and that this is especially the case during election cycles when raising the ‘Arab issue’ carries traction. They said that those episodes only strengthened the solidarity within the community.

Although the Lebanese diaspora in the Dearborn area is predominantly Shia and from southern Lebanon, the majority of interviewees indicated that they had friends from essentially every region, interacted with them regularly, and did not care about their religious background. These dynamics extend to the engagement of diaspora leaders of all faiths, as they mobilize to support peacebuilding and development in the homeland, as well as provide critical support during periods of national crisis. In 2014, for example, interviewees shared information about local diaspora leaders coordinating fundraising efforts to support a project by ATFL that would help finance mine action activities in Lebanon. Demining is widely recognized as an element of post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, and the diaspora has been an active supporter of these efforts. In 2010, the diaspora also provided over \$100,000 to finance mine action as a means of clearing areas that remained contaminated by mines in the aftermath of the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. On that occasion, local leaders from Dearborn also facilitated fundraising organized by ATFL. Significantly, the U.S. Department of State provided a matching grant that doubled the amount raised by the diaspora, and then commissioned the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), a British-based NGO, to use the funds for demining and mine risk education. During a research visit to the area in April 2018, respondents again shared that the community had been raising funds for an ATFL-led sponsorship of demining in Lebanon, this time to finance the use of specially trained mine detection dogs. This ongoing mine action activity has been undertaken throughout Lebanon, and has been coordinated by the Marshall Legacy Institute, in conjunction with the Lebanese Army. These efforts highlight the role of diaspora leaders at facilitating peace, stability and reconstruction in the homeland.

During group discussions at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, students from the Lebanese Student Association (LSA) highlighted a peace camp organized by a local Christian church (Littlefield Presbyterian Church). Two LSA members noted that they had attended the camp as youth. Both were Muslim women and indicated that they found the experience highly valuable from a bridge building perspective. Because diaspora members are routinely exposed to the transnational socializing agents of the homeland (mass media, political parties, religious institutions), they are susceptible to exposure to the antagonistic homeland frame. This camp is an example of attempts by community leaders to build constructive relationships across religious communities and to teach Shia, Sunni and Christian youth about ways to engage in conflict resolution. Though delivered by Littlefield Presbyterian Church for 22 years, the LSA members indicated that it is widely supported by diaspora leaders from all faiths, who regularly encourage youth to attend and to apply the lessons learned when they travel to Lebanon, and when they engage others within the local Dearborn community.

Diaspora leaders have also supported peacebuilding efforts to help alleviate tensions between Syrian refugees and Lebanese citizens across different locales in Lebanon. During interviews in October 2016, several diaspora leaders active in fundraising mentioned that in Akroum, a Sunni village in northeast Lebanon, funds from Dearborn have helped to support programs facilitating dialogue and understanding, including workshops on human rights and the creation of committees that facilitate positive engagement between the two communities. It is a peacebuilding program for which Dearborn area diaspora leaders have been raising funds since 2014.

One of the most revealing aspects of fieldwork in Dearborn was the realization that the diaspora community has been actively engaged in a process that I term legacy mobilization, and it appears to serve two interrelated purposes. In the broad sense, it involves designing strategies to prevent homeland or regional conflict from emerging in the local environment. It is an

immigrant-led integration strategy designed to facilitate peacebuilding within a diaspora community, and it becomes particularly critical for those diasporas emanating from fragmented societies in the homeland. The root causes of homeland conflict are often perpetuated in diasporic space by diaspora entrepreneurs who emphasize the social, political and cultural divisions between diaspora groups (Féron 2017). In Dearborn, this has not been the case. Instead, the diaspora elite have set in motion processes to abate these divisions, and thus to avoid the occurrence and the implications of imported conflict. Community leaders have focused on establishing a variety of social services, educational, charity and cultural institutions geared toward addressing many of the underlying social causes of these divisions, and they are inclusive. Shia arriving from southern Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley, or the southern suburbs of Beirut receive their training, assistance, and other services alongside Sunnis who have arrived from Tripoli and Maronites who have arrived from Dekwaneh. Principal among these institutions is ACCESS, founded by a Lebanese American and now the largest Arab American community non-profit organization in the United States. Interlocutors further indicated that constant interaction via other local community organizations had offered increased exposure to individuals that they might have otherwise viewed in adversarial terms in the homeland. The Arab American National Museum (AANM), a library and museum complex founded through an initiative by ACCESS, is one such institution that promotes broad Arab American pride. It offers regular exhibits and cultural programming that emphasize the contributions to society made by Lebanese Americans, Iraqi Americans, Yemeni Americans, and others. It has been an effective means of socializing toward broad Arab pride. Politically, the diaspora entrepreneurs in the Dearborn area appear to have coordinated their messaging so as to avoid the use of any inflammatory rhetoric or themes that might incite physical or discursive violence within the diaspora. The discursive opportunity structure is constrained by the setting of parameters of acceptable engagement. Whenever there is a crisis in the home region, the religious leaders

from all of the Lebanese confessions represented in Dearborn tend to hold joint events as a way of galvanizing support for peaceful response, both in a general sense and in terms of relations across the constituent communities of the diaspora. This was seen in the response, for example, to the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005, the war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006, and has been further demonstrated in response to ongoing conflict in the region.

In the United States, the Lebanese were the first – and remain the largest – Arab immigrant community. They consider themselves the vanguard of the Arab American community. Legacy mobilization is also utilized as a means of ensuring that subsequent generations do not jeopardize the societal standing and peaceful relations that the vanguard generation has cultivated over time in the country of settlement. Indeed this is the division that manifests itself most predominantly in the Lebanese diaspora, the fissure between established communities and those who have emigrated during or after major crises in the homeland, most notably the civil war. In his study of the Lebanese diaspora in Côte d'Ivoire, Bierwith (1999) elaborates on the divisions that exist between *les durables* and *les nouveaux*. He finds that one of the main reasons for the division is that the *nouveaux* did not possess the kinship ties that promoted bonds across the first two generations of Lebanese who first settled in the country. This meant that newer arrivals were often without access to the Lebanese networks that had traditionally facilitated employment and social mobility. Because they were more disadvantaged economically, the *nouveaux* resented the *durables*. As was expressed by multiple interlocutors in Dakar, the more established members of the diaspora community tend to be wary of the newcomers because of concerns about how their experiences with conflict might affect their disposition in the diaspora environment, largely because they fear them to be ideologically charged. Instead of viewing post-war arrivals with trepidation, the diaspora community in Dearborn has sought to help them to overcome the financial uncertainty and insecurities, as

well as the psychological traumas of war that often frame their early transition to life in the United States. Legacy mobilization may be considered through the prism of ethnic capital. Borjas (1992) notes how the ethnic environment created by communities can influence intergenerational relations and the development of human capital. He places emphasis on investments made by families and groups in this context to facilitate social and economic mobility across generations within ethnic communities. Although they consider it in the context of school achievement, the work of Shah, Dwyer and Modood (2010) elucidates how co-ethnic networks not only enforce community norms, but also prevent younger generations of the ethnic community from engaging in reckless behavior that might not only forestall personal prospects for social mobility, but might also adversely affect the image of the broader community. Speaking directly in a diaspora context, Gayer (2007) notes that diasporas “ground their identities in constructions of otherness, both internal (fixing the boundary between ‘proper’ and ‘incorrect’ behaviours inside the community) and external (fixing the boundaries between the community and its social partners). Legacy mobilization has been utilized by the Lebanese diaspora in Dearborn to place limits on the discursive opportunity structure of diaspora elite, build the human capital of new arrivals, and socialize new arrivals towards an ethos of Arab pride – all for the purpose of eliminating the social, cultural, and political divisions that are often instrumentalized in both homeland and hostland contexts to induce conflict.

The social and political environment in Dearborn has been conducive to promoting peaceful relations within the Lebanese diaspora community. Several factors have helped to reshape the boundaries between groups so that they are more likely to emphasize Lebanese American and Arab American identity and solidarity. The political opportunity structure and multicultural environment have provided Lebanese leaders with the opportunity to establish a number of organizations, and to freely and openly engage public space for the purpose of advocating for

Lebanese issues, Lebanese American issues, and Arab American issues. Diaspora entrepreneurs, including religious leaders, do not mobilize in such a way that instrumentalizes identity toward conflict. This is due, in part, to legacy mobilization, which has also helped to recondition the orientations of both new arrivals and those who may be struggling to manage (or adjust to) life outside of the homeland. The economic opportunity structure has allowed Lebanese Americans to realize professional success across multiple sectors of the economy. There is no systemic discrimination regarding job access in the Dearborn area, and there is a strong support network within the Lebanese community, thus making it less likely that members of the community will become insular and turn towards alternative – perhaps radical – structures of support and representation. The racism, discrimination, and hostility toward the Lebanese during the colonial era and in the period of post-colonial transition facilitated a shift in Lebanese assessment of boundary-maintenance. Furthermore, the opportunity structures within the country have made it possible for the Lebanese to maintain this solidarity. The core conflict in Lebanon has not been replicated in diasporic space. The tensions within the diaspora community exist along class and temporal lines, not based on confessional identity, which is the organizing principle of boundary-maintenance in the homeland.

5.6 Conclusion

The literature on conflict transportation has elucidated how conditions in the country of settlement can affect the importation of core conflicts from the homeland. The social context, political environment, and economic opportunity structure are all circumstances that do play a role in influencing the trajectory of group relations, and thus on the prospects for the importation of conflict. This chapter has argued that reactive transnationalism and legacy mobilization have played important roles in forestalling the importation of conflict to diasporic space in Dakar and Dearborn. In Dakar, the Lebanese coalesced as a single ethnicity in response to systemic racism, discrimination, and hostility, thus redrawing the boundaries between

groups that can often lead to conflict. Their solidarity was further solidified by the approach taken by Shaykh al-Zayn, the leader of the Islamic Institute in Dakar, who has placed an emphasis on Lebanese solidarity and Lebanese identity. Furthermore, none of the opportunity structures in Dakar have served as infrastructures of conflict importation. In Dearborn, the Lebanese diaspora community is not divided in ways that reflect the core conflict in the homeland. Conflict transportation has similarly not taken place in this context. Legacy mobilization on the part of established members of the diaspora community, and the mobilizing practices of the diaspora elite have actively sought to reorient members of the diaspora in such a way as to make them less susceptible to the root causes of homeland conflict, and to build solidarity within the diaspora. The opportunity structures in Dearborn have provided the diaspora elite with the freedom to use the public sphere as a platform to establish organizations that are geared towards building the human capital and intragroup solidarity of the Lebanese community. Drawing on the literature from transnationalism, diaspora, and immigrant socialization, and further informed by extensive fieldwork in Dakar and the Dearborn area, this chapter has shown how endogenous factors have helped to preclude the importation of conflict from the homeland to diasporic space.

Chapter 6

Triggers of Conflict Transportation? Homeland Events, Diaspora Response

6.1 Introduction

Events have transformative power. They can alter geopolitical realities just as quickly and surely as they influence the trajectories of state policy. An event can draw attention to a region, issue, or population that has been ignored or deemed insignificant until a trigger proves otherwise and demonstrates its gravity. For members of diaspora communities, events can lead to an assessment or reassessment of the ways in which they relate not only to the societies in which they live, but also to their countries or regions of origin. In June 1984, for example, an Indian army attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar – the holiest shrine of the Sikh faith – catalyzed a marked shift in the relationship between the Sikh community abroad and India, and also precipitated the emergence of a collective identity and a mobilized diaspora. This illustrates a phenomenon that Sökefeld (2006) laments as an understudied dimension of diaspora research, namely the central role of events and mobilizing practices (such as framing) in the development of a transnational imagination of community.⁵⁷ Adamson (2012) also finds that a deeper understanding of diasporas can be realized by examining framing processes employed by diaspora leaders.

The current chapter responds to these calls for further research in these areas. Its aim is to examine diasporic response to events in the homeland, and in so doing to understand how diaspora leaders strategically frame and use these events in the context of identity mobilization. Pivotal events transpiring in the country of origin can lead to not only the initiation of conflict among diaspora communities, but also to an escalation of existing conflict between these

⁵⁷ He places emphasis on the dynamics of how and when diasporas form, and the primary argument is that diasporas result from mobilization processes and do not emerge naturally as a result of migration. Events are seen as precipitating this mobilization, and in his discussion of this theme, the author focuses on the framing of events and developments as key to eliciting a transnational imagination of community.

groups in the country of settlement (Féron 2017). The potential for such an importation of homeland conflict may be higher when diaspora groups in the country of settlement were at odds in the homeland. The operative question for this chapter is whether such events in Lebanon have led to features of the core conflict being transported to diasporic space. Studying conflict transportation in the context of diasporas entails giving consideration to the effects of exogenous conditions in the country of origin (Baser 2015; Perrin and Martiniello 2011), which is a logical approach, given that diasporas are often extensions of the homeland villages and regions from which original emigration took place, and they remain engaged with these locales. The transnational practices of diaspora communities are not merely reflective of increased frequency of engagement. More importantly, they allow for a deepening of linkages with the home country. Thus, when critical events take place in the homeland, diasporas are especially sensitive to the effects because of their strong and abiding ties to the local context. Furthermore, collective memories of the homeland shape diaspora attachments to it, and also play an important role in the development of identity in the diaspora. Events that trigger memories of conflict or trauma can adversely affect group relations in the diaspora setting, as noted above, by either introducing or escalating tensions between groups. In some cases, they have been shown to lead some elements within the diaspora to engage in activities that exacerbate tensions and conflict in the homeland by, for instance, providing financial support to insurgents or other conflict-involved parties (Lyons 2007; Bercovitch 2007).

In this chapter, emphasis is placed on diaspora response to two key events, namely the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel. One of the primary goals of the empirical research was to examine whether the boundaries between Lebanese groups became either more or less porous in the diaspora as a result of these episodes, and whether the interactions between the groups were reflective of the core conflict in Lebanon. In the homeland, for instance, the assassination of

Hariri reoriented the nature of sectarian conflict, shifting it from a largely Christian-Muslim conflict to one characterized more so by heightened tensions between Sunnis and Shias. My analysis of empirical research in Dakar and Dearborn finds that the aforementioned events did not trigger conflict transportation in the diaspora. Indeed, sectarian conflict did not escalate between Lebanese communities in either of the local contexts, which is to say that there were no emergent patterns of group behavior defined by discursive confrontation or physical violence.

This chapter draws on that empirical analysis to argue that the absence of conflict transportation in these instances is, in part, the result of the framing strategies undertaken by diaspora leaders. Analysis of the empirical data indicates that they consciously framed the events in such a way as to forestall rather than incite physical violence and discursive confrontation among those in the diaspora community. This has had the effect of facilitating a more peaceful coexistence among the constituent communities of the Lebanese diaspora in Dearborn and Dakar. Specific to the Lebanese diaspora itself, one of the dominant themes to emerge from the data was the consistency in perspectives shared by Maronite, Shia, and Sunni respondents. There was no pattern of differential impact in terms of religious orientation, but two groups were shown to be more likely to take part in protests: those from the second generation, and those who had emigrated from Lebanon after the start of the civil war.

Though events may be structuring in terms of identity; may activate or reactivate cleavages within and across diaspora communities; and may spur active engagement in the public sphere, they “are only critical when they are perceived and framed in a particular way” (Sökefeld 2006, 275). This implies that there are intermediaries who perform an interpretive role, managing the space between *what happened* and *why it matters*, and who then condition the perspectives of community members on what should be done in response. This is typically undertaken by diaspora entrepreneurs within the local community, ethnic leaders who act as the primary

agents of mobilizing identities (Nasr 2000; Adamson 2013; Koinova 2018; Adamson and Demetriou 2007). These individuals, because of their elevated status within the diaspora, are able to exert influence on the perspectives of its members. This status may be the product of noteworthy professional exploits in either the homeland or country of settlement, or perhaps the result of prior leadership in a political or civic capacity. Accepted as legitimate representatives of their communities, these leaders are able to wield significant influence over diaspora interpretation of not only events in the host country setting, but also those events that transpire in the homeland. As mobilized identity communities, diasporas are intimately tied to the homeland by a range of linkages. For diaspora communities emanating from conflict environments, the question becomes not simply whether critical events in the homeland, evocative of mobilization there, also generate responses in the diaspora. The more relevant question focuses on the *kinds* of responses that emerge, and particularly whether they are indicative of a reproduction of homeland conflict in diasporic space. These responses are shaped by the aforementioned diaspora elite.

By applying frame analysis, this chapter seeks to provide insight into the social construction of meaning for the diaspora (Benford and Snow 2000; Goffman 1974; Gamson and Meyer 1996), and the implications this holds for shifts in perception, interpretation, and mobilization. In so doing, it is attentive to rhetoric and responses in the diaspora that are evocative of the indicators of conflict transportation: spatial separation and social avoidance, physical violence, and discursive confrontation. The chapter draws on the scholarship from transnationalism and social movement theory, and is further informed by empirical work (including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and archival research) in Lebanon, Senegal, and the United States.⁵⁸ As in the Golden Temple episode, it will be demonstrated that events have the power

⁵⁸ Additional fieldwork was conducted in Windsor, Ontario (Canada), an extended suburb of Dearborn, Michigan, where many members of the Lebanese diaspora community either travel for worship or have residences.

to not only create diaspora consciousness, but also to influence the trajectory of that consciousness. The chapter is organized into seven thematic sections. Following the introduction, the second section explains framing as an approach used by the diaspora elite to spur mobilization in countries of settlement, and establishes the link that exists between framing and diasporas. Section three offers a brief discussion of the relevance of the selected events – Hariri’s assassination and the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah – by setting them against the backdrop of sociopolitical and geopolitical conditions in Lebanon. Sections four and five analyze, respectively, the framing and response dynamics in Dearborn and Dakar. Taking into account the empirical realities within the respective diasporic sites, section six offers an assessment of the relationship between framing, diaspora response, and conflict transportation. Lastly, section seven offers a conclusion.

6.2 Framing, Mobilization and Diasporas

Social movement perspectives on frame alignment help to explain the strategies that diaspora entrepreneurs use for enhancing the resonance of their collective action frames. Actors and institutions in the diaspora often portray events in particular ways in an attempt to exert influence on group thinking about meaning and significance (Benford and Snow 2000; Gamson 1995), and also in an effort to rationalize or justify mobilization (Snow and Byrd 2007). Their efforts are aimed, in the immediate sense, at those who comprise the diaspora, and in an indirect sense at broader society. Framing, in the former context, can be used to strengthen group cohesion and expand group membership. In the broader community environment, framing can be used as a means of raising awareness about issues of importance to the diaspora, or as part of a strategy to gain support from the host society and its political elite. The systematic study of framing was introduced by Goffman (1974) and has been central to research on social movements. Framing has also been applied in scholarship that examines the formation of

diasporas. This study embraces a view of diasporas as social constructs, and not merely as the outcome of a people moving from one national locale and settling in another. Reflecting this perspective, Adamson (2012) has argued that the development of diasporas is driven, in part, by actors who engage in strategic social identity construction which leads to notions of shared identity and the development of an imagined community. Two related viewpoints on the study of diasporas are key. Sökefeld (2006), in a discussion of what is missing in diaspora research, suggests that insufficient attention has been given to the role played by specific events in triggering the rise of a transnational imagination of community, and how the framing of events affects those who constitute these particular communities. Adamson further notes that “one way of beginning to understand the nature of diasporas is by using a social movement framework that emphasizes the strategic social construction of transnational identity communities through processes of framing and political mobilization by diaspora entrepreneurs” (2012, 32). Frame analysis, from the methodological toolkit of social movement theory, offers an effective approach for examining these dynamics.

Benford and Snow (1998) refer to framing as a process involving the construction of meaning and the interpretation of reality in an attempt to mobilize current and potential constituents. Loizides similarly deems the process to consist of “conscious strategic efforts to shape shared understandings” (2015, 29). Framing is also utilized as a tool for trying to build consensus on contentious issues or on issues in need of clarity. This is consistent with Goffman’s (1974) early view of frames as “schemata of interpretation”. According to Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), framing is key to helping individuals interpret their life experiences and make sense of the world around them. For Oliver and Johnston, frames are “complex interpretative schemata . . . that become important in analyzing collective action insofar as they are shared by enough individuals to channel individual behavior into patterned social ones” (2000, 41). Relating the concept to diasporas, Sökefeld (2006) notes that framing processes establish the significance

of the imagined community and play a fundamental role in shaping diaspora identity. In practice, framing involves three core tasks: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing has often been referred to as the blame game. It is a process that “addresses the problem of consensus mobilization by diagnosing some event or aspect of social life or system of government as problematic and in need of repair or change, and attributes blame or responsibility” (Snow and Byrd 2007, 124). Prognostic framing entails outlining both a solution and a plan for implementing it. Motivational framing, the last of the core framing tasks, is a call to action. It involves “the construction of vocabularies of motive that provide prods to action by overcoming both the fear of risks often associated with collective action and . . . the free-rider problem” (Snow and Byrd 2007, 128). Snow and Byrd refer to this as moving current and potential constituents from the balcony to the barricades. In many ways, this also speaks to strategies that might be employed in an attempt to motivate those within a diaspora community to follow a prescribed course of action.

Adversarial framing is often used as a component of the aforementioned framing tasks. It entails defining the responsible party in largely pejorative terms, and characterizing the relationship with that party (or group) as a central part of the necessary struggle to overcome the problem or injustice that has been identified. Injustice frames, normally based on grievances, thus identify targets for culpability and retribution, and add an emotional element to framing (Gamson 1995). Rhetorical devices and derogatory imaging are used in these contexts to vilify and demean the “other”, and to depict the group or community as somehow inferior. As Entman notes, “those frames that employ the more culturally resonant terms have the greatest potential for influence” (2003, 417). These are the kinds of framing strategies that are regularly practiced in Lebanon, and that foment tension and conflict. If diaspora elite were to employ the same approaches in their framing of homeland events, it could possibly contribute to the transportation of elements of the homeland conflict such as physical violence

or discursive confrontation. Resonance is a key component of these framing processes and demonstrates a connection between what is being conveyed and a belief on the part of the audience that this is consistent with that audience's system of priorities, beliefs, and lived experiences. This is why, in the homeland context, framing such as this is so effective. Through the media outlets that they control, the political elite in Lebanon regularly castigate their adversaries (and the supporters of those adversaries), while socializing their own adherents toward their perspective. This influences the boundaries that exist between communities in the homeland, as these practices tend to harden the divisions between communities.

Two of the primary frame alignment strategies employed by leaders within diaspora communities to spur mobilization are frame bridging and frame extension. These approaches involve conveying to the target audiences that their priorities, interests, and grievances are consistent with those of the diaspora. This target audience may include members of the extended community sought for mobilization; those with the potential to provide financial support; or governments preparing to make policy decisions of relevance to diaspora. Frame bridging focuses on "the linking of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem" (Snow et al. 1986, 467). In her comparative study of Lebanese and Albanian diasporas in the United States, Koinova (2011a) notes how the leaders of both groups connected sovereignty with democracy, hoping that the longstanding American focus on democracy and democracy promotion would make its policymakers more receptive to their lobbying efforts for Lebanese sovereignty vis-a-vis Syria, and also more sympathetic to ethnic Albanian interest in independence for Kosovo. Frame extension occurs when "the interests of a social movement are depicted in such a way as to include concerns of importance to potential adherents" (Benford and Snow 2000, 625). The frame is extended to other issues of importance to the broader public, and particularly to the specific audience from whom support is desired. As an example of this strategy, Berkowitz and

Mügge (2014) demonstrate how Kurdish diaspora organizations have linked resolution of the Kurdish question to broader concerns about the prospects for peace and stability in the Middle East. This is not only an example of frame extension, but also of frame amplification, in which the frame is connected to the perceived belief systems and values of the target audiences.

A major factor in the efficacy of diaspora leaders within their respective communities is the existence of political opportunity structures and discursive opportunity structures that are conducive to their framing efforts (Esman 1986; Tarrow 1998). These will determine the extent to which they are able to create the organizations and form the networks that are central to using mobilizing practices such as rallies and protests to shape perspectives. If the political opportunity structure in the country of settlement is more open, then diaspora leaders will have the capacity to establish mobilizing structures that provide them with a platform for recruiting members and communicating their grievances. Those within the diaspora will also have the ability to freely participate in activities that are organized around their identity and interests. Discursive opportunity structures are no less meaningful, and this is so in two contexts – within the diaspora itself, in terms of whether the ideas being conveyed are deemed reasonable, legitimate, and consistent with its acceptable norms; and secondly, in the context of the wider political culture of the country of settlement, and whether these ideas exceed the bounds of acceptable mobilizing activity and speech (Koopmans and Statham 1999). This demonstrates the relevance and power of cultural dynamics within the hostland environment to affect both the organizational and content dimensions of diaspora activity.

In this context, Shain and Barth (2003) identified two interrelated classifications of diaspora, one set focused on prospects for mobilization, and the second focused on the roles played by those in the diaspora. They divide mobilized diasporas into core, passive, and silent members. The core members correspond to the diaspora entrepreneurs and diaspora elite who are highly visible and engaged with issues relevant to the diaspora community. The distinction between

passive and silent members rests in the extent to which they are responsive to the framing undertaken by the core members. The social and political life of passive members is not necessarily defined by routine, active engagement of issues related to the homeland, but they are more likely to mobilize than the silent members, whom Shain and Barth characterize as having ascribed rather than self-identified status as part of the diaspora. In terms of diasporic roles, Shain and Barth identify active actors and passive actors. The active actors are those who organize to influence not only political decision-making, but also society, including members of the imagined community. Diasporas are deemed to be passive actors when they have, for example, become the object (desired or not) of homeland foreign policy. Russian intervention in Crimea and the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine serves as a prime example. Embedded within these classifications of the diaspora – core/passive/silent and active versus passive – lies the reality that the catalyst for moving members of the diaspora from potential to actual mobilization is effective framing. Such framing processes could be utilized as a means of attempting to reach the silent members of the diaspora in order to spur them to collective action. Snow and Benford were largely focused on collective action in a social movement context, but framing and social movement theory are nevertheless relevant to diasporas, which are transnational identity communities that are mobilized toward shared collective identity through framing. Key for the purposes of this thesis is whether these processes mobilize diaspora members towards or away from an identity that reflects the core divisions in the homeland, or towards an identity that rejects the homeland frame and embraces a different conception of what it means to be Lebanese.

What is clear from the scholarship is that framing is key to not only the emergence of diasporas, but also to any transformations that might take place within or across diaspora communities. Central to these dynamics is the role played by diaspora elite, who use their status to direct their constituent communities, and also to pursue their interests vis-à-vis the political leadership

in the countries of origin and settlement. Drawing on the aforementioned framing tasks, and after detailing two critical events in post-civil war Lebanon, it will be demonstrated how diaspora entrepreneurs have set the parameters for mobilization in response to both the assassination of Hariri and the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. As importantly, it will be shown that the sociocultural and historical dynamics within the country of settlement are no less significant at conditioning diaspora response to events in the homeland and affecting conflict transportation.

6.3 Pivotal Events in Lebanon: Potential Triggers of Conflict Transportation

The social and political landscapes in Lebanon are dominated by vestiges of conflict. From the long civil war, which spanned fifteen years, to the succession of political assassinations since the conclusion of the war, physical violence has been an enduring feature of the national landscape. Discursive confrontation has been no less pervasive, and this has especially been the case during electoral cycles when competition for the spoils of the clientelist system are amplified by conspicuous projections of identity. The territorial dimensions of conflict have been manifest by the fixed boundaries within which Lebanese communities have settled. Although social avoidance is not as pronounced as was the case in the immediate aftermath of the civil war, spatial separation remains a lasting effect of that conflict. Cross-communal suspicions and insecurities, hardened by the atrocities witnessed during the war, have normalized self-segregation. These social strains are deeply embedded. As Baser notes, “tensions rooted in homeland conflict usually reveal themselves in the host country in the form of clashes between rival groups, especially after critical homeland events” (2013, 108). Pivotal events in Lebanon are usually symptomatic of the core conflict outlined in Chapter 4, a conflict that has been sustained by a constellation of factors both domestic and regional. Two such events in this context are the assassination of the former Prime Minister in 2005 and the summer 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah. Though these events are treated in greater detail in

Chapter 4, it bears noting here that they carried profound implications for the conflict indicators discussed at the beginning of this section. The assassination of Hariri transformed the political landscape and ushered in the Cedar Revolution, the model for protests which later drove the Arab Spring. The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah has also generated far-reaching social, political, and security-related implications for Lebanon.

What is central for the purposes of this chapter is that my research found that the diaspora responses to these two events were shaped largely by the framing activities of the diaspora elite. Relative to elite framing, three prominent themes emerged from my empirical work undertaken in Dakar and Dearborn. First, elite framing in both contexts tended to be collaborative and inclusive. Diaspora leaders frequently coordinated their activities and their messages. Joint meetings were often organized by religious and civic leaders from across the local Lebanese communities, meaning that Christians and Muslims in the diaspora participated in these sessions together. Sometimes these took the form of commemorations of events, and on other occasions, they were gatherings that allowed leaders and members of the diaspora community to discuss the impact and implications of more recent or ongoing events, along with possible ways to offer a collective and constructive response. This had the effect of exposing the diaspora community to interpretations that were counter to the markedly negative and confrontational discourses that often emanated from the homeland. As the leader of one Lebanese organization in Dearborn noted, “We know they have internet connections, satellites, and smartphones or whatever. We are not trying to compete with what they are hearing elsewhere. I don’t think we need to. I believe they understand that we’ve built a community here and they will be a big part of helping to keep it together”. Also pertinent to elite framing, a second pattern that emerged from analysis of the empirical data involves the tenor of the diaspora elite’s public engagement. The rhetoric employed by diaspora leaders tended to reflect a rejection of sectarian division and communal discord. This was in stark contrast to what was

witnessed first-hand and conveyed by interlocutors during fieldwork in Lebanon. Blame, distortion, and targeting were prevalent themes in the homeland context, and these were distinct features of both the media landscape and the direct messaging of homeland political elite and their proxies. In Dakar and Dearborn, however, the diaspora elite did not characterize other Lebanese groups as threats or use their own prominent status as a platform for legitimizing negative stereotypes or assigning culpability to particular groups for any adverse economic, political, or security-related situations or developments in either the homeland or the diaspora setting.

A third theme to emerge from the data relates specifically to the nature of the diagnostic framing used by diaspora entrepreneurs. When leaders made use of injustice frames or adversarial frames, they regularly identified external – as opposed to Lebanese – actors and institutions as being responsible for perceived transgressions committed against Lebanon or the Lebanese. Most often, this entailed references to American foreign policy or Israel, or to discriminatory practices such as racial profiling. Taken together, the elite framing practices of the diaspora leaders appear to be designed specifically to forestall the development of conflict within the Lebanese diaspora community, and to simultaneously strengthen the internal ties among its members. This framing has fostered a shared sense of belonging to a more expansive conception of the Lebanese diaspora, as opposed to a fragmented diaspora defined along religious lines. These framing practices have broadly contributed to making the boundaries between communities more porous than they are in the homeland. In effect, they are diminishing sectarianism in the diaspora. This underscores the argument that identity is malleable (Demmers 2007), and that processes in transnational social space can affect the construction or reconstruction of notions of community (Mavroudi 2007).

6.4 Elite Framing and Diaspora Response in Dearborn

The Dearborn area has witnessed a proliferation of Lebanese institutions, some acting as social service organizations, others emphasizing the professional, religious, political, or cultural interests of the communities they serve. Included among these institutions are local branches of Lebanese political parties and movements. The leaders of these institutions have acted as the primary diaspora entrepreneurs in terms of framing events, socializing constituents, and attempting to condition mobilization. In the aftermath of the Hariri assassination, these representatives sought to organize rallies and protests, and many of these events took place in and around the Greater Detroit and Dearborn area. Though the rhetoric was charged, this did not bring about cross-confessional conflict because, I argue, there were no adversarial frames that targeted other groups within the Lebanese diaspora. At the height of the war between Israel and Hezbollah, similar demonstrations erupted in the Greater Detroit and Dearborn area, much as they did in Dakar and elsewhere; and the diaspora leaders from the local region orchestrated many of them. No cross-communal conflict emerged.

A recurring theme that emerged from discussions of the 2006 conflict was that many of the respondents considered southern Lebanon to be home much in the way that they viewed Dearborn as home. Most of the families had parents or grandparents who lived there, or who split their time between villages in the south and Dearborn. The deaths of children and of the elderly, along with images of destruction – particularly the scale – were powerful motivators in their own right, but similarly for the Lebanese in Senegal, the conflict was viewed not through a sectarian prism, but rather as an attack on Lebanon, an attack on home. For many of those who helped to inform fieldwork in Dearborn for this project, the demonstrations in 2006, even if accompanied by Hezbollah flags and slogans, were not in support of a Hezbollah cause or a sectarian one linked to the narrowly defined interests of a particular religious community. The demonstrations were in support of what their participants deemed to be a purely Lebanese cause – the call to defend the homeland, and to support those capable of doing so.

Members of the Lebanese diaspora in Dearborn maintain extremely strong connections with the imagined community (Anderson 1986). The web of linkages that connect them to the homeland and to other sites within the diasporic network make it such that they are intimately tied to what transpires across the network. Significant events occurring in Lebanon often affect families abroad in pronounced ways. During periods of war or natural disaster, for example, homes have been completely destroyed and thousands of families displaced. Many in the diaspora also own or maintain residences in Lebanon, which makes them not only vulnerable to such occurrences, but also sensitive to their causes and perhaps likely to mobilize either in anticipation or in response. Economic downturns can adversely affect business operations in the homeland, leading perhaps to downsizing or closure. Many in the diaspora continue to own or share ownership in private enterprises in Lebanon, which makes them susceptible to financial losses if such dynamics do emerge. Events of a political nature that affect domestic Lebanese society in broad fashion have normally elicited responses in the diaspora, in part because modern communication technologies have made it easier to access news and information, as well as to exchange it. What was made clear by all interviewees was the ease with which they could remain aware of what was taking place in the homeland, and that they actively sought to do so. The constant interaction with the homeland became a regular part of their daily lives in the United States. This demonstrates, as the scholarship on transnationalism conveys, the increasingly blurred lines in conceptions of home. Diasporas challenge traditional notions of the bounded citizen, and highlight the modern reality of transnational belonging. In his discussion of a related theme, Clifford (1997) has argued that diasporas have perfected the practice of what he termed non-absolutist forms of citizenship. The hyper-transnationalism of the Lebanese diaspora serves as a prime example. It is no surprise, then, that there was such an immediate and attentive reaction on the part of the community in Dearborn to the Israeli war with Hezbollah, and to the assassination of Rafik Hariri.

Interviews and discussions conducted with members of the Lebanese community in Dearborn indicated that individuals and families maintained constant contact with their home villages and communities immediately after the initiation of the 2006 conflict. Members of the Lebanese diaspora community in the Detroit and Dearborn area are predominantly Shia, and most are from southern Lebanon (many from the same villages), and also from the southern suburbs of Beirut. These were the areas most heavily and adversely affected by Israeli retaliatory actions to a conflict initiated by Hezbollah. The predominant means of following these events were satellite television, online access to regional news portals from the Middle East, and constant exchanges of messages via social media, which were, in any event, more direct and more personal, and therefore more relevant for those seeking updates on what was transpiring. Small businesses that had televisions on the premises – barber shops, dry cleaners, sandwich shops along Warren Avenue and elsewhere – were overflowing with people who had come to follow the news. This was not merely an exercise in seeking updates. Many had been unable to reach their families in southern Lebanon or had seen images or read of destruction and fatalities in their village areas. They were desperate to know, above all, if members of their extended families were safe. Many of the local community centers and religious institutions also opened their doors to those who sought not only information, but who were also in need of crisis counseling. One respondent shared that she had volunteered in this capacity, and had never experienced a display of that kind of despair and anxiety, at least not in terms of volume. She also expressed her appreciation for community leaders encouraging members of the diaspora to seek such counseling.

Within a week of the start of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, daily protests had already begun to take place in and around Dearborn. One of the largest, which drew an estimated crowd of 17,000, included people from a broad cross-section of the community. One interviewee, who was a university student during that period, expressed a sentiment that was shared by multiple

respondents during fieldwork in Michigan. In reflecting on those events, she observed that the expansive nature of participation in the demonstrations indicated that there was a real (and strong) sense of community among Lebanese of divergent religious backgrounds and regional origin, and also among the other immigrant groups who had settled in the area. There was a familiarity among many of the participants, and the demonstrations were not limited to those of Lebanese heritage. One interlocutor shared that, “It seemed like it wasn’t just about us. Iraqis joined in the protests, too, and other people here who are not Lebanese and not even Shia. We are a community. Our families know each other”.⁵⁹ Protest participation was cross-confessional, multi-generational, and inclusive, even if Lebanese Shia were the largest and arguably most vocal of those taking part. Indeed, narratives conveyed by informants echoed the sentiment that the *Lebanese* – not a community disaggregated to refer to Shia Lebanese – were suffering as a result of the war. This was witnessed by the ubiquity of Lebanese flags being flown in front of storefronts, from cars and trucks, and from private residences. Cars often passed through Dearborn as if in a parade, flying their flags with attendant waves or shouts of support from pedestrians. It was a common sight and sound that came to permeate the diaspora landscape.

Similar dynamics were on display after the assassination of Rafik Hariri, though the popular and collective response was far more muted than would be the case the following year when the hostilities erupted between Israel and Hezbollah. Those who participated in the protests were predominantly Sunni Muslims from Lebanon, but they were routinely joined by others from within the Lebanese diaspora, as well as by other members of the Arab immigrant community in Dearborn, which remains the largest immigrant group in the region. Members of the Palestinian diaspora were predominant among the non-Lebanese at these gatherings. According to interlocutors with whom regularly meetings were held at the Arab American

⁵⁹ Author interview, September 2016, Dearborn, Michigan.

National Museum (AANM), the Palestinians were especially moved by the Hariri assassination because of the consistent support that the Hariri family has given to the Palestinian refugee population in Lebanon. In addition to the small-scale demonstrations that erupted in the immediate aftermath of the assassination, there have been a number of ceremonies held in honor of Hariri and the contributions that he made to the post-civil war rebuilding of Lebanon, most of which have been organized on or near his date of birth or death. These commemorations have also been attended by a wide representation of the local community, but particularly by the Lebanese, and have been conducted primarily at local event centers and as part of cross-confessional memorial services jointly organized by a demographically diverse group of Lebanese civic and religious leaders from the region.

An analysis of the rhetoric employed by two diaspora entrepreneurs, coupled with the response of the community, is instructive in helping to understand framing in the context of prospects for conflict transportation. The emphasis here will be on whether (and how) these leaders engaged their constituents by framing events in a way that either invokes or seeks to avert physical violence, discursive confrontation, or social avoidance and spatial separation. The following section begins by outlining the background of each diaspora entrepreneur as a means of establishing his credentials as an accepted spokesperson for the diaspora community, and then analyzes the framing that was undertaken. These two examples are fitting because they serve as clear and representative illustrations of how the diaspora leaders in the Dearborn and Greater Detroit area have approached framing processes relative to homeland issues and events. They further help to illustrate at least part of the reason why conflict transportation has not taken place in this local context.

Reflective of the open political opportunity structure in the United States, a large number of diaspora organizations have been created by members of the Lebanese community in the Dearborn area. Those within the diaspora are actively engaged in the activities of these

organizations, which are comprised of a diverse set of heritage associations, social service institutions, professional societies, and political organizations. Religious institutions are also a central element of the diasporic environment; and although the Shia are the majority within the Lebanese and broader Arab diaspora in Dearborn, the large number of Maronite churches in the Greater Detroit area testifies to the diversity within the local Lebanese diaspora. Though the vast majority of the aforementioned organizations are truly local in origin, there are some that were founded and are headquartered elsewhere (most notably Washington and Beirut), but have branches in Dearborn or Detroit. The leaders of these diaspora organizations are highly visible, and are widely known throughout the diaspora community.

Osama Siblani is one of the most active and visible members of the Lebanese diaspora in the Dearborn area. His personal story epitomizes the collective experience of many within the local Lebanese community. He departed from Beirut in 1976, soon after the start of the civil war, and traveled to the United States to pursue higher education and a career. Both were undertaken in the greater Detroit-Dearborn area of Michigan. He later established a successful professional life in the state, and ultimately decided to settle in the Dearborn area. Active in the life of the diaspora, he sought a way to connect to both the Lebanese and wider Arab American community, and thus founded *The Arab American News* in 1984. It is a free weekly newspaper, published in both Arabic and English, and has become the most widely read news source among Arab Americans. Siblani has been able to parlay his leadership of the newspaper into a prominent role within the Arab American community and for the Lebanese diaspora. In 2013, for example, he was inducted into the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame. He is a constant presence at rallies and demonstrations (many of which he has helped to organize), and he appears regularly on the broadcast news programs of the BBC, CNN, National Public Radio (NPR), CBS, NBC, MSNBC, Fox, Al Jazeera, and PBS. He has also been interviewed by a range of newspapers, including the Detroit Free Press, Detroit News, New York Times, Wall

Street Journal, The Guardian, Le Monde, Chicago Tribune, and the Los Angeles Times. That these outlets have so routinely called upon him for commentary on issues affecting Arab Americans and Lebanese Americans speaks to his recognized status as a diaspora entrepreneur. Excerpts from remarks given by Siblani at a rally in Dearborn in 2017 provide valuable insight into the overall approach he has taken in the way that he frames events relative to Lebanon, and how he has consciously sought to harmonize the interests of the Lebanese diaspora's constituent communities, as opposed to presenting these interests in more narrow terms, based on sectarian or confessional exclusivity – Christian or Muslim; or Maronite, Sunni, or Shia. In his participation in rallies, protests, and conferences, he routinely calls attention to mutual interests and shared suffering, and portrays events (and policies) in such a way as to unite what might otherwise be considered disparate communities. This example also demonstrates the consistent pattern of diaspora response to homeland events. The framing is inclusive, blame is assigned to an actor outside of Lebanon, there is no call for discursive or physical violence, and there is an appeal for the Lebanese community to maintain solidarity in the face of what has transpired.

Today we stand with Hariri not because he is a Sunni or a Muslim, but because he is oppressed and he is the Prime Minister of Lebanon. In the same breath, we do not stand by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah or the Lebanese resistance because they are Shi'a, but because they liberated our mother country's land, brought dignity to the Lebanese people and defeated occupation, represented by Israel. (Khalifeh 2017)

These remarks were given in response to a resignation announcement that was made by Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri on 04 November 2017. The announcement was made while the Prime Minister was in Riyadh, and was broadcast via Al Arabiya, a Saudi Arabian television news network. Hariri's declaration produced a mixture of shock, disbelief, and suspicion among citizens in Lebanon, and also among its vast diaspora. In his remarks, he used harsh language in assigning blame to Iran and Hezbollah for instabilities in Lebanon and the

broader region. He also indicated that part of the rationale for his resignation was the fear of assassination, alluding to evidence that a plan to eliminate him had been discovered. The announcement generated a flurry of diplomatic activity, culminating in Hariri's return to Beirut on 21 November 2017, after direct intervention by French President Emmanuel Macron.

In his speech, Siblani asserts that the members of the diaspora are supportive of Hariri, not because of parochial allegiances based on religion, but because he is the legitimate head of Lebanese government. This is a significant acknowledgement, as the political framework in Lebanon mandates that the Prime Minister must be a Sunni, the Speaker of Parliament must be Shia, and the President must be a Maronite Christian. This institutionalization of sectarianism has been a longstanding source of conflict among communities in the homeland, but strong support expressed by a Lebanese Shia member of the diaspora (Siblani) for Hariri, a leading figure of the Lebanese Sunni community, resonated. This expression of support for Hariri is also important because it incorporates not just the political dimension of Hariri's identity, but also the national dimension. He is, above all, Lebanese. His treatment in Saudi Arabia is portrayed by Siblani, a Shia, as a violation of Lebanese dignity and sovereignty, not merely as a transgression against a Sunni politician. The consensus in Lebanon and among those in the diaspora community is that Hariri had been held in Saudi Arabia against his will. Realizing that opposition to external intervention in Lebanon is a unifying theme, Siblani was able to effectively frame this event by interpreting it as an affront to all Lebanese. By referring to Hariri as oppressed, the speaker uses a triggering mechanism that elicits memories of how each of the communities has suffered. This framing resonates because it demonstrates a consistency with the histories and lived experiences of the diaspora community, whether such experiences were endured directly or conveyed in narratives of the homeland from one generation to another (Benford and Snow 2000). The widespread news coverage and intense local discussions of this episode generated heightened interest and participation in events that

focused on it. Those attending the rallies were representative of Lebanese of all backgrounds, and also included others within the Arab American immigrant community in the Dearborn area. In this context, Siblani sought to link Israeli occupation with the uncertainties unfolding in Saudi Arabia as two examples of infringements on Lebanon and its sovereignty. This frame resonated because Lebanese of all backgrounds had suffered in myriad ways as a result of Israeli interventions (Traboulsi 2007; Salibi 1988). Tying Hezbollah to the theme of successfully responding to external interference in Lebanon was an attempt at frame extension, a required strategy when the perspective of the framer may not be as consistent with those of the targeted public (Koinova 2011a; Snow et al. 1986).⁶⁰

In the specific context of the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, Siblani was active in planning and participating in many of the demonstrations that took place in Michigan and elsewhere. In the largest local protest in response to the 2006 conflict, one in which approximately 10,000 people took part, Siblani urged on the crowd by saying, “If the F.B.I wants to come after those who support the resistance done by Hezbollah, then they better bring a fleet of buses. I, for one, would be willing to go to jail” (Torriero 2006). In a similar context, on 12 August, roughly 2,500 Lebanese Americans and other Arab Americans from Dearborn joined Siblani in Washington to participate in protests against the war, and to call on the U.S. government to exert pressure on Israel. Part of his speech included a call-and-response with the crowd in which he asked “Who is the resistance?” and the crowd responded “Hezbollah!” Notable here is the open support for Hezbollah, an organization listed by Washington as a terrorist organization. The ability of Siblani to convey such a message – and indeed of protest participants to demonstrate their vocal support for it – reinforces the notion that the political and discursive opportunity structures within which they were operating were open ones. His

⁶⁰ It could not have been lost on Siblani that Sunni members of the diaspora were not largely supportive of Hezbollah, and Maronite Christians even less so.

framing strategies in both instances, in Dearborn and in Washington, emphasized antagonistic framing that identified Israel as the actor ultimately responsible for the conflict and the scope of the resultant casualties and destruction, primarily in southern Lebanon and areas near Beirut. The call for mobilization centered on advocating that the Lebanese and Arab American communities maintain solidarity, support Hezbollah, and pressure the United States to intervene to stop the war.

In another of the many Dearborn protest events in this context, this gathering took place one week into the conflict, and Siblani again made use of his prominent role within the community as a way to interpret the meaning of the conflict. For two such gatherings, he conveyed the following messages to those in attendance:

CAAO members are appalled that, while the international community has condemned the Israeli actions and called for a cessation of its criminal behavior, our own government is not only supporting the killing of hundreds of civilians, but it is also encouraging the systematic destruction of two blooming democracies in the Middle East. U.S. officials also do not seem to care that tens of thousands of the civilians under attack by Israel are U.S. citizens currently visiting Lebanon on vacation.⁶¹

I know that you are afraid, and you have been subjected to a great deal of harassment in an attempt to silence you and send you into hiding. I know you are terrorized, afraid for yourselves and your family here in America, but you have a duty now to be brave and stand up against tyranny and terror. This is not the way to win the hearts and minds of Muslim Arabs, to give Israel the green light to kill innocent people and destroy the only democracies in the Middle East, the Palestinian democracy and the Lebanese democracy.

In this set of remarks, Siblani has used an injustice frame to portray Israel as the responsible party for these hostilities in the Middle East, and specifically for the suffering of those within Lebanon. Many of the debates taking place in Lebanon at the time focused on the culpability of Hezbollah for instigating a conflict that could ultimately cause over 1,000 casualties and a scale of destruction not seen since the civil war (Norton 2007). Siblani, however, focused his criticism on two themes relative to his point of view – Israeli accountability for the conflict,

⁶¹ This was a press statement issued by Siblani in his capacity as spokesperson for CAO.

and Washington's indifference to the plight of the Lebanese. In an attempt at frame bridging, Siblani's victim frame ties the conflict in Lebanon to the Israeli conflict with the Palestinians as a way to generate support from the broader Arab American diaspora. By referencing Lebanese and Palestinian democracy in the context of this broader conflict, Siblani is conflating the protection of democracy with his desire for the U.S. government to exert pressure on Israel to end the fighting. This is an example of frame extension. Importantly here, Siblani also makes use of the phrase *our own government*, along with references to members of the Lebanese diaspora who were trapped by the conflict, as an attempt to align the concerns of the protest movement with those of the American government, namely in the context of protecting its own citizens, even if it is reticent in its criticism of the Israeli operation and strongly opposed to Hezbollah, as evidenced by its official designation as a terrorist organization.

Siblani was an invited speaker for a service to commemorate those who had died in Qana, a village in southern Lebanon that was the target of Israeli strikes during Operation Grapes of Wrath in 1996.⁶² Two Lebanese children from the local diaspora community were among the casualties, as they had been visiting family in Qana during this summer period. Qana was also targeted during the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, resulting in the deaths of over 100 villagers. Like the majority of such events held in the region, this service was inclusive, and was attended by Shia, Sunni, and Christians from Lebanon, along with other members of the Arab American community.

Here in this country, we can determine our destiny. We can be united. We have to use our mind. We are not going to be divided between Sunni and Shia. It doesn't help us. The only way they could defeat us is dividing us. They went to their books and they searched for a way to do it. Unfortunately, they have found it - sectarianism. (Arab American News 2015)

Siblani's remarks emphasized two primary themes – the need for unity among Lebanese in the diaspora, the possibility of unity among Lebanese in the diaspora, and the identification of an

⁶² See Norton (2000) and Ranstorp (1998).

external source of not only Lebanese suffering, but also of divisions among the Lebanese. This reflected the prevailing theme across all of his public presentations.

John Akouri, whose grandfather emigrated from Tripoli to the United States, is also a leader among the Lebanese diaspora in the Dearborn area. His status emerged as a result of his active political engagement in southeast Michigan, and after having served in a number of high-profile positions for elected and appointed Lebanese-Americans in Washington. He worked for Spencer Abraham, a Lebanese-American who was one of Michigan's U.S. Senators and also a former Secretary of Energy in the cabinet of President George W. Bush. Akouri was also press secretary for Congressman Joe Knollenberg, who represented two different congressional districts, both of which encompassed areas with significant Lebanese-American populations. Knollenberg had no Lebanese heritage himself, but Akouri was his major link to the Arab-American communities among his constituents, and particularly for those who were of Lebanese descent. Akouri also previously served as a city councilman in Farmington Hills, a suburb of Detroit that is twenty miles north of Dearborn. Upon election in 2003, he was the first US-born city councilman of Lebanese heritage to sit on the Farmington Hills city council. In November 2005, Akouri founded the Lebanese American Chamber of Commerce, an organization linking interests of the multitude of Lebanese enterprises in the United States and Lebanon. In 2017, he began hosting a radio show on WJR Radio, a local Detroit station. These activities all elevated Akouri's profile in the community, and provided him with a platform to both elicit and represent the concerns and interests of those within the diaspora.

In remarks commemorating the third anniversary of the assassination of Hariri, Akouri remained consistent with the pattern of discourse utilized by diaspora leaders in the Dearborn area. They have regularly used public forums to advocate peaceable interethnic relations within the Lebanese community. There has not been a rhetoric which characterized relations within the diaspora in competitive or adversarial terms. This is a departure from practices undertaken

in the homeland by both elected political officials and many of the elite within society. In this particular speech, Akouri actually devotes more time to emphasizing unity among the Lebanese than he does speaking directly about Hariri. This is a deliberate use of symbolism, as Akouri is alluding to stronger intra-diasporan ties as a sign that Hariri's dream for Lebanon is coming to fruition. Several passages from his speech are indicative of this model of engagement. Midway through his speech, Akouri offers a prayer for peace, and mentions the names of several Lebanese figures whom he said had all suffered and died for Lebanon. What is significant here is that the list is an inclusive one, recognizing both Christians and Muslims – and both Sunni and Shia – who had disappeared or had been assassinated. His words in this instance resonate with the entire Lebanese community. When he says that he is praying *for the victims of violence everywhere and for the martyrs and their families in our beloved Lebanon*, he makes use of a unifying theme which acknowledges that no community within Lebanon holds a monopoly on suffering and victimhood. This inclusive rhetoric highlighted for the Christians and Muslims in attendance their common suffering, even if the geographies of homeland sectarianism mean that it is likely that they suffered apart (Reinkowski 1997).

One of the passages speaks directly to the question of enmity among Lebanon's constituent communities:

I know that a number of opinions exist in the diaspora and in Lebanon today. And I am confident that though some Lebanese may not be able to agree on who the enemy is, we can agree on who the enemy is not: each other. We are not each other's enemies. We agree on far more than we disagree on. We share a common blood and bond. And in Lebanon, Christians cannot exist without Muslims, and Muslims cannot exist without Christians. Otherwise the very Lebanon that we know and love would cease to exist.

This is an explicit rejection of sectarianism and division, and of the adversarial framing that has come to define community relations in the homeland. That an appeal to denounce it is coming from a prominent member of the diaspora community signifies how members within the diaspora have internalized a perspective on communal relations that diverges from the

dominant discourses in Lebanon. They have abandoned the antagonistic frame. In the domestic political context, Loizides (2015) has shown how states find themselves trapped in an antagonistic frame, often through emphasis on victimhood and the systemic use of injustice frames by the political elite. This is a defining characteristic of the sociopolitical reality in Lebanon. Significantly for the study of diasporas, the framing practices undertaken in Dearborn demonstrate that diaspora elite, the key purveyors of interpretation for their communities, play a vital role in helping diaspora members escape the antagonistic frame of the homeland.

And let's take a moment today to say thank you to our own government here in the United States for its continued support of Lebanon. How fortunate we are that our country chooses to aid the people, army and government of Lebanon. Its unwavering support for Lebanon's freedom, sovereignty and independence has been absolute. I thank our government for all it has done and continues to do for our families in Lebanon, for the funds distributed by USAID throughout all of Lebanon, especially the south, in aiding the Lebanese people.

In this passage, Akouri effectively links two sets of groups: the Lebanese diaspora with the United States, and members of the Lebanese diaspora with each other. By referring to the aid programs administered in southern Lebanon, he recognizes that this predominantly Shia region has traditionally been the most underdeveloped and impoverished region of the country, and expresses empathy. As Akouri is a Christian within the local diaspora, this message resonated with those of the Lebanese Muslim community. By expressing gratitude for aid provided to *our families*, Akouri makes a further implicit reference to Lebanon's constituent communities being a single people rather than a society of factions. By making a positive reference to *our own government*, he clarifies an important reality that is often lost in popular discourses about migration and immigrant communities – he underscores in this instance that, although they are from Lebanon, they are nevertheless citizens of the United States with pride in their government.

One of the dominant patterns to emerge from fieldwork was the consistency of perspective that was shared by those from the Maronite, Shia, and Sunni communities. In response to these events, the overwhelming majority of respondents expressed no animosity toward the other religious groups, and instead reserved their condemnation for what they termed a broken political system in Lebanon. Within this context, those who were among the first generation expressed far less interest in either event, and were less likely to express negative sentiments about those from other sects. Members of the second generation of the diaspora were more critical of the political and economic elite in Lebanon, and were also more active in terms of participating in the protest events that had been organized in the Dearborn area. They did not, however, indicate that in their personal lives they sought to avoid interaction with those of other Lebanese groups, nor had they initiated or engaged in physical or discursive violence based on patterns of conflict as seen in the homeland. Relative to the war between Israel and Hezbollah, the recurring themes were *pride in Lebanon*, *dignity*, *protect sovereignty*, and *US indifference*. Across confessional and generational lines, the majority of respondents viewed the conflict as an attack on Lebanon, with Hezbollah seen as legitimately defending the country during the thirty-three day war. Therefore, even though the diaspora in Dearborn is comprised primarily of Shia Lebanese, it should not be inferred that they are necessarily supportive of Hezbollah. The majority of interviewees indicated that they do not share the organization's ideology, but that they recognize the capacity that it possesses to defend the country. This relates to a particular source of frustration expressed by many of the diaspora members in the Dearborn area. In sharing their views of Lebanon, the overwhelming majority revealed that they did not have faith or confidence in the Lebanese government. Although they tended to share positive views of the army – the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) – they also noted that the army did not possess the same capabilities as Hezbollah. In this sense, many indicated that their display of Hezbollah flags during the protest was done to demonstrate support for the

defense of Lebanon, and not as an explicit endorsement of Hezbollah. This was a distinction that many noted they had shared with journalists who were covering the protests, yet they were still portrayed as being supporters of Hezbollah, and Dearborn linked to the organization in that context. Several respondents did, however, express support for Hezbollah and shared that it was partly due to the seeming indifference of American political leadership to what was transpiring in southern Lebanon and Beirut. Some indicated that the 2006 conflict was a turning point for them in terms of how they viewed the organization and Lebanon. Walid, who took part in multiple protests during the summer 2006 period, shared that he remembers feeling anger, but also a great deal of frustration:

How many Shia were killed and how many Israelis? No one should die like that, no matter who they are. Flip those numbers around and I bet there would've been a lot of outrage. *They destroyed so much!* We don't get the benefit of everybody's sympathy because we don't have their clout. That's how the world is. So if nobody else is coming over to our side to help, we have to help ourselves. Now I know how to give to the Resistance, and I plan to keep up on that.⁶³

Although the Hariri assassination was a transformative event in Lebanon, it did not elicit as widespread a degree of protest among the diaspora in Dearborn as had the regional conflict that took place in the previous year. The response within the diaspora, however, was nevertheless revealing about the ways in which Lebanon's constituent communities engage one another in this diaspora setting. Fieldwork revealed that community leaders of all faiths – Maronite Christian, Greek Orthodox, Sunni, Shia – had communicated to their congregations that the Lebanese should remain supportive and united. Joint worship and commemorative events were held and widely attended, indicative of a longstanding practice among the local elite of using a collective approach to interpreting homeland realities. Members of the diaspora community took cues from their leaders and desisted from taking part in any violent confrontations in response to the assassination, and in the aftermath of the assassination, there were no chasms

⁶³ Author interview, April 2016, Southeast Michigan

that developed within the Lebanese community that gave rise to patterns of discursive confrontation. Given that members of the diaspora enjoy deep personal and professional ties in the local setting, it was noted by interlocutors that there was a great deal of respect that respondents harbored toward others in the diaspora who were of a different religious orientation. Respondents indicated that there was a shared sense of the need to avoid taking part in any activity that might generate violence or divisions within the community. Relative to the Hariri assassination, one of the prominent themes was the fear of another civil war, and that active diasporic engagement of “the Hariri question”, as some labeled it, could only lead to conflict. Another of the themes to emerge from the interview sessions in Dearborn was a strong emphasis on what diaspora members viewed as major differences between the diaspora community and Lebanon. Those of the second generation all seemed to stress that the diaspora approach was markedly different than the one normally taken in the homeland. They pointed to the nature of cross-confessional interaction in Dearborn and considered it a worthwhile model for Lebanon. Among these respondents, as well as the broader members of the diaspora who participated in these sessions, Hariri was seen as a figure who embodied this ideal. Irrespective of party affiliation or religious background, the majority of respondents did not blame any Lebanese actors for the assassination, nor did they advocate the use of violence against any other actor as a measure of retribution. Such a response was viewed by interlocutors as a path to civil war. They viewed violent and discursive encounters between groups as the antithesis of what they sought to represent of the Lebanese in the United States.

There are definite parallels that exist in the diaspora responses to these two homeland events. In neither instance did the events trigger an importation of the core conflict from Lebanon. This reveals much about the type of framing undertaken by the diaspora elite who engage the community in the Dearborn area, in terms of not only the immediate aftermath of the events, but also (and as importantly) during observances to mark each occasion. The responses by

those within the Dearborn community were equally telling, as members of the diaspora never mobilized in a way that signified a development of intra-communal fissures along confessional lines. The kind of framing used by the diaspora elite played a key role in these dynamics, but so too did the context in which the framing took place. In Dearborn, the Lebanese find themselves in a setting in which they are part of a broader immigrant community, an Arab American community. Engaging in activity that might incite violence, particularly sectarian violence, risks spillover effects in an environment where large numbers of individuals and families have sought refuge from such conflict. This includes Palestinians, Iraqis, and those who have fled violence and instability in Yemen. Even though diaspora leaders and their constituents enjoyed the political freedom to organize and participate in these public activities, constraints on their discursive practices limited the content of their framing. According to multiple respondents, there was a concern that developments in the Middle East had the potential to ignite latent hostilities within the diverse Arab American population in the region, particularly among those who had arrived more recently or who had endured direct experience with conflict in their home countries. The framing approaches were thus a function of a consensus among leaders within the Lebanese diaspora community that there was a need to avoid inflammatory rhetoric and to cultivate amity not only within the diaspora, but also across the broader Arab American community. As a result, diaspora entrepreneurs engaged the diaspora community only within boundaries of engagement that they had prescribed as acceptable. There were self-imposed limitations on the framing practices of diaspora leaders. This speaks to the reality that context plays a vital role in setting the parameters for framing and mobilization (Tarrow 1998).

It also became clear that the motivation for creating or leading civil society organizations tended to be a function of much broader political calculus on the part of some local diaspora entrepreneurs. Discussions with local activists indicated that the political ambitions of many

local Lebanese individuals was just as strong as the implicit acknowledgement that within the Lebanese community there would be no use of inflammatory public discourse when debating sensitive homeland issues. These individuals have utilized the opportunity structure to build a constituency that they hope will translate into electoral support once they make a bid for public office. In a local political context defined by a growing Arab American community that has become increasingly active politically, potential candidates have been careful to use rhetorical and framing strategies that broaden rather than limit their electoral appeal across the Arab American community in the Dearborn area. This was part of the approach taken by Akouri when he established the Lebanese American Chamber of Commerce and then began hosting a local radio show that emphasized issues that resonated with the wider Arab American community. He was building a constituency.

The rise of Abdullah Hammoud is also illustrative of these dynamics. A young, second-generation Lebanese American, he is known in the region for his activism relative to Arab American and environmental causes. In November 2021, at 31 years of age, he was elected as the first Arab American (and first Muslim) mayor of Dearborn. In May 2021, while Hammoud was still serving in the Michigan state legislature, U.S. President Joe Biden toured Ford's new electric vehicle plant in Dearborn. The visit coincided with an escalation of conflict in Gaza that had, at the time, resulted in over 200 Palestinian deaths. Hammoud engaged Biden and pressed the Palestinian case, arguing that the only genuine peace agreement for the Middle East was one that included a free Palestine. The Palestinian issue resonates with the Arab American community, and particularly so in the Dearborn area because nearly half the population is of Arab heritage and tend to hold a negative view of Israeli government actions in Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories. Hammoud not only addressed the ongoing conflict in Gaza in the direct sense, but he also penned a letter to Biden that he shared with the local community. Intended as much for the broader Arab American population as for President Biden, the letter

spoke to the theme of injustice and utilized similar framing strategies as employed by Akouri and Siblani when addressing the Palestinian question. In the lead-up to the Dearborn mayoral election, Hammoud was using the political opportunity structure to expand his political constituency. This demonstrates how electoral incentives shape the local framing processes of diaspora entrepreneurs.

6.5 Elite Framing and Diaspora Response in Dakar

Understanding framing as an instrument of mobilization in the context of Senegal, particularly as it relates to diaspora response, requires an examination of the roles played by the primary actors who have attempted to engage Senegal's transnational Lebanese population. The centrality of framing has been outlined, and shown to be "the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion a shared understanding of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action" (McAdam et al. 1996, 6). In Senegal, these efforts have been undertaken by a set of three core actors: Shaykh Abdul Mun'am al-Zayn, religious leader of the Lebanese in Senegal; representatives from the Lebanese political parties Hezbollah and Amal, who frequently visit the country; and al-Manar, the Lebanese satellite network affiliated with Hezbollah. Together, they have succeeded in drawing the Lebanese in Senegal closer to Lebanon, linking identity and interests.

Within the Lebanese community, the most prominent diaspora entrepreneur is Shaykh al-Zayn. This is not to be taken as an indication of any extent to which those in the diaspora are pious, but rather as a reflection of how al-Zayn has been able to make effective use of his background, platform, and the local context in Senegal to build and expand a constituency. He arrived in Dakar in 1969 after having been sent from Lebanon by Imam Musa al-Sadr, the Shia cleric and founder of what would eventually become the Amal Movement. Central to both the appeal and approach of al-Zayn is the melding of his own early experiences in Lebanon with the

sociopolitical ethos of al-Sadr. In the Lebanese context, al-Sadr was an unabashed advocate of cross-confessional rapprochement, even if he was mostly known for his organization of the Shia, and for his efforts to spur development in southern Lebanon and within the Shia community (Traboulsi 2007; Norton 1987). He differentiated between what he termed *positive sectarianism* and *negative sectarianism*, and tried to bridge the divide that had been both widened and deepened by the civil war. He viewed the former as a simple, but necessary practice of communities focusing on the human development of their adherents as a way to build greater capacity for citizens to contribute to broader society (Weiss 2010a). He was disdainful of the segregation, chauvinism, and discrimination that had become commonplace across the Lebanese sociopolitical landscape. In his formative years, al-Zayn studied in Maronite, Shia, and Sunni schools, developing a social dexterity that would, combined with the influences of al-Sadr, serve him well in Sunni-majority Senegal, where the Lebanese are a small (but visible) minority community. Through his sermons and his regular engagement with Senegalese religious leaders and other community leaders, al-Zayn has emphasized Muslim solidarity (as a way to ease Sunni-Shia relations); and in his engagement with the diaspora community, he has emphasized Lebanese identity (as a way to promote Christian-Muslim relations). Events taking place in the Middle East, or otherwise of relevance to communities in Senegal, are therefore portrayed and framed through this lens.

Lebanese political leaders from the homeland have often visited Senegal, most generally during the periods preceding national elections in Lebanon. Those in the Lebanese diaspora were not able to vote from their respective countries of residence until the general election of 2018. Prior to the initiation of this particular electoral reform, it was necessary for them to travel to Lebanon in order to cast a ballot. The standard practice among the political parties was to heavily subsidize the travel costs of the Lebanese abroad as a way of enhancing electoral support. As a component of that strategy, they strategically timed their visits to specific sites

across the diaspora network in order to garner support and, importantly, to negotiate the terms of that support. Interlocutors shared that party representatives come far more frequently than do elected officials, and are quite often in Senegal on holiday, and that they enjoy cordial relations with Senegalese political leaders. Eleven months before the assassination of Hariri, the Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, Nabih Berri, visited Dakar. On that occasion, a street was renamed “Rue du Liban” in recognition of the contributions that the Lebanese diaspora has made to the Senegalese economy. Because the diaspora in Senegal is predominantly Shia, the party representatives who visit most regularly tend to be from Hezbollah and Amal. In addition to the aforementioned electoral strategy, respondents indicated that Hezbollah and Amal figures have used their time in the country to reinforce the ties between the Shia in Lebanon and those in Senegal. Their efforts in this regard are complemented by Shaykh al-Zayn, who also promotes deeper devotion to Shiism, but equates Shia identity with Lebanese identity, which strengthens the diaspora connection to the homeland. Regular messaging via their party-aligned media outlets is used by political leaders from the homeland as a way to maintain links with the diaspora community in Senegal and to try to influence their perspectives.

Al-Manar also played a central role in conditioning the diaspora response to the events of 2005 and 2006. A carefully orchestrated media campaign was devised so as to not only expand the target audience of the network, but also to alter the prevailing narrative that characterized Lebanon (Harb 2011). In the former context, Al-Manar sought to move beyond its insular programming that focused primarily on the Shia Lebanese in Lebanon. The revised approach entailed targeting the Lebanese diaspora, inclusive of all confessional orientations; the Lebanese of all political party affiliations; and the international community. Regarding the modification of programming content, the network began to alter its emphasis on deriding the “enemy”, and to adopt as its focal point an emphasis on Lebanese victimhood. The resulting

media campaign thus took the form of expansive victim framing that highlighted Lebanese suffering. One intended consequence of this approach was a reorientation of the international view of Lebanon, away from the stereotype of incessant sectarian in-fighting and toward a view of a Lebanese community suffering as a result of myriad causes, whether it be a lack of sufficient international support or frequent external intervention. A second aim was to unite the disparate Lebanese communities.

How have the Lebanese in Senegal responded to pivotal events in the homeland? How have these events been framed by leaders within the Lebanese diaspora community? And how have these dynamics affected the importation of conflict to the diaspora setting? Analysis of empirical data indicated that the reaction to the Hariri assassination was influenced by two primary factors. One was a desire to avoid public engagement of a Lebanese political issue. The diaspora has traditionally eschewed such engagement in Senegal, partly because of the limitations of the political and discursive opportunity structures (as discussed in the previous chapter), and also due to the diaspora members' own reticence to move beyond their traditionally discreet engagement of charged political issues. The reaction to the Hariri assassination was therefore a largely muted one, compared to how the Lebanese in Dakar reacted to the war between Israel and Hezbollah. A second factor was that there was no framing for mobilization by diaspora elite, largely in recognition of the aforementioned restraint, but also because Hezbollah did not seek to draw attention to controversies about its possible complicity in the assassination of Hariri. A third identifiable factor, similar to patterns revealed by fieldwork in Dearborn, was a disinclination to become either directly or indirectly involved in a conflict that could potentially lead to the destabilization of Lebanon. According to perspectives shared in interviews, the assassination of Hariri generated not only shock, but led to a number of questions about whether Lebanon would now begin a slide toward instability and the kind of internal conflict that they normally associated with the homeland, and that they

all hoped to avoid. In response to the Hariri assassination, there were no mass protests or demonstrations of the sort that took place in Beirut or in Dearborn. According to one interviewee, reflecting a common vantage point, he was not surprised by the lack of any pronounced response:

I don't know who did it and I doubt you can find anyone who really, really does, honestly. It was a guarantee for civil war. Won't take you long to find out that we don't get caught up in that business here. No, this is what people left behind, what they escaped. Maybe there's some ideas kept inside their heads, but we cause no commotion here. Might as well stay in Lebanon for that.⁶⁴

This was not an isolated sentiment, and it reflected the viewpoints shared by most informants, spanning multiple generations. There seemed to be a concerted effort on the part of the Lebanese community to distance itself from public discourse or actions that might be construed in a way that resuscitated home-grown fissures. In fact, commemorations have been held regularly in Dakar to recognize all of those who have lost their lives in conflict, representing the victims from all Lebanese communities, among them Hariri. This includes May 2007 services of remembrance for those who lost their lives in southern Lebanon prior to the Israeli withdrawal in 2000; vigils held in August 2006 to honor those who died in Qana, a village in southern Lebanon where twenty-eight civilians were killed during the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah; and the protest on 20 July 2006, which served multiple purposes: to commemorate those of all communities who had been killed because of sectarian violence in Lebanon; to remember those who had thus far lost their lives in the summer conflict between Israel and Hezbollah; and to demonstrate strong support for Lebanon. Notably, the individuals who took part in these services represented a cross-section of Senegalese society, including not only all of the Lebanese communities, but also the local Senegalese who had no Lebanese heritage.

⁶⁴ Author interview, June 2016, Dakar, Senegal.

It was this summer 2006 period, marked by the war between Israel and Hezbollah, that served as an exemplar of the dynamics of homeland trigger and diaspora response. In the wake of the images of destruction in southern Lebanon and in the areas outside Beirut, the Lebanese in Senegal took to the streets of Dakar in protest. Thousands participated in what marked the first such collective public display by the Lebanese diaspora community, in any social or political context. It was particularly noteworthy because Lebanese of all demographics took part in the protest to express their solidarity with Lebanon, to project Lebanese identity, and to express – either directly or indirectly – support for Hezbollah in the context of its standoff with Israel. Until July 2006, the Lebanese had always maintained a low profile, keen to avoid jeopardizing their economic interests or disrupting established relationships that had been carefully cultivated over time across Senegalese society. Their decision to engage the public domain and to demonstrate against the war signified the development of a growing consciousness of Lebanese solidarity, and a willingness to express it.

The question thus becomes why the community suddenly decided to depart from its longstanding approach of suppressing any public displays of nationalist identification towards Lebanon. Previous gatherings of a public nature had always been subdued affairs, and when they had a political dimension related to Lebanon,⁶⁵ those in the diaspora always sought to reinforce the community image of connections and nostalgia with Lebanon, but simultaneous and undiminished loyalty to Senegal. The war between Hezbollah and Israel was one that ushered in a clear shift in this approach. Multiple respondents who took part in the march, or followed media coverage of it, shared that the events of that summer changed their perspectives. They indicated that the conflict stirred feelings that they had not experienced

⁶⁵ There have been frequent visits by political leaders from Lebanon, including Michel Suleiman, who was president from 2008-2014, Nabih Berri, the Speaker of Parliament, and Rafik Hariri, among others. Quite often, these visits coincided with the period leading up to national elections, and were used as a way to try to mobilize support.

before, and resulted in a heightened sense of pride in being of Lebanese descent. The majority of interviewees expressed that, from their vantage point, the war demonstrated strength. Among most of the respondents, there was a stable pattern of referring to Hezbollah as not only representing, but also protecting the honor of Lebanon during the conflict. There was no significant difference relative to regional origin. Those from southern Lebanon and those from Beirut shared similar views of the conflict. Many of the Christian respondents shared that they had been relatively indifferent toward Hezbollah before the conflict. Some assessed blame to the organization for starting the conflict, but the vast majority said that in light of the disproportionate Israeli response, Lebanon had a right to defend itself. As one interlocutor put it, “You have to use your best defense. Whether we like it or not, we know what that means”.⁶⁶

The diaspora population in Senegal is predominantly from southern Lebanon, and many are from Qana. This made the 2006 conflict a particularly relevant and sensitive one. Some had only recently moved to Dakar, and exposure to the constant imaging and messaging of Al-Manar reminded them of experiences they had endured in 1996 when Israel also shelled their village. The Friday sermons of Shaykh al-Zayn also helped to condition diaspora perspectives on the war. During major international conflicts involving the Middle East, he has often framed his sermons in such a way that drew attention to a wider set of injustices and adversities among the Muslim community, and has called on all Muslims – Shia and Sunni alike – to work together toward overcoming the systemic issues that make populations vulnerable and that empower actors to engage in destabilizing exploits (Leichtman 2018). Typical to his approach was also incorporating the Palestinian struggle as a way to bolster his argument of a need for Muslim solidarity. This was reflected in the speeches given by members of the Lebanese diaspora during the 2006 protest, speeches in which they evoked both Palestinian suffering and Nelson Mandela’s fight against apartheid as part of their rhetorical symbolism. Both themes resonate

⁶⁶ Author interview, June 2016, Dakar, Senegal.

with the Lebanese, and also with the Senegalese. It was an effective use of frame bridging and frame extension to tie the war between Hezbollah and Israel to the struggles witnessed in the ongoing Palestinian and historical South African contexts.

During both interviews and casual conversations, the majority of the Lebanese who were born in Senegal routinely referred to Lebanon as *our country* or *my country*, and they frequently employed phrasing that indicated a support for defending and protecting Lebanon. This is indicative of the attachments that the second and third generations often exhibit toward an imagined homeland where they were not born, have never lived, and for some in the diaspora, perhaps rarely (if ever) visit. Throughout the interview sessions, many of them intimated that the 2006 war actually made them feel closer to Lebanon. And even though they conveyed an easily discernible attachment to the idea of Lebanon and a strong affinity for the Lebanese community (regardless of sect), they tended to nevertheless express a detachment from the state and a lack of confidence in its institutions to govern effectively. This was so regardless of confessional orientation or temporal distance from the homeland in terms of generation. In the diaspora, these misgivings about state institutions reflect similar sentiments expressed within Lebanon. In the homeland, people turn to their respective confessional communities to provide what the state has shown itself incapable of providing, either because of a lack of institutional capacity, a lack of will, or corruption. In the diaspora, people turn to the network of Lebanese communities abroad and to transnational institutions that they feel best represent or protect their interests. Fieldwork revealed that in Dakar, they have turned to each other, thus strengthening the bonds within the diaspora and contributing to the maintenance of more porous boundaries between Lebanese groups in the diaspora setting. Much in the way that many in Lebanon viewed the murder of Hariri as an attack on Lebanon, many in the diaspora also viewed the clash between Israel and Hezbollah as a fight between Israel and Lebanon. In the context of the 2006 war, the most common themes that emerged from analysis of data were the

expressions of attachment to Lebanon (our country); pride in being Lebanese; and the notion that members of the diaspora should support those able to defend Lebanon.

Similar to the dynamics in Dearborn, neither the assassination of Hariri nor the war between Israel and Hezbollah triggered the importation of conflict to the diaspora. Physical violence among members of the community never materialized, there were no pronounced episodes of verbal confrontation, and social relations have not become strained to the extent that those in the diaspora have begun to consciously avoid one another. Many of the Christian respondents were critical of Hezbollah's initial actions, but isolated that assessment and viewed it as having no pertinence to their personal relationships with any Lebanese in Senegal who were supportive of the organization. Interlocutors were rather consistent in their condemnation of violence of any kind, as it relates to engagements within the community. They intimated that they are too small and too close, and that their linkages extend beyond Senegal, meaning to the home villages in southern Lebanon from which many of the families originated. They also intimated that the friendships and trust across the community are not based on sect, but on a familiarity that has been developed over time. As a demonstration of that trust, for instance, Christian and Muslim parents have booked their children's flights to Lebanon according to the travel plans of friends, regardless of confessional orientation; this was so they could accompany the children on the flight to Beirut, where they would ultimately be met by family members. The friendships are strong, and many of them began soon after arrival from Lebanon or very early in childhood for those born in Dakar. Given that these pivotal issues were all framed in ways that emphasized Lebanese solidarity, it is not surprising that relations within the diaspora community remained peaceful. Had they been framed otherwise, it is not certain that the result would have been different.

Many respondents within the Lebanese diaspora community noted that in the privacy of their homes, there were regular (often heated) discussions of questions related to politics and

tensions in Lebanon, but that they saw no reason to involve others. By “others” in this context, they were referring to not only the Senegalese, but also to fellow Lebanese whose religious heritage and political orientation may have been in contrast to their own. The diaspora population is overwhelmingly Shia, but none of the respondents indicated any disposition toward focusing on issues or events that might make other members of the community experience any discomfort or unease. A third-generation Lebanese student shared an anecdote that she says often repeats itself: Whenever there was a controversial occurrence in Lebanon (especially an assassination or a revelation of political corruption), her grandfather would close his establishment, place a “Back in 15 minutes” sign on the door, and leave to go debate the issue with friends. Often, he didn’t reopen until the next day.⁶⁷ This reflects the norm relative to the way in which the Lebanese have treated sensitive issues and questions from the homeland. It also demonstrates that they are not detached or disinterested in what is transpiring in Lebanon. Frequent travel to Lebanon keeps members of the diaspora apprised of conditions in the homeland, and satellite access and technology that facilitates instant communication help to maintain that connection.

The public engagement of homeland issues has been an especially rare practice for the Lebanese diaspora in Senegal. Members of the community have long participated in politics, and have been elected and appointed to official posts, serving in both the municipal and national governments, and holding prominent roles within political parties. The current mayor of Dakar, Soham El Wardini, is of Lebanese heritage – born to a Senegalese mother and Lebanese father – and is the first female to serve as mayor. This may give the appearance of an elevated status that provides a platform for public advocacy, but the Lebanese have not viewed their position in society as a license to import homeland issues to Senegal. In public space, the Lebanese have traditionally focused on Senegalese issues. The legacies of the colonial and post-colonial

⁶⁷ Author interview, June 2016, Dakar, Senegal.

experience have made the Lebanese wary about such engagement. Civil society engagement is largely individual and focuses on broad issues that resonate with the wider community, such as environmental protection or promotion of education and the arts. This is due to two interrelated issues – both the political opportunity structure and discursive opportunity structure inhibit their ability to engage the public sphere. As noted earlier, the Lebanese in Senegal have traditionally preferred to maintain a low profile and to engage politics in more discreet manners. This is due to both self-censorship and past experiences. The Muslim brotherhoods have tended to view civil society as a threat (Beck 2008), and the Lebanese have been careful in their strategies for navigating the political sphere because of these dynamics.

In response to the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, the Lebanese diaspora in Dakar mobilized for the first time. When former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated, the diaspora held inclusive commemorations to honor all Lebanese victims of violence. The emergence and trajectory of the diaspora response to these events was shaped by two primary factors: framing and context. The framing was undertaken by diaspora elite, homeland institutions, and political elite from the homeland. Shaykh al-Zayn acts as the primary diaspora entrepreneur, and his efforts have helped to build a sense of strong Lebanese identity among those in the diaspora. These efforts were complemented by representatives from the two main parties with which Lebanese Shia identify, Amal and Hezbollah, who frequently visit the country to promote Shia solidarity. The constant socialization by al-Manar's 24-hour broadcasts has also played a significant role in influencing both the diaspora attachment to Lebanon and its response to events that have taken place in Lebanon. Together, these actors influenced the Lebanese community to view the war as an attack on Lebanon, not as a conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. They thus expressed a strong sense of Lebanese pride as the conflict carried on. In terms of context, the traditional cleavages present in Lebanon have not existed in Senegal, largely because of the cross-confessional solidarity that emerged as a result

of reactive transnationalism in the face of the treatment experienced early on in relations with the French colonizers and the local Senegalese.

6.6 Elite Framing, Homeland Events and Conflict Transportation

If identity formation is about the construction of narratives, and diasporas are the product of strategic identity mobilization, then understanding the framing undertaken to mold that identity is paramount. At the intersection of conflict studies and migration studies, there has been a dearth of research on the ways in which framing may affect relations between diaspora communities, and particularly on how this framing might help to either escalate or deescalate conflict. The principal framers (diaspora entrepreneurs within the local community) are able to interpret events – and, more broadly, to assign meaning to social and political realities – in a way that shapes preferences and perspectives about relations within and across communities. In homeland contexts in which conflict is defined along ethnic or religious lines, grievances often constitute the main impetus for discord. These grievances may be based on imbalances in power relations, or perhaps on perceived violations of group rights such as denied access to economic resources, persecution and discrimination based on religion or ethnicity, the seizure of land, or the destruction of property (Gurr 2000). Injustice frames are often used by those who aim to highlight such grievances in an attempt to spur mobilization or build constituencies. In the domestic context in Lebanon, this adversarial framing has become entrenched, and has adversely affected relations between the homeland communities, engendering and sustaining a cycle of conflict in which actions have tended to create reactions that reinforce the lines and rhetoric of division. This vein of framing targets other communities within society, assigning culpability for any adversities that have befallen a particular group – the Christians blamed for underdevelopment in Muslim-majority areas; the Shia blamed for Lebanese insecurity; the Sunni blamed for Lebanese instability; the Maronites blamed for Shia marginalization. In the homeland, citizens are seemingly trapped in an adversarial frame, and the framing interactions

within that field of contention continue to affect identity and the trajectory of relations. In the diaspora context in Dearborn and Dakar, the mobilizing elite do indeed make use of injustice frames, but theirs are of a markedly different variety. They consistently identify external actors (American foreign policy or Israel, for example) as being primarily responsible for *Lebanese* suffering or injustices committed against the *Lebanese*. They eschew narrow, parochial conceptualization of diaspora interests, and instead embrace a more holistic view of the settled community. In Dakar, this is done by portraying the community as the Lebanese as opposed to Shia Lebanese, Sunni Lebanese, or Christian Lebanese; and in Dearborn, as Lebanese Americans or Arab Americans, not via an identity defined by religion or sect. The framing undertaken in the diaspora is far removed from the kind of antagonistic framing approaches utilized by the elite in Lebanon to shape perspectives or interpret socioeconomic or geopolitical realities (Clark and Salloukh 2013; Nötzold 2009). In Dearborn and Dakar, the diaspora leaders within the community have emphasized common interests and shared histories in a way that redefines the notion of belonging that had been inculcated in the homeland. This holds implications for the development of diaspora identity. In the homeland, Lebanese identity is factionalized, and it has been conditioned in this manner by a combination of factors, including political and historical processes, lived experiences, and elite framing. Identity, however, is malleable (Demmers 2007). This implies that individual and collective senses of self, even those produced and hardened in conflict environments such as Lebanon, have the potential to be transformed. The key element in such a transformation process is the framing undertaken by diaspora entrepreneurs. In Dearborn and Dakar, this framing has contributed to the emergence of a group consciousness that is antithetical to what is witnessed in Lebanon. It represents a product of strategic identity construction toward a shared sense of Lebanese identity, and away from the homeland sectarian identity that is exclusive and opposed. The imagined community among the Lebanese in Dearborn and Dakar is an inclusive one. This

helps to explain why community leaders did not frame pivotal events in Lebanon through an antagonistic prism that played one community off against another, and why members of the diaspora community did not respond to events in a way that gave rise to violent clashes, discursive confrontation, or spatial separation and social avoidance within the community. As noted earlier in the chapter, two important determinants of the efficacy of framing are the political and discursive opportunity structures that provide the context for public engagement. While the empirical evidence supports the argument that elite framing activities in Dakar and Dearborn precluded the importation of conflict, the framing itself was a reflection of both the limitations and the opportunities presented by political and discursive opportunity structures.

6.7 Conclusion

Events have the capacity to activate or reactivate cleavages within and across communities. For transnational communities like diasporas, pivotal events occurring in the homeland can affect the trajectory of relations between communities in the country of settlement. It is not the event in and of itself that provokes such a reaction, but rather the ways in which the event is framed by diaspora entrepreneurs who are seeking to mobilize identity for particular ends. In the contexts of the assassination of Rafik Hariri and the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, this chapter has sought to demonstrate how Lebanese diaspora leaders in Dearborn and Dakar framed events in such a way as to prevent elements of the core conflict in the homeland from emerging in the diaspora setting.

CHAPTER 7

Assessing Conflict Transportation among the Lebanese Diaspora in Dakar and

Dearborn: Conclusions

7.1 Relevance and Contributions of the Study

This thesis contributes to the large body of literature on the relationship between diasporas and conflict. Much of the existing literature has tended to emphasize the activities in which diasporas participate to either escalate or deescalate conflicts that are occurring in their countries or regions of origin. An additional point of emphasis has been on the emergence of tensions between diaspora communities and their host societies, and the implications that these dynamics carry for social stability in these settings. There is, however, a dearth of scholarly attention paid to several key themes that rest at the nexus of conflict studies and migration studies, themes that are all directly addressed by this thesis.

On the one hand, few studies have examined conflict *within* diaspora communities. This is particularly surprising when one considers that much of the post-Cold War emigration from conflict-affected states and regions has been driven by intra-state conflict with ethno-linguistic or religious undertones. What happens when these groups find themselves settled in the same host state, sharing social and political space? Is the homeland conflict reintroduced in this environment? It is this question of imported conflict that has been largely understudied in the diaspora scholarship, and has been addressed by this thesis.

Secondly, few studies have been undertaken to examine how conditions in the country of settlement affect the development and projection of diaspora identity – and thus, importantly, the nature of interaction – for members of diaspora groups. Social exclusion and economic marginalization in the homeland can serve as points of contention between communities,

especially if one community is deemed the responsible party for sustaining such a system of discriminatory practice. Conditions in the country of settlement place diaspora members in an environment where access and agency often differ from what is experienced in the homeland. The current study addresses a gap in the literature by demonstrating how these dynamics influence diaspora relations between groups that were adversarial in the country of origin.

Thirdly, as Sökefeld (2006) has lamented, there is a noticeable lack of scholarship on the role played by homeland events at shaping diaspora consciousness and mobilization. Addressing this need, Koinova (2018) has offered a study of critical junctures and transformative events, and demonstrates how the positionality of diasporas affects the ability to mobilize in response to these events. She further explains how these two categories of events influence diaspora mobilization differently, and shows how events taking place anywhere within a diaspora's transnational social space can catalyze mobilization. It is an innovative contribution to the field, but the theme remains understudied. This thesis builds upon and expands this work by demonstrating how diaspora elite act as intermediaries of mobilization. They strategically frame and use homeland events for identity mobilization. The tenor of their framing strategies is of particular relevance in the context of diaspora communities that emanate from conflict environments.

Fourthly, the emphasis of this study moves beyond the three issue areas that have long dominated research on the Lebanese diaspora. The existing scholarship generally highlights either patterns of settlement and adjustment, with a focus on relations with the host society (Hourani and Shehadi 1992, Arsan 2014, Abdelhady 2011, van der Laan 1992); contributions of the diaspora to the host society economy via commerce and trade (Arsan 2014, Roberts 2000, Lesser 1992); or the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland (Tabar 2016). Humphrey (2004) examined the processes that shape Lebanese diaspora identity, but no studies have explicitly asked the question explored in this thesis, namely whether the socially

constructed boundaries between Lebanese groups have weakened in the diaspora. Such a focus speaks to the notion that identities are malleable (Mavroudi 2007, Wimmer 2008). This is an important consideration in the study of diasporas originating from conflict environments. In the Lebanese case, the constituent communities of the diaspora are engaged in antagonistic, identity-based conflict in the homeland. If identity is indeed malleable and can be reconstructed or reimagined, and if diasporas are mobilized identity communities (Adamson 2012), then it is possible that they can peacefully coexist in the diaspora. The question becomes ‘under what conditions’ and via what processes? This thesis has contributed to the scholarship on the Lebanese diaspora and to the literature on diasporas and conflict by addressing these key questions.

7.2 General Findings of the Thesis

In Dakar and Dearborn, conflict transportation has not taken place among members of the Lebanese diaspora community. Extensive empirical work in Lebanon and the aforementioned sites of inquiry revealed striking contrasts between patterns of interaction in the homeland and those in diasporic space. To be sure, in both Dakar and Dearborn there have been limited occurrences of conflict within the diaspora community. These isolated incidents were more reflective of personal disputes, however, and were not characteristic of the social norms observed by the diaspora in these two locales. Significantly, the primary indicators of conflict transportation – physical violence, discursive confrontation, and mutual avoidance/spatial separation – have not emerged in these settings to define group relations. What is equally important (and telling) is that these dynamics of group interaction do not change after highly charged events transpire in Lebanon, events which are directly associated with the core conflict in the homeland. Furthermore, where tensions do exist within the community, they are manifest along class and temporal lines, with the latter referring to the time of arrival in the host society (before or after the civil war, before or after 2006).

One of the principal tenets of conflict transportation is that homeland conflicts continue to frame diaspora relations in countries of settlement (Féron 2017, Baser 2015). This study demonstrates that diasporas emanating from conflict zones are not predisposed to propagating the homeland conflict in their host societies. Specifically, individuals belonging to conflict-generated diasporas do not necessarily wish to either remain or become involved in conflicts still occurring in their home countries; such behavior is not instinctive. In diasporic space, these individuals and groups should not be viewed, automatically, as harbingers of that conflict frame. In his analysis of inter-ethnic relations, Barth (1998) emphasized the social construction of boundaries as markers of belonging, exclusion, and hierarchy. These fictive markers play a key role in fomenting social distance and enmity across groups. This study of Lebanese communities in Dakar and Dearborn shows that these markers are not permanent. It further demonstrates that as members of a transnational community, diasporas are able to “simultaneously maintain and shed cultural repertoires and identities, interact within a location and across its boundaries, and act in ways that are in concert with or contradict their values over time” (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, 1013). In these two diaspora contexts, the established patterns of group behavior and engagement show that the Lebanese communities in these locales have shed the homeland frame and adopted practices and discourses that both facilitate and sustain peaceful coexistence.

This is markedly different than the realities seen in the Iraqi diaspora, for whom the dominant pattern across sites of settlement has revealed a continuation of the conflict frame from the homeland. Conflict transportation within the Iraqi diaspora shows the effects of shifts in the symmetry of power relations between rival groups (Baser 2015). During the 24 years that Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq, the minority Sunni community enjoyed a privileged position. In the post-2003 era, there has been a role reversal in which the once-marginalized and oppressed Shia majority population now wields the preponderance of power. The prospect of retribution

and political violence in the homeland has precipitated Sunni migration, which now places Iraqi Sunnis in sites of settlement with those who, prior to the 2003 intervention in Iraq, were among an Iraqi diaspora community largely comprised of those marginalized by or opposed to Hussein. This has engendered feelings of suspicion and distrust across the diaspora, where the constituent communities practice mutual avoidance and spatial separation, and tensions have followed from the homeland. A significant difference between the Iraqi and Lebanese diaspora cases is that the constituent communities of the former continue to make competing claims vis-à-vis the homeland, which foments tensions within the diaspora. For the Lebanese diaspora, the Syria Question no longer exists, thus eliminating a potential source of tension in the foreign policy agendas of diaspora leaders. Secondly, neither a fear of retribution nor a lack of trust exists among recent Lebanese emigrants, making it less likely that they will consciously and collectively self-separate from Lebanese of other religious orientations in new sites of settlement. There has been no reversal of hierarchy in the diaspora that might engender such reasoning. Infrastructures of reconciliation are another factor that inhibit conflict transportation within the Lebanese diaspora. Diaspora leaders and members of the community continue to create and expand programs that encourage rather than deter regular interaction among Christians, Sunnis and Shia in the diaspora.

This study has identified several contributing factors that are responsible for deterring the importation of homeland conflict to Lebanese diasporic space: conditions in the country of settlement (endogenous conditions), conditions in the country of origin (exogenous conditions), reactive transnationalism, and legacy mobilization. The first two elements refer to the trappings in which individuals and groups find themselves; the latter to their responses to these settings. Memories of victimhood and the effects it has caused are powerful catalysts. No less influential is the messaging of those who lead diaspora communities. Since diasporas are both self-conscious mnemonic communities (Gayer 2007) and mobilized identity communities

(Adamson 2012), the factors noted above should be regarded as key to understanding whether and how diasporas can be mobilized either towards or away from identities that reflect and perpetuate homeland conflict. *Sectarianism* is often used to characterize the longstanding communal conflict in Lebanon. This study shows that in Dakar and Dearborn, the Lebanese diaspora is far more secular than sectarian tradition allows.

7.3 Conflict Transportation and Endogenous Factors – Conditions in the Country of Settlement

One of the arguments put forward by this thesis is that conditions in the host society matter, and that they have both a direct and indirect effect on the trajectory of cross-communal relations. The thesis has demonstrated how the social context, political environment and economic opportunity structure can all play a role in regulating intergroup relations, and thus prospects for the importation of homeland conflict. It focuses on how members of a diaspora community may be (re)socialized by the sociopolitical structures and terms of reception in the host society.

7.3.1 Terms of Immigrant Reception and Incorporation

The ways in which diasporas and other immigrant communities are received in their countries of settlement play a key role in shaping their dispositions, both individually and in terms of group interaction. Models of immigrant incorporation – for example multiculturalism or assimilation – speak to the approach taken to achieve social cohesion. In a multicultural society, diaspora elite have a ready-made stage for engaging in identity mobilization. If they do so in an environment where rival groups from the homeland now cohabitate, and if they do so in ways that echo the claims making of core conflict in the homeland, then this could foster conflict transportation. As already noted, however, despite the trappings of a multicultural environment, diaspora leaders in Dakar and Dearborn have not used their respective positions

to do so. In these diaspora settings, two of the most salient developments were the emergence of racism and targeting of Lebanese communities in Dearborn and Dakar. In the latter context, the diaspora response to discrimination took the form of reactive transnationalism (Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002, Portes and Rumbaut 2001). In Dakar (and in Senegal, more broadly), the Lebanese coalesced into a single ethnic group as a means of support and survival, forgoing organizing their social relations with one another along polarized lines. They were also a relatively small group and arguably the most visible minority in Dakar, making them a potentially easy target for reprisals or other acts of violence. In Dakar, consistent with the typology offered by Cohen (1997), they have traditionally been viewed as a trade diaspora. Out of that same context, however, they have also been viewed as an exploitative diaspora (Boumedouha 1990, Arsan 2014), which led to resentment by the black Senegalese population. In Dearborn, the post-9/11 securitization of Muslim communities drew the Lebanese community even closer together (internal dimension). These securitization practices led diaspora members to want to demonstrate that all Lebanese-Americans are *loyal* Americans (external projection). One important development to emerge from these dynamics is that securitization of Arab immigrants in the United States – and particularly in the Dearborn area, where they constitute a majority – has helped to diminish some of the lingering attitudes of Christian eminence within the diaspora community. In the early 20th century and onward, many either emphasized their Christian orientation or pretended to be Christian in order to set themselves apart from Arab Muslims who had emigrated from Lebanon and elsewhere. As discussed in Chapter 6, the post-9/11 environment precipitated a greater sense of unity within the diaspora.

7.3.2 Opportunity Structures

Koinova has pointed out that conditions in the host society provide both opportunities and constraints for mobilizing to address past atrocities (2018, 1253). This speaks to the centrality of political and discursive opportunity structures at setting the parameters of group engagement in the public sphere. Depending on the configurations of these opportunity structures (levels of access and permissiveness, for example), members (and particularly leaders) of diaspora communities may not be as free to organize their activities and engage in the kind of pejorative rhetoric that often characterizes discursive confrontation between groups. Hall (2010) has also shown how access to higher education and the labor market affect interethnic relations in the diaspora. He argued that the social position acquired via elevated status socializes diaspora members away from preoccupation with conflicts in the homeland. His study of relations between Serbs, Bosniaks, and Croats in Sweden demonstrated how economic opportunity structures mitigate tensions between groups. The underlying premise in this context is that elevated socioeconomic status helps to socialize members of a diaspora away from preoccupation with the conflict narratives of home.

Relative to the economic opportunity structure in the diaspora, the Lebanese in Dearborn and Dakar are no longer bound by the constraints of the clientelist system of the homeland, a system that forced them to project an identity in order to gain access to economic resources, including employment. This deeply entrenched clientelist system pits communities against one another, thereby helping to sustain a cycle of communal conflict. In the diaspora, members of the Lebanese community now find themselves in a markedly different environment, where the opportunity structures do not encourage them to be at odds with members of other Lebanese demographic groups. In Dearborn, members of the diaspora have genuine prospects for upward mobility and they enjoy open access to economic opportunity, which is in stark contrast to the homeland reality of having to rely on the patronage system for such attainment. In Dakar, the

Lebanese occupy a privileged position within the economy, dominating virtually all sectors. This has facilitated access to employment for members of expanded family networks, and has been defined by an inclusive practice of making economic opportunity available to those from all homeland confessions. It has also made it easier for new Lebanese immigrants to secure employment after arrival. Though this has often generated tensions with the local black Senegalese population – especially during periods of high unemployment, especially among the youth – it has helped to sustain positive group relations within the Lebanese diaspora.

The dynamics of political and discursive opportunity structures are outlined fairly extensively in Chapters 5 and 6, where the thesis shows how the diaspora itself has placed limits on the permissible bounds of rhetorical engagement in both Dakar and Dearborn, thereby making it extraordinarily difficult for any actors to stir homeland conflict in these diasporic spaces. In Dakar, they are particularly wary of providing a platform to the post-civil war and post-2006 members of the community, fearful that they might use such a platform to engage in ethnically charged identity politics. Therefore, the Lebanese exercise self-censorship in such political engagement of the public sphere. This practice, too, has helped to inhibit conflict transportation from the homeland to diaspora.

7.4 Conflict Transportation and Exogenous Factors – Conditions in the Country of Origin

Successive waves of emigration⁶⁸ have led to settlement in virtually every continent, and Lebanese diaspora communities are present across South America (primarily in Brazil and Argentina), North America, Europe, Australia, West Africa, and the Middle East. The complex web of formal and informal linkages binding these communities to the country of origin (and to each other) is replicated in few other national-to-transnational contexts. This makes the

⁶⁸ See Tabar (2016) and Issawi (1992) for detailed accounts of the emigration patterns from the Mount Lebanon region of Greater Syria, and later from Lebanon.

Lebanese diaspora an ideal focal point for examining how events in the homeland translate to responses in the diaspora. Significant events transpiring in Lebanon, particularly those of a political nature, are typically expected to generate strong reactions among settled communities abroad, particularly because these communities are largely extensions of the villages and particular regions from which emigration took place. Peleikis (2003) explores the concept of the translocal village, and offers a study of how Lebanese emigrants have come to develop new ways of managing the relationship between multiple homelands. Her work demonstrates the pattern of migration from Shia villages in southern Lebanon to West Africa.⁶⁹ In her study, she illustrates how the residents of Zrarieh, a village in southern Lebanon, have created a transnational social space that allows for a reconstruction of village life in Abidjan, providing them with a chance to “construct and reconstitute their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society” (2003, 19). An important implication of this, which is consistent with transnationalism, is that diasporas are constantly redefining the geography of relocation in a way that expands notions of what constitutes home. This implies that events are of consequence. Studying these events and the responses they elicit among Lebanese communities abroad offers a way to explore whether (and, if so, by what factors) these dynamics are translated to the diaspora. Key in this context is the role of framing by the diaspora elite.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, framing is a conscious exercise of interpreting events and contexts, assigning meaning, and prescribing preferred courses of action relative to the construction of mutual interests (Snow and Byrd 2007; Benford and Snow 2000; Koinova 2011a). Ethnic elite within diaspora communities often rely on their prominent status across homeland-hostland networks as an implicit license to speak on behalf of their respective

⁶⁹ For further treatment of this theme, see Arsan (2014), van der Laan (1992), Bierwirth (1999), and Leighton (1979), who examine the motivations for emigration from southern Lebanon and the strategies used by Lebanese immigrant communities to adjust to the challenges of life in West Africa as visible migrants who are often resented as outsiders by the local African populations. See also Issawi (1992), who shares a comprehensive examination of the historical patterns of emigration before the First World War.

communities. These activities are key to understanding not only diaspora mobilization in the broad sense, but also to the relationship between the framing-mobilization nexus and the production of diaspora identity. This is both an understudied and indispensable dimension of the formation of transnational identity communities (Adamson 2012, Sökefeld 2006). In her work on diasporas and conflict, Demmers (2007) also embraces this constructivist understanding of diaspora formation. She views diasporas as “the product of interactive processes of identification and ascription” (2007, 8), and refers to the “diasporic turn” as a phenomenon in which events can indeed trigger the emergence of transnational identity communities.

The framing strategies of diaspora leaders in Dakar and Senegal have had pronounced effects on the ways in which members of diaspora have responded to homeland events. Specifically, the absence of conflict transportation within these communities is, in part, a direct result of the framing strategies undertaken by the diaspora elite. This thesis has shown how they consciously framed pivotal events in such a way as to forestall rather than incite tensions among those in the diaspora community. Three elements of their approach are of particular relevance. First, elite framing in Dearborn and Dakar was both inclusive and collaborative. Leaders frequently coordinated their activities and their messaging. Joint meetings were often organized by religious and civic leaders from across the local Lebanese communities, meaning that Christians and Muslims in the diaspora participated in these sessions together, as did the Shia and Sunni. These gatherings took the form of commemorations of events, and on other occasions, they were meetings in which leaders and members of the diaspora community discussed the impact and implications of recent or ongoing events, along with possible ways to offer a collective and constructive response. These activities exposed the diaspora to interpretations that were counter to the markedly negative and confrontational discourses that often emanated from the homeland.

Another significant dimension of the framing strategies used by the diaspora elite is their direct public rejection of sectarian division and communal discord. This was in stark contrast to what was witnessed first-hand and conveyed by interlocutors during fieldwork in Lebanon. Blame, distortion, and targeting were prevalent themes in the homeland context, and these were distinct features of both the media landscape and the direct messaging of homeland political elite and their proxies. In Dakar and Dearborn, however, the diaspora elite did not characterize other Lebanese groups as threats or use their own prominent status as a platform for legitimizing negative stereotypes or assigning culpability to particular groups for any adverse economic, political, or security-related situations or developments in either the homeland or the diaspora setting.

A third theme to emerge from the data relates specifically to the nature of the diagnostic framing used by diaspora entrepreneurs. When leaders made use of injustice frames or adversarial frames, they regularly identified external – as opposed to Lebanese – actors and institutions as being responsible for perceived transgressions committed against Lebanon or the Lebanese. Most often, this entailed references to American foreign policy or Israel, or to discriminatory practices such as racial profiling. Taken together, the elite framing practices of the diaspora leaders appear to be designed specifically to prevent the development of conflict within the Lebanese diaspora community, and to simultaneously strengthen the internal ties among its members. This framing has fostered a shared sense of belonging to a more expansive conception of the Lebanese diaspora, one in which the community is not divided and defined along religious lines.

7.5 Conflict Transportation and the Homeland Frame

In Lebanon, it is well-established that the fissures of communal conflict are deeply embedded not only in the social fabric of the state, but also in the organization and practice of national

politics (Traboulsi 2007; Weiss 2010a; Salloukh et al. 2015; Makdisi 2000). It is a core conflict that sets communities at odds, and also foments political violence. The primary focus of this research project was to answer the question of whether this core conflict continues to structure diaspora relations in countries of settlement, and to understand the emergent features of those relations as they are revealed in the diaspora setting. As a necessary point of departure, Chapter 4 demonstrated how the features of the core conflict in Lebanon serve as structuring elements of identity and group relations. It illustrated how a constellation of actors, institutions and processes frame the discourses and practices that establish and harden boundaries between communities. This has given rise to discursive confrontation, physical violence and mutual avoidance. The homeland frame helps to set boundaries which are often maintained in the diaspora (Brubaker 2005), but this thesis has demonstrated that boundary erosion is possible, even amongst groups that were at odds in the homeland.

Among the defining features of diaspora communities are the strong links that they tend to maintain with their respective countries of origin. The ubiquity of conflict in the homeland context is therefore particularly relevant because those within a diaspora remain intimately tied to the country of origin, and are constantly exposed to factors in the homeland that have contributed to domestic hostilities and social fissures. Frequent travel to Lebanon, regular consumption of transnational Lebanese media, and the maintenance of contact via a range of communication channels all facilitate this exposure. In their work on the diffusion of conflict, McAdam and Rucht (1993) argue that linkages such as these, along with strong relational ties, can play a role in the transfer of conflict from one national setting to another. Understanding conflict transportation in a homeland-to-diaspora context requires first developing an awareness of precisely how the homeland context has conditioned relations among the conflict parties. This framing is important because of the way it structures, and perhaps hardens, dispositions within and across communities. Debates in the socialization literature, for

example, ask whether it is difficult for immigrants to shed long-held orientations because prior experiences encumber the internalization of new norms (White et al. 2008). Those originating from conflict environments may be particularly susceptible in this regard. The framework for studying conflict transportation involves examining endogenous (hostland) and exogenous (homeland) conditions, and analyzing diaspora interaction relative to three indicators of the importation of conflict: physical violence, discursive confrontation, and spatial separation/social avoidance (Baser 2015, Perrin and Martiniello 2011). Accordingly, and as a point of departure, this chapter focuses on the conditions within Lebanon that have created and sustained sectarian conflict domestically. It demonstrates how sectarianism is caused by a matrix of mutually reinforcing dynamics not easily explained by the oft-employed dichotomy of instrumentalism vs. primordialism. It is argued that these actors, institutions, and processes have forged distance between citizens and the state, forcing the Lebanese to turn to alternate structures of representation which themselves encourage tension and conflict. Scholars have debated the sociology of sectarianism⁷⁰ – its historical inevitability, its cultural specificity, its social construction – but for those whose focus is on the Lebanese context, there is a consensus that, its genesis aside, what has emerged is “the persistence of a seemingly resilient culture of sectarianism” (Clark and Salloukh 2013, 732). It has proven itself not only durable, but also increasingly pervasive, affecting virtually every facet of life across shared social and political space. An empirical expectation might be, then, that this core conflict will travel in the diaspora, thus representing an example of conflict transportation. Humphrey (1998), for instance, demonstrates how spatial separation and social avoidance defined the approach of Christians to Muslims (and vice versa), as families arrived in Australia from Lebanon after the civil war. Also indicative of the importation of conflict from Lebanon to Australia, many of the civil

⁷⁰ See Chapter 2 for a review of the literature, which includes treatment of primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism in broad terms, and relative to the explanatory power of each relative to the Lebanese context.

society organizations created by immigrants in the post-war era actually mirrored the confession-based rivalries and antagonisms seen in Lebanon, thereby reproducing homeland conflict in the diaspora environment. Are these developments in Australia reflective of a recurring pattern, or are they an exception? Examining the interplay between exogenous and endogenous factors is an effective means of understanding conflict transportation by diaspora groups (Féron 2017, 365).

Ziadeh (2006) and Nasr (2007) have argued that ethnic and religious identity are often deliberately manipulated by the leaders of political regimes as a means of maintaining power. This has been a familiar refrain in assessments of Lebanon (Picard 2002; Byman 2014; Winslow 1996; Fisk 2001), echoing themes that speak to the ways in which the elite seek to further their own economic and political interests, at the expense of national unity. The means undertaken to pursue these goals involve building dependent constituencies who must turn to the elite in order to gain access to a range of resources, including employment and the provision of basic services. This brand of clientelism manifests itself as a system of patronage in which there is a performativity of religious identity, with a concomitant reward for such a projection. It is a practice that both reflects and sustains a social milieu in which competition and conflict hinge on identity projection. It influences the development and projection of identity and interests, can determine access to resources such as employment and public services, and drives space between citizens and the state. Moreover, as most studies of Lebanese society tend to stress, it has also served as a primary catalyst of both conflict and emigration. Existing research on the diaspora has tended to focus on one of two primary themes: the level of integration and patterns of entrepreneurial success in the respective countries of settlement, on the one hand; and secondly, on the relationship between the diaspora community and Lebanon, particularly the role played by the former in supporting the domestic economy. These are important areas of emphasis, to be sure, and the resulting studies have contributed significantly to both

academic and policy-relevant comprehension of diaspora-homeland relations, and also to an understanding of the factors that promote or impede migrant adjustment within the majority culture. Yet these studies do not speak to the relationship *within* the diaspora, reflecting a gap in the research on Lebanese communities abroad, and also in diaspora studies more broadly. This is an especially relevant question given the embeddedness of conflict among the constituent groups in the homeland. It is around this notion that the primary research question guiding this study was conceived, namely whether, as a signifier of conflict transportation, sectarianism travels in the diaspora.

7.6 Conclusions and Areas for Further Research

The Lebanese diaspora is among the largest and most broadly dispersed diaspora communities. Much of the emigration that fueled departure from the homeland was driven by conflict, and often catalyzed by sectarian tensions. The diaspora remains closely connected to the homeland and continues to practice a depth and frequency of transnational engagement not seen in most diaspora communities. An empirical expectation might be that conflict transportation would emerge in diasporic space. This has not been the case in either Dakar or Dearborn, as there are no discernible patterns of physical violence, discursive confrontation or mutual avoidance/spatial separation between groups that were rivals in the homeland. To the contrary, this study has found that the patterns of group interaction in both local contexts engender cooperation and an expanded sense of community. This thesis has identified and explained the factors that have contributed to preventing the importation of the homeland frame. Importantly, none of these factors alone explains conflict transportation (or, in this case, its prevention). It is the cumulative effect, the interplay, of these endogenous and exogenous factors that is crucial to explaining whether and how conflict transportation occurs.

Broadly speaking, few studies have examined conflict *within* diaspora communities. This is particularly surprising when one considers that much of the post-Cold War emigration from conflict-affected areas has been driven by intra-state conflict with ethno-linguistic or religious undertones. This study fills that gap in the literature. In addition, few studies have examined how conditions in the country of settlement affect the development and projection of diaspora identity and, thus, the nature of interaction for members of a diaspora. This study addresses that gap in the scholarship by demonstrating how factors such as terms of reception and opportunity structures influence diaspora behaviour. Moreover, building on the work of Koinova (2018), this thesis addresses the understudied question of how homeland events shape diaspora consciousness and mobilization, and does so by demonstrating how diaspora leaders in Dearborn and Dakar use particular frame alignment strategies to mobilize their adherents away from the antagonistic homeland frame and towards peaceful coexistence. They have done so, in part, by redefining notions of belonging and focusing on shared histories and common interests. There is a dearth of scholarship on diaspora mobilization in this context, and this thesis highlights the utility of social movement perspectives on frame alignment at helping to understand diaspora mobilization.

This thesis has shown how the diaspora elite in Dearborn and Dakar have purposely conceived their framing strategies to deter the emergence of homeland fissures in their respective areas, and to foment peaceful coexistence among the constituent communities of the diaspora. This thesis has also demonstrated how new socialization norms in the diaspora have affected the willingness of diaspora members to engage in hostile acts. Moreover, this thesis has shown that critical incidents and transformative events in Lebanon do not evoke conflict transportation to these diaspora settings, in part because the discursive opportunity structures in these environments constrain social movement framing that might undermine peaceful relations within the diaspora community.

This thesis has also introduced a new concept to describe the community building and conflict deterrence practices undertaken by the Lebanese diaspora. Termed *legacy mobilization* and further delineated in Chapter 6, it involves the pooling of social capital by a diaspora to build a cohesive, inclusive community. The approach entails proactively designing institutions and processes for two specific, interrelated goals – first, the prevention of homeland conflict from emerging in the diaspora setting, and relatedly, ensuring that subsequent generations (and new arrivals) do not jeopardize the societal standing of the Lebanese, cultivated over time, as the vanguard of the Arab American community of citizens. It helps to illustrate how new socialization norms in the diaspora have affected the willingness of diaspora members to engage in hostile acts. It is also an example of an immigrant-led integration strategy designed to facilitate peacebuilding within a diaspora community, and it becomes particularly critical for those diasporas emanating from fragmented societies in the homeland. This concept deserves further study to determine if these strategies are being employed in other contexts, and whether diaspora entrepreneurs in those environments have been successful.

These findings hold important implications for scholarship on both diasporas in general, and the Lebanese diaspora in particular. They demonstrate, on the one hand, that diasporas originating from conflict zones are not predisposed to recreating homeland conflict where they settle, nor do they necessarily pose risks to peace and stability in their countries of settlement. This breaks with the rationale underpinning the securitization of entire immigrant communities, particularly after incidents such as 9/11 and recent terrorist attacks in Brussels, London, Paris and Madrid. Relatedly, this study has also shown how these securitization practices can actually spur the process of reconciliation between erstwhile rivals groups from a particular country or region. Diaspora has become, at once, a site of resistance to the securitizing practices of the host state government and a space for interaction, realization of mutual interests, and reconciliation. In Dearborn and across southeast Michigan, the Lebanese have founded and/or

lead a large number of civil society organizations as a means of engaging in collective mobilization against what they perceive as systemic racism and profiling based on Arab heritage. Under the umbrella of Arab American unity, Lebanese American unity has become much more attainable. Moreover, it is clear that social movement perspectives on frame alignment help to explain the strategies that diaspora entrepreneurs use for enhancing the resonance of their collective action frames. This study has shown how diaspora leaders in Dearborn and Dakar use these strategies to mobilize their adherents away from the antagonistic homeland frame and towards peaceful coexistence. They have done so, in part, by redefining notions of belonging and focusing on shared histories and common interests. There is a dearth of scholarship on diaspora mobilization in this context, particularly as it relates to conflict-generated diasporas. If diaspora entrepreneurs are actually engaging in these practices in other homeland-to-diaspora contexts, what countervailing factors are sustaining the homeland frame in the diaspora, and how?

Areas for Further Research

Because of frequent transnational activity involving the homeland, members of diaspora communities are constantly exposed to the same environment and socializing agents that conditioned rivalry and conflictual relations in the country of origin. Moreover, many of these agents of political socialization – mass media, political organizations, religious institutions – are themselves transnational in nature, which positions them to reinforce the very dispositions that they helped to inculcate. Even though much scholarly attention has been afforded to the socialization of immigrants, there is a paucity of existing research on the socialization of diasporas within this canon. Though the theme is addressed in this thesis, additional research would expand our understanding of which mobilizing practices and which institutions are more likely to influence the trajectory of diaspora attitudes and behaviors. A virtue of such an emphasis is that it would help to capture the transnational dimension of diaspora mobilization.

This thesis has touched upon the issue of pivotal events in the homeland as a potential factor in triggering conflict transportation. Although Koinova (2018) has helped to move scholarship in this direction, there remains insufficient scholarship on this theme, particularly on the temporal limits to mobilization, or how long diaspora entrepreneurs are able to make use of a homeland event as a catalyst for mobilization. A second question that might also be considered in such research is whether, for instance, the first or second generation members of a diaspora might be more likely to mobilize in response to a conflict-related event transpiring in the homeland. There is much to be uncovered in the context of focusing on homeland events, which also further illustrates the importance of considering exogenous factors when seeking to understand and explain diaspora mobilization.

An additional vein of future research might involve another understudied area of focus of the scholarship on diasporas and conflict. Much of the literature has tended to emphasize the role of diasporas as either peacemakers or peace wreckers. This dichotomy, prevalent in the literature elucidates much about the ways in which diasporas mobilize to either de-escalate homeland conflicts by contributing to peace processes or exacerbate existing conflict by, for instance, supporting insurgent groups. More research needs to be done, however, on the relationships that exist between or within diaspora communities in a given country of settlement, and particularly on configurations in which group interaction is defined by peaceful coexistence. This would bear relevance not only for the study of diasporas and conflict, but is also relevant for policymakers who might be interested in understanding which approaches are taken by diaspora leaders to facilitate and sustain peace, especially among groups who clashed in the country or region of origin. This carries implications for social cohesion in the country of settlement.

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