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RACIALIZATION IN LEBANON

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The combined impact of both Ottoman attempts at modernization and European colonialism in the late 19th century caused profound ruptures in Lebanese society still visible today. In his book *The Culture of Sectarianism*, Ussama Makdisi specifically identifies sectarianism as a culture produced through the tension of competing notions of modernity, which emerged and competed as old hierarchies were discredited, reformed, and reordered through imperial and colonial contact; it involved an imagined ancient rivalry between “races” as well as the Orientalist notion of the timelessness of those disputes. Racialization processes in Lebanon, however, are not addressed. I argue the importance of distinguishing racialization processes from sectarianism lies in the inability of the latter to explain separations and discriminations among groups which cannot solely be attributed to differences in sect and their imagined qualities but rather to concrete differences in the allocation of resources and relations of power. In this paper, I will argue that along with sectarianism, European colonization as nationalist identities were beginning to form within the Arab region of the Ottoman Empire’s borders and Lebanon’s subsequent incorporation into the capitalist modern world-system sparked racialization processes which categorized groups of people based on imagined racial qualities, and I will specifically focus on different chronotopes to represent how those racializations changed over time and space.

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CHAPTER I

ON “RACE” AND RACIALIZATION

Since the late 1880s, writers have described conflict in Lebanon as having a sectarian nature, as a sort of inescapable ‘clash of civilizations’ between Christian and Muslim, and later even clashing within those broad categories. In his book *Cultures of Sectarianism*, Ussama Makdisi argues that sectarianism, rather than being part of some innate character of social relations in Lebanon, was produced in the 19th century by “competing Ottoman, European, and Lebanese narratives of modernization”¹ emerging as old hierarchies were discredited, reformed, and reordered through imperial and colonial contact. Indeed, the combined impact of both Ottoman attempts at modernization, European colonialism, and Lebanon’s subsequent incorporation into the capitalist modern world-system in the late 19th century caused profound ruptures in Lebanese society still visible today. In this paper, I argue that part and parcel to the production of sectarianism was the formation of racialization processes. The historical process which produced the culture of sectarianism involved an imagined ancient rivalry between “races” as well as the Orientalist notion of the timelessness of those disputes;² those categories are imagined by the elite who have power over the allocation of resources, ultimately creating a stratification system with racial boundaries. As a student of Transnational American Studies, I aim to study race-making in Lebanon by interrogating borders, both within and beyond states

¹ Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 6.

² Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 84.

and nations, with an interdisciplinary approach.³ This paper addresses the production of “race” categories and the racialization process in Lebanon framing history to highlight three main chronotopes: 19th century Ottoman Lebanon, post-Tanzimat Lebanon, and Lebanon at the turn of the century.

We must first begin by defining “race” and discussing racialization. The popular notion that “race” exists as a biological fact identified through physical traits has been disproven by countless writers for several decades (hence my use of quotation marks around the word—as a reminder of its socially constructed condition); yet, this belief consumes the main critique to my work (and the work of other critical race theory scholars⁴): “race” as an issue limited to “black” and “white” categories in a Western context. However, many scholars of critical race theory have extended their study to a global scope, examining racialization far beyond the Western world. Etienne Balibar asserts that there is not one static type of racism, but rather a number of racisms.⁵ It is worth keeping such distinctions in mind in order to recognize the number of ways “race” categories can be deployed socially, institutionally, nationally, and transnationally, clearly implying that the US brand of “race” and racism is not meant to and could not possibly be applied globally as-is. Critics also support their argument by pointing to sectarianism as the only lens through which social categorization and asymmetrical power structures specifically in Lebanon can be explained. While I agree that recognizing the history and functions of sectarianism is integral to understanding much of Lebanese social and political society, it must also be considered that sectarianism is limited to categorizations by sect, relying solely on

³ "The Journal of Transnational American Studies," eScholarship: University of California, accessed April 19, 2017.

⁴ Shu-Mei Shih, "Comparative Racialization: An Introduction," *PMLA* 123.5 (2008): 1348.

⁵ Etienne Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism" in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London and New York: Verso Books, 1988), 38-40.

religious identifications without sufficiently accounting for other central factors, such as class, nationality, and ethnicity. This paper aims to add to the growing body of global critical race theory scholarship as an exercise in examining racialization in a pluralist country with a confessional system—Lebanon—in a third world, post-colonial region—the Middle East.

Classifying populations based on physical traits is not a new concept. While the study of “race” differences in Europe spawned in the 17th and 18th centuries due to the influence of biological sciences,⁶ people the world over have been categorizing each other based on physical traits for centuries to distinguish between allies and enemies—for example, 1350 B.C. Egypt used four colors in drawings to represent different populations: Egyptians, Northerners, the enemies in the East, and black people.⁷ The 19th century brought with it the joint forces of European colonialism and spreading capitalism, which advanced racial discourse to rationalize Western contact with non-European people throughout the world,⁸ binding questions of mental and moral character to distinctive physical traits.⁹ Those racial categorizations were institutionalized as colonialism and capitalism expanded, seeking more resources, markets, and laborers, motivated by prospects of profit and power and supported by a driving sense of racial superiority.¹⁰ Balibar highlights that racism was originated to create a mythic narrative of nobility through a superior “race” contrasting with the inferior “races” and their destiny of a dominated life incapable of autonomy; he writes, “It is only retrospectively that the notion of

⁶ Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 34.

⁷ Gossett, *Race*, 4.

⁸ Michael Banton, *The Idea of Race* (Great Britain: Tavistock Publications, 1977), 54.

⁹ Adam Lively, *Masks: Blackness, Race & the Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 23.

¹⁰ Ralph Bunche, *A World View of Race* (Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1936), 40.

race was 'ethnicized', so that it could be integrated into the nationalist complex."¹¹ Thus, the material importance of those racial categories still visible today lies in the recognition that they are "built into institutions that allocate resources to people, and this means that they are therefore social and economic phenomena as well."¹² Racialization, then, emerges from political, social, and economic ideologies that becomes institutionalized as a form of domination and oppression.

The result of these racial categorizations, of course, is a multidimensional stratification system—a hierarchy contingent upon a 'white' category that "defines the normal functioning of modern social systems"¹³ and decides the unequal distribution of society's resources.¹⁴ White, as a political color, represents the dominating class which both normalizes its own ideologies and allocates resources throughout the entire social system. The realist/economic determinist school of critical race theory argues that "racial hierarchies determine who gets tangible benefits," supporting the notion that "race" is inextricably linked to class.¹⁵ Balibar takes it further--not only are "race" and class linked, but "class conflict is always already transformed by a social relation in which there is an inbuilt tendency to racism," which he calls class racism.¹⁶ In other words, class conflict cannot be removed from its environment, which—in the modern world—is already affected by racialization processes. This class racism results in producing a sort of sub-class within part of the working class that is closed to social mobility but open to the flows of

¹¹ Etienne Balibar, "Class Racism," in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London and New York: Verso Books, 1988), 207.

¹² Banton, *The Idea of Race*, 158.

¹³ David S. Owen, "Towards a Critical Theory of Whiteness," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 33.2 (2007): 208.

¹⁴ Martin N. Marger, *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives, 4th edition* (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1997), 37.

¹⁵ Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, "Hallmark Critical Race Theory Themes," in *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (NYU Press, 2012), 21.

¹⁶ Balibar, "Class Racism," 205.

proletarianization through generations of social heredity, marked for capitalist exploitation.¹⁷

Rather than “race” being a circumstantial addition to the larger class struggle, Balibar argues that they constitute each other—both “race” and class must be kept at the forefront of the conversation on racialization. Class conflict is both affected by racialization processes and produces further racialization. The way capitalism sustains itself is by growing itself, endlessly accumulating more capital through the commodification of everything in its sight, which in the world market means capital, goods, and labour-power; in turn, the capitalist world-system perpetually needs more labour-power to produce more goods.¹⁸ Wallerstein adds that racism functions to lower the cost of labour-power and minimize the accompanying political disruption in order to increase the accumulation of capital.¹⁹ Racism provides a system which functions throughout the entire world to control the numbers of people available to take on the lowest wages as labour-power, justifying vast inequality on a completely non-meritocratic basis.²⁰ Categories of “race” function globally and transnationally through economics, which also reflects politics and ideology, dynamically dividing people into subhuman and super-human categories.²¹ To put it simply: class and “race” in the modern world-system reproduce each other, further defining the dominant and subordinate populations.

An analysis of the modern world system, and namely of liberalism, illustrates the way “race” is implicated in the most basic rights assigned through and within modern nation-states. In his book, *The Modern World System*, Immanuel Wallerstein argues that not only is inequality a

¹⁷ Balibar, “Class Racism,” 212-3.

¹⁸ Immanuel Wallerstein, “Ideological Tensions of Capitalism: Universalism versus Racism and Sexism,” in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London and New York: Verso Books, 1988), 31, 33.

¹⁹ Wallerstein, “Ideological Tensions of Capitalism,” 33.

²⁰ Wallerstein, “Ideological Tensions of Capitalism,” 34.

²¹ Balibar, “Racism and Nationalism,” 44.

fundamental part of the modern world-system, but the modern world-system--with liberal states in its core regions--claims to have the goal of equality for all people.²² Liberal states extend rights and responsibilities to populations through citizenship. Citizenship within the liberal state has a long history with one important, defining event being the French Revolution; so, late 18th century Europe categorized citizenship into a binary: the active citizen, with political power and privileges, and the passive citizen, who enjoyed certain rights allowed for all people (protection, property, liberty).²³ Citizenship within the liberal state, then, became about inclusion and thus exclusion. Following the same trajectory as other hierarchies discussed, those with power justified their positions above others by "theoriz[ing] the distinctions as in some way natural," engraining racial categories within the liberal state and society.²⁴ Charles W. Mills argues that the contractual or deontological liberalism emerging from Locke and Kant that is hegemonic today is actually a "racial liberalism, in which conceptions of personhood and resulting schedules of rights, duties, and government responsibilities have all been racialized."²⁵ While the fact that both philosophers limited property rights and self-ownership racially is telling, it is important to note that liberalism's color-coded polity through definitions of personhood and justice has never been addressed or amended at the structural level.²⁶ Inequality based on "race" is deeply entrenched in the dominating political structure of the modern world—liberalism—and thus permeates through the nation-state at all levels.

The modern world-system includes the incorporation and proliferation of nation-states as political units, and the nation-state would not exist without the nation, which Benedict Anderson

²² Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System Vol. IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789-1914* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 143.

²³ Wallerstein, *Modern World System*, 145.

²⁴ Wallerstein, *Modern World System*, 146.

²⁵ Charles W. Mills, "Racial Liberalism," *PMLA* 123.5 (2008): 1380-1.

²⁶ Mills, "Racial Liberalism," 1382.

argues is an inherently limited and sovereign imagined political community.²⁷ Balibar comments that nationalism and racism are ideologies that help create one another; he claims that racism cannot be produced without nationalism²⁸ and racism, in turn, is a necessary tendency for the constitution of nationalism.²⁹ Further, he questions whether "the seeds of racism could be seen as lying at the heart of politics from the birth of nationalism onwards, or even indeed from the point where nations begin to exist."³⁰ He justifies these claims by pointing to the way nation-states require the production of a fictive ethnicity to justify the unity of a 'peoples' (which, he claims, is just as arbitrary as "races"), which also means justifying the exclusion of other peoples.³¹ Such a system of inclusion and exclusion works in tandem with the system of racialization. Balibar identifies nationalism as a paradox: by creating a national home for peoples through the exclusion of other peoples, it continues to seek for the peoples to exclude in order to create itself, "endless[ly] rediscover[ing] that the enemy is 'within.'"³² Citizenship and nationalism, then, are foundational tools under the liberal state (which claims to promote equality for all peoples and focuses on individual rights) where the functions of "race" as a justification for the inclusion and exclusion of peoples is clearly visible. In his argument on racial liberalism, Mills describes "race" as a political system. The racial contract is "an agreement among white contractors to subordinate and exploit non-white noncontractors for white benefit."³³ This white supremacy under liberalism is clearly not achieved at a roundtable meeting of among all white people, but

²⁷ Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities*. (New York and London: Verso, 2003), 6.

²⁸ Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism," 37.

²⁹ Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism," 48.

³⁰ Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism," 47.

³¹ Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism," 49.

³² Balibar, "Class Racism," 215.

³³ Mills, "Racial Liberalism," 1381.

rather through the catalyst processes of capitalist expansion and colonialism, which necessitated white power over nonwhite people and thereby shaped history.

Racialization is a process that is used by all structures of the modern world-system—from political economy to political ideology—to justify its continued existence. It follows that in order to achieve revolutionary change, “race” must be addressed in tandem with nationalism and class struggles. As the genealogy has shown, “race” is a dynamic concept. Its meanings and implications change over time and geographies, especially as capitalist growth and colonial expansion continues to shift. Shu-Mei Shih usefully raises Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope as a way to specify the way each time and place produces “race” and racialization under the constant structuring of an asymmetry of power;³⁴ “the chronotope of a given instance of racialization as a moment in relation to history interarticulating with a location in relation to other locations.”³⁵ From this perspective, racialization processes occur throughout the globe with differing implications under asymmetrical power structures, depending on each instance's context of time and place. Including in Lebanon. Racialization chronotopes in Lebanon can be identified and differentiated from other chronotopes by analyzing key moments of change; in this paper, I focus on Mount Lebanon under the Ottoman Empire both before and after the Tanzimat decrees as two separate chronotopes of racialization, as well as the mandate period, and finally contemporary 20th century and 21st century Lebanon as potential chronotopes for analyzing racialization. Analyzing racialization through chronotopes allows the reader to recognize the way shifting power structures, nationalisms, class struggles, and geographies create perpetually shifting racialized categories that define the population beyond and between sectarian conflicts. The rest of this paper will address how racialization processes began in Lebanon by pointing to

³⁴ Shih, “Comparative Racialization,” 1354.

³⁵ Shih, “Comparative Racialization,” 1358.

emerging nationalisms, state formations, and class struggles, and it will commence the work of analyzing “race” as a system within the context of late 19th century to early 21st century within and surrounding Lebanon’s borders.

CHAPTER II

OTTOMAN LEBANON

A. Imperial and Colonial Racialization

The incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the modern world system through its participation in the global economy can easily be traced back to the 16th century, if not earlier. In 1569, the Ottoman Empire granted the first effective capitulations to France, which allowed special economic, commercial, legal, and religious rights to French representatives within the Empire; for example, taxes and custom duties could be avoided, exclusive churches could be built, and the foreigners would answer solely to the courts of their own nations¹. Capitulations were later extended to the Dutch, to Britain, and to Russia, and they were not fully abolished until 1914. In the 16th century and the centuries surrounding it, the Ottoman Empire was the leading power with military superiority over the West; Europe began to contest that power in the 18th century when the Ottoman Empire lost the 1699 and 1718 wars with the Russian and Austrian Empires, signaling the rising military powers of the West and the shifting balance of power.² In order to remain competitive and protect its Western geographical boundaries, the Ottoman Empire strengthened its political alliance with France, regularly sending ambassadors to Europe to study and import technological advances.³ Meanwhile, the Europeans continued their study and infiltration of the Ottoman Empire, paying special regard to the Christian populations. These old capitulations literally institutionalized the means for European powers to influence

¹ James L. Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2008), 48-9.

² Fatma M. Göçek, introduction to *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 4.

³ Göçek, introduction, 5-6.

Ottoman markets, and subsequently, its society as a whole. The shifting asymmetrical power relationship between the European powers and the Ottoman Empire, with the economic and religious/cultural freedoms granted the former through and within the latter's own territory, as well as European colonialism's growing sphere of dominance, coincided with the emerging study of “race” differences in Europe.⁴ Relations between the European powers and the Ottoman Empire and their mutual curiosity continued for centuries coded in racialized discourse, with Europe identifying themselves as civilized and modern, and the Ottomans described as barbaric and backward. While it is true that the Europeans did not formally colonize the Ottoman Empire, colonial ideologies were active, legitimizing the European force which compelled Ottoman compliance;⁵ racializing the Ottomans justified European colonialism in the region, cementing the notion of the Ottoman as other and simultaneously strengthening the European power's sense of self. Eighteenth century French racial discourse, which was distributed through texts and ultimately framed experiences, is exemplified in the writings of famous French traveler Volney, who spent eight months in Mount Lebanon (then known as Mountain of the Druze) while traveling Egypt and Syria between 1783 and 1785.⁶ He describes the “Oriental” as inherently lazy, and he disregards Islam as a “fanatic superstition” that causes disorders amongst its followers; yet, Volney sees a “ray of liberty” that differentiates the people of Mount Lebanon from the rest of the Ottoman population—mainly due to the presence of Christians.⁷ Volney's comfort in Mount Lebanon is attributed to the presence of a familiar religion in spite of their “Arab” appearance,⁸ highlighting the special relationship established between France and the

⁴ Gossett, *Race*, 34.

⁵ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 9.

⁶ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 18, 23.

⁷ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 19.

⁸ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 22.

Maronites of Mount Lebanon and its role as a door for the Europeans into the region. Over time, those capitulations and the growing European involvement in the Empire symbolized Ottoman inferiority to their European counterparts—the Ottoman Empire was neither able to uphold European, coded as civilized, standards nor regulate their activities within Ottoman borders—and thus threatened the existence of the Empire itself.⁹

By the time Mehmet Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha of the province of Egypt invaded Syria and Mount Lebanon in 1831 in a nationalist push against the Empire, the Ottoman Empire was at the height of insecurity—not only at the hands of the rebellious Egyptians, but also due to their vulnerable position potentially allowing further devastating European encroachment. Indeed, by the early nineteenth-century, the European powers had already developed a vested interest in Mount Lebanon and considered it to be a Christian refuge in which they had a religiously-backed strategic stake. French poet and travel writer Alphonse de Lamartine viewed Mount Lebanon like many others: as a familiar biblical geography that housed “a European colony [the Maronite Christians] haphazardly cast into the midst of desert tribes” that could potentially serve as the winning battleground for Christianity.¹⁰ Europe’s racial imaginations of the Orient were so pervasive that French travel writer Gérard de Nerval admonished them in his book *Voyage en Orient* describing a year of his travels in the Near East: “Il peut résulter de grandes choses du frottement de ces deux civilisations longtemps ennemies, qui trouveront leurs point de contact en ce débarrassant des préjugés qui les séparent encore. C’est à nous de faire les premiers pas et de rectifier beaucoup d’erreurs dans nos opinions sur les mœurs et les institutions

⁹ Steve Niva, "Contested Sovereignties and Postcolonial Insecurities in the Middle East," *Cultures of Insecurity* (1999): 153-4.

¹⁰ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 22.

sociales de l'Orient."¹¹ Nerval's perspective was in the minority, but it highlights the racial prejudice prevalent in the 19th century that divided not only Christian and Muslim but also the Europeans from the Ottomans.

Mount Lebanon, a largely autonomous and neglected region of the Ottoman Empire, provided a strategic entry-point for French involvement, especially through the powerful Maronite Church and the dominating silk market. European demand for Lebanese silk soared in the eighteenth-century, and as locals and Europeans introduced modern production methods during the new age of free-trade treaties, entire communities in Mount Lebanon came to depend on the profits from foreign trade.¹² Lebanon's silk industry played an integral role in racialization processes in the 18th and 19th centuries by strengthening the relationship between the French and Mount Lebanon and creating new prosperity for Lebanese Christians which further divided the local population along class and sectarian lines. Before the increased financial and cultural involvement of the Europeans in Mount Lebanon, the local hierarchy that separated the *ahali*—the Druze and Maronite villagers—from the elite was ordered based on who had control over religious and secular knowledge.¹³ Religious communities lived together without politicizing the differences in faith; the Druze and Maronite elite were distinguished by rank rather than religion.¹⁴ The local religious coexistence diminished as European and Egyptian involvement and control grew in power; and, in turn, fully aware of the growing influence of the foreigners compared to the weakening of the Sublime Porte, Druze and Maronite leaders participated in the

¹¹ Gérard de Nerval, *Voyage en Orient: Tome Second* (Paris: Charpentier, Librairie-Éditeur, 1862), 216.

¹² Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 27.

¹³ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 29.

¹⁴ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 35-6.

growing sectarian divide with the hopes of achieving their own profit and advantage.¹⁵ The Egyptian occupiers made a point to further increase trade with Europe to satisfy Ali's expansionist ambitions—ambitions which required increasing access and exploitation of Syrian and Lebanese resources and trade routes.¹⁶ To do so, the occupiers enforced conscription, disarmament, and a more centralized exaction system; however, in order to appease the Europeans, preferential treatment was applied to the Christian populations, disproportionately affecting the Muslim and Druze populations.¹⁷ The Lebanese Christians, then, received preferential treatment that allowed them to benefit the most from the socioeconomic changes under the Egyptian occupation, while the Lebanese Muslim and Druze populations suffered higher taxes and extortion. Mehmet Ali chose Lebanese Christians to be the consular agents for foreign powers and to manage trade in the newly established European houses.¹⁸ Those consulates often granted Christian merchants *berats*, special certificates that gave them many of the same status and privileges as merchants of European states under the capitulatory agreements (such as lower customs duties and more tax breaks), distinguishing them with more profit and socio-economic privilege.¹⁹ Steam navigation lines were built, the French built a carriage road between Damascus and Beirut, and with the growing economy of the silk trade, Beirut became a main coaling station.²⁰ Only a few decades into the 19th century, European influence had so proliferated that the increasingly important city of Beirut was remarkably European in character and amenities. The Lebanese economy, which was previously self-sustaining, encompassed a balance of trade which had generated a chronic deficit. By the end of the 1830s, Mount

¹⁵ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 76.

¹⁶ Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 47.

¹⁷ Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 48.

¹⁸ Charles Issawi, *Fertile Crescent, 1800-1914* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 1988), 136.

¹⁹ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 97-8.

²⁰ Issawi, *Fertile Crescent*, 48.

Lebanon's economy was so focused on silk that it could only meet around half of its own cereal needs.²¹ A visible shift in local social structure occurred when a new mercantile middle class largely composed of Christian merchants and agents of European traders and firms emerged as the most financially prosperous group, leaving the elite Druze feudal lords behind.²² Divides that had previously been defined along elite and non-elite lines had become defined by growing hostilities between the Christian and Druze communities. As Mount Lebanon was incorporated into the international market through the silk trade and French influence, capitalist and bourgeois relations were developed by the ensuing differentiation.²³ Thus, Mount Lebanon was incorporated into the modern world-system, specifically as a low-level producer fulfilling the hegemonic world economy's demands while absorbing modern European technology and a system of racialization to support it.

The period between 1831 and 1839 (between the Egyptian occupation and before the introduction of the Tanzimat) serves as the first chronotope of racialization in Mount Lebanon. In other words, in Ottoman Lebanon, before the Tanzimat decrees were even issued, local class conflicts combined with colonialism were producing a divide along racial lines. The racialized interpretations of the indigenous populations by the Europeans were transferred to the people in question in a tangible way through the allocation of resources and by stoking the fires of economic competition. The Europeans, who had already racialized the Ottomans, had further racialized the people of Mount Lebanon and "invented the tribes of Lebanon."²⁴ As Benedict Anderson argues in his book *Imagined Communities*, "where racism developed outside Europe in

²¹ Issawi, *Fertile Crescent*, 274.

²² Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 52-3.

²³ Issawi, *Fertile Crescent*, 48.

²⁴ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 23.

the nineteenth century, it was always associated with European domination.”²⁵ The success of the French depended on the success of their co-religionists, the Maronite population, and this could only be accomplished through the explicit division of the Maronites and the Druzes. As Nerval wrote during his visit to Mount Lebanon, “Malheureusement trop de peuples ont intérêt à profiter de leurs division.”²⁶ And the local communities participating in instituting the racialization process, by claiming to protect the interests of their own sect, they were differentiating themselves from the rest of the population as a distinct, politicized unit with interests diverging from other sects.²⁷ The subsequent creation of the advantageous mercantile class is further proof that, by creating a social stratification system dependent on racialized identities which prioritizes the European and the Christian, what was previously defined as a class conflict had become a “race” conflict.

B. Tanzimat Nationalisms

The chronotope of the Ottoman Tanzimat reformation period was integral to fully institutionalizing racial divides in Mount Lebanon, especially because it occurred as nationalist sentiments began to take root with local Arab and Turkish populations. Prior to the Tanzimat era, the Ottoman Empire resembled Benedict Anderson’s two cultural systems of the religious community and the dynastic realm.²⁸ Both Islam and the Sultanate were legitimated by divine authority. What emerged with the Tanzimat reform movement was a redefinition of Ottomanism that imagined an identity and a community that promised equality before the law regardless of

²⁵ Anderson. *Imagined Communities*, 150.

²⁶ Nerval, *Voyage en Orient*, 5.

²⁷ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 98.

²⁸ Anderson. *Imagined Communities*, 12-22; David Commins, "The Resiliency of Empire: Political Identities in Late Ottoman Syria," in *Configuring Identity in the Modern Arab East*, ed. Samir M. Seikaly (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 2009), 36.

religion, shifting to nationalist, imagined communities. The reforms largely adopted from European modernization, especially the liberal Napoleonic Code which centralized government control while espousing principles of life, liberty, and property. The Ottoman Empire launched the decrees as an attempt to secure its borders in light of the increasing European interventions; however, they were ineffective in that regard: the European powers publicly viewed the Tanzimat as emerging instead from an Islamic Ottoman tradition and continued to intervene on behalf of the Christian populations.²⁹ According to Wajih Kawtharani, the emergence of the Tanzimat era signified the following:

For European capitalist powers, these reforms represented a facilitation of commercial exchange, an expansion of the capitalist market, and the ability to protect foreign communities and their local trade representatives. For Ottoman elites, especially those who were enlightened, modernization was understood as a way to neutralize any potential justification for intervention through the enactment of popular representation and the provision of the rights of Ottoman citizenship. For the Ottoman communities (*millet*s), particularly those that were non-Muslim, these measures were understood as an application of the right to equality, while non-Turkish ethnicities and nationalities saw them as an opportunity to achieve a measure of participation.³⁰

In a word, the reforms turned the subject into the citizen—citizens who began to be defined and to define themselves in a discourse of nationalist secularism. It cannot be ignored that the Tanzimat reforms were initiated within a context of European colonialism and a weakening Ottoman Empire. The reforms diminished the superior position of the Sunni Muslims to create

²⁹ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 57.

³⁰ Wajih Kawtharani, "The Ottoman Tanzimat and the Constitution," *Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies* (2013), <http://english.dohainstitute.org/release/6e7d6732-8e4e-4d19-88c3-7f7645b1bbe1>

an equal playing field while the Europeans demanded special protections for the Christian communities;³¹ rather than creating an egalitarian society like the Tanzimat reforms promised, the existing stratification system simply changed directions. The rising class of Christian elites in Mount Lebanon were to become the natural, dominant bearers of nationalist ideology while Druzes and Muslim peasants were pushed away from privilege.³² And, by shifting away from the dynastic and religious community, previous guarantees of security—found in paternalist networks—were invalidated and replaced with a modern, centralized bureaucracy.³³ Mount Lebanon’s rising economic influence and strong ties with Europe made it the determining battleground for the future of the Empire.³⁴ The Tanzimat reforms, consequently, served to advance and institutionalize racialization processes in Mount Lebanon by creating new nationalist categories where “race” conflicts had already risen in a context of European colonialism and sectarian and class struggles.

The Tanzimat era, instead of creating stability and security for the Empire, was a period of change and upheaval. Ottomanism was redefined as a civic nationalism open to all citizens of the empire, rather than only elite members of the dynasty and religious stratum.³⁵ The new citizens of the Ottoman Empire were to be allotted equal rights of participation and responsibilities toward the Sultanate. According to Benedict Anderson, “official nationalisms” such as Ottomanism developed as a “willed merger of nation and dynastic empire” in response to

³¹ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 3, 11.

³² James McDougall, "The Emergence of Nationalism," *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Middle East and North African History* (2015): 4, doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199672530.013.12.

³³ McDougall, “Emergence of Nationalism,” 5.

³⁴ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 57.

³⁵ Commins, “Resiliency of Empire,” 37.

popular national movements.³⁶ Ottoman modernity attempted to adopt European liberalism to harness the full power of a centralized state over its populace and borders. Earlier budding nationalisms which contested imperial control in favor of autonomy—Arab, Egyptian, and Syrian, for example—began to be conceived by the people as having socio-economic qualities in the context of expanding global capitalism.³⁷ Indeed, the “primacy of capitalism” made the notion of the nation so popular.³⁸ McDougall writes:

[These nationalisms] emerged on several social levels and at the intersection of dramatic patterns of change in culture and communication, markets and mobility that impacted very unevenly on different social groups across the region, as well as being influenced by shifting geopolitical relations and the rapid expansion of the state. Both the increasingly disruptive incorporation of Middle Eastern and North African societies into the periphery of global capitalism, and the unanticipated consequences of the defensive developmentalism upon which regional statesmen embarked to harness the dynamism of markets and technology while seeking to ward off their threat, combined to fragment and reorder social and market relations, exacerbate local social conflicts, politicize communal and sectarian identities, and destabilize established hierarchies.³⁹

Nationalism facilitated participation in the growing global economy and promised autonomy from imperial control. The provinces began to define themselves in contrast to the Ottomans and

³⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 86.

³⁷ Roger Owen, "The Middle Eastern National Economy: Imagined, Constructed, Protected," in *Configuring Identity in the Modern Arab East*, ed. Samir M. Seikaly (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 2009), 140.

³⁸ Anderson. *Imagined Communities*, 37.

³⁹ McDougall, "Emergence of Nationalism," 4-5.

the French,⁴⁰ through nationalist expression the changing economy and its effects on society and regional loyalties provided a basis for nationalist movements in Greater Syria to develop.⁴¹ The nation was associated with qualities that are not chosen but are born into,⁴² guaranteeing inclusion and civic participation—a promise the Ottoman Tanzimat did not fulfill. Provincial groups such as the Syrians sought their own nation to protect themselves from a weakening Sultanate and ensure future autonomy. As the Empire continued to thrive, however, the Syrian nationalists returned to Ottomanism, even supporting the authority of the Sultanate.⁴³ Both the Druze and Maronite elites of Mount Lebanon, on the other hand, often played a balancing act with the European presence and the Ottoman authority as the key to attaining local power and autonomy. The elites of Mount Lebanon were aware that the Tanzimat decrees were made in a failing attempt to preserve Ottoman sovereignty, so they sought to preserve their own inclusion and participation by affirming their loyalties to the Sultanate while simultaneously aligning themselves with either of the Great Powers—the Maronites with France and the Druzes with Great Britain.⁴⁴

As the Ottoman officials sought their own liberal modernity to balance and compete with Europe, creating a modern “self” required a reference point from which they could be differentiated. The people of Mount Lebanon, long considered to be quite separate from the Empire, were racialized as the un-modern foil to Ottoman modernity.⁴⁵ Mount Lebanon was distinguished from the Empire not only for their general autonomy, but because the sectarian

⁴⁰ Crawford Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 382.

⁴¹ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 200.

⁴² Anderson. *Imagined Communities*, 143.

⁴³ Commins, “Resiliency of Empire,” 38.

⁴⁴ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 61.

⁴⁵ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 72.

violence attracted European encroachment and thus threatened the Empire itself. Ottoman elites considered the sectarian struggles in Mount Lebanon as innate to the population, creating a fictive history of age-old and timeless disputes.⁴⁶ To preserve its security, the Sultanate would either have to increase control over Mount Lebanon or separate itself entirely. The Tanzimat decrees were meant to increase control over the rebellious provinces, including Mount Lebanon. The Ottomans stoked the fires of the sectarian hostilities by supporting different sides to undermine Lebanese autonomy under the Shihabi Emirate and invoke their own direct authority.⁴⁷ The Druze and Maronite of Mount Lebanon were not divided by an inherent civilizational clash as colonial ideology professed but rather, at the source, were divided by an unfair allocation of power, rights, and resources. Despite the Druze feudal lords' resentment of the newly prosperous Christians, peasants and feudal lords from both sects came together to fight against Amir Bashir Shihab and his allegiance to foreign Egyptian occupation.⁴⁸ The sects unified again against Bashir III's Ottoman-supported administrative council, which the Druze and Maronite feudal sheikhs saw as further undermining their traditional authority.⁴⁹ The 1841 Druze attack on Deir al Qamar was sparked by a dispute over the distribution of taxes, but the clash motivated other sectarian violence in several villages.⁵⁰ Makdisi describes the massive violence of 1841 as a conflict that was, "at heart, one of opposing interpretations of the restoration and contradictory innovations of rights and responsibilities in the post-Tanzimat era," ushering in the age of sectarianism.⁵¹ Lebanese sociologist Samir Khalaf writes of the Tanzimat decrees: "more damaging than the socioeconomic disparities were the widening religious

⁴⁶ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 73.

⁴⁷ Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 58-9.

⁴⁸ Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 57.

⁴⁹ Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 57.

⁵⁰ Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 57.

⁵¹ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 51.

cleavages and confessional hostility.⁵² During the Tanzimat period, then, sectarianism and the violence that ensued was a direct result of the racialization processes of the period proceeding it and was influenced by the growing insecurity of the Ottoman Empire and the measures it took to regain its power.

Nevertheless, Mount Lebanon's sectarian hostilities progressed. In 1842, the concerned European powers imposed a partition of the region along the line of the Beirut-Damascus road to separate the Maronite populations from the Druze—a partition that was interpreted by the locals as a formal call for civil war.⁵³ Unsurprisingly, the arbitrary border did not quell the clashes but only exacerbated them. Even if the disputes had been purely based on religious grounds, the Beirut-Damascus road did not literally separate the Christian and Druze territories; many villages were mixed, and both Christian and Druze claimed all of Mount Lebanon, not only the Northern or the Southern side. The Christians in Zahleh went so far as to create a mythic narrative of indigeneity, claiming that the Christians were the “original inhabitants” of Mount Lebanon who then received the Druze, though historical accounts actually prove the opposite.⁵⁴ Violence over the transitioning feudal system and shifting majorities and minorities continued. In 1845 the Sultanate sent foreign minister Shakib Efendi to Mount Lebanon to end the violence and reassert Ottoman authority. Efendi imposed what became known as the *Règlement Efendi*, which was the first “legalization of sectarian political representation in Mount Lebanon” to assist with tax collection and order;⁵⁵ it involved a council of elected feudal families with seats divided by sect, yet the Christian clergy had the strongest power over the elections.⁵⁶ Efendi justified the

⁵² Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 66.

⁵³ Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 60.

⁵⁴ Fawwaz Traboulsi, *History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 26.

⁵⁵ Traboulsi, *History of Modern Lebanon*, 27.

⁵⁶ Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 61.

council's division by sect by supporting the Ottoman assertion that the Druze and Maronite are of different "races" struggling from an "ancient" rivalry.⁵⁷ The council further institutionalized the sectarian divide and the racialized qualities attributed to the Druze and the Maronite of Mount Lebanon, and only aggravated the disproportionate allocation of power and resources during the tumultuous phase of unstable authority in the region. By the time thousands were massacred during the 1860 civil war, the French and British intervened on behalf of their dependents. The European powers convened and later demanded that the Sultanate turn Mount Lebanon into a special administrative district, a *mutasarrifiya*, protected by Europe; the Ottoman Empire compromised by emplacing an Ottoman Christian as governor of the *mutasarrifiya*.⁵⁸ The European powers saw the Maronite and Druze disputes exclusively as an issue between religions, an "age-old problem" of Muslims oppressing Christians.⁵⁹ The *mutasarrifiya* failed just as the previous partition did because the clashes in Mount Lebanon were treated simply as disputes between "races" though they were deeply related to economic conflicts and power struggles.

As the Sultanate failed to successfully exert authority over Mount Lebanon and control the sectarian clashes to deter European intervention, the Empire changed course from the Tanzimat decrees. Reasoning that the Christians were more loyal to Europe than to the Sultan compared to the Ottoman Muslims who saw the Sultan as their sovereign, by the end of the 19th century Sultan Abdulhamid reverted the civic Ottomanism to a dynastic Ottomanism which returned its focus to the Muslim population.⁶⁰ At this point, the Lebanese economy was deeply dependent on European production and trade, to the point that disturbances in the European

⁵⁷ Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 84.

⁵⁸ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 99.

⁵⁹ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 99.

⁶⁰ Commins, "Resiliency of Empire," 39.

economy had dire effects in Mount Lebanon's economy and population.⁶¹ The Tanzimat's liberal decrees for equality and inclusion before the law and the Sultanate resulted in deepening the civic, economic, and racial exclusion of Mount Lebanon's population while European colonialism advanced on the region. Class conflicts were distinguished as sectarian conflicts of a timeless nature, only progressively deteriorating the relationship between Druze and Maronite. Power, resources, and authority were in flux, and during the upheaval of the Tanzimat, racial divides were institutionalized in Ottoman Mount Lebanon.

⁶¹ Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 66.

CHAPTER III

TURN OF THE CENTURY

A. WWI to Mandate: Nationalism to State-Building

In the late 19th century, Arabist movements in the Empire were growing. Uncertainty about the future of Ottomanism and their own autonomy and participation within it amidst the CUP's centralist "Turkification" policies stimulated new imaginations of communities separate from the Ottomans or the Europeans and built on a shared language: Arabic. At the turn of the century, groups were beginning to refer to an "Arab nation" within the Ottoman Empire, distinct and autonomous from the Turks. With the rise of the Young Turks, some Arab Ottomans called for revolt, advocating for the earlier 1877 nationalist project *Bilad al-Sham* to unite Mount Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine into an independent Arab kingdom.¹ Turkish chauvinism was so exclusive that Syrians began to perceive systemic discrimination, further alienating the Muslim Arab population from the Ottomans.² The Arabs were building on their experiences of exclusion from participation in the Empire to develop greater aspirations for autonomy, separate from the Turks dominating 20th century Ottomanism. In the midst of this critical moment of redefining and politicizing identities in the region, the first world war erupted, and the Ottoman Empire joined Germany on the side of the Central Powers. World War I instilled a new political order in the region which resulted in the creation of the state system still present today. It also created the conditions for Ottomanism to no longer be an identity that much of the Empire's citizens felt loyal to, creating space for new Arab nationalist parties to rise to power. The Empire's

¹ Traboulsi, *History of Modern Lebanon*, 68.

² Commins, "Resiliency of Empire," 44.

involvement in the first world war and the mismanagement of its provinces and citizens greatly contributed to its demise and set the playing field for the institution of the mandate system.

Mount Lebanon lost more than half of its population during the first world war due to famine.³ The Empire had prioritized the war effort and civilians were left behind. It was not a lack of food that caused the famine; rather, it was caused by a combination of the unregulated free market, administrative chaos, and a double blockade: the naval blockade by the Entente powers and the overland transport blockade by the Ottoman military.⁴ There was a sufficient amount of food available to feed the region, but the utter mismanagement of the government resulted in the deadly famine that continued for years. Transportation of food through Syria into Mount Lebanon had become sporadic with the exclusive use of the paved road for the military, and much of the available food was used to feed the soldiers. What was left for the civilians in Mount Lebanon was sold at inflated prices, with the profiteers making 300 times their usual turnover.⁵ The Sultanate introduced the *Safar Barlik* compulsory military conscriptions with a provision that allowed exemption for a price; the wealthy were able to pay the fee and avoid military service, while the poor who failed to flee were primarily farmers and sharecroppers, further disrupting food production.⁶ The famine of Mount Lebanon at the turn of the century is an interesting chronotope of racialization precisely because it does not discriminate based on the “race” identities constructed in the previous century. Over half of the population starved to death, but it did not result in the genocide of one sect over another, despite the economic disparities prevalent at the time. Food is the most basic resource necessary for the survival of a population.

³ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 172.

⁴ Melanie Tanielian, "The War of Famine: Everyday Life in Wartime Beirut and Mount Lebanon (1914-1918)" (PhD. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2012), 37-8.

⁵ Melanie Tanielian, "Feeding the City: The Beirut Municipality and the Politics of Food During World War I," *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 46 (2014): 745.

⁶ Tanielian, "War of Famine," 40.

The Ottoman Empire chose to place its military and the war front above its citizens, with Mount Lebanon bearing the brunt of it, and great suffering ensued. The citizens were expected to perform the responsibilities of that role without receiving the rights promised; they were to fight a war that was not theirs and risk their lives to protect an Empire that was incapable—or unwilling—to do what was necessary to protect its citizens' most basic right, the right to life. Ottoman authority over its citizens, especially the Arab populations, and its political legitimacy was in jeopardy.

A year into the war and the famine, Armenian refugees escaping the genocide by the Special Organization of the Young Turks, slaughtering one million Armenians in 1915 alone, eventually made their way into Lebanon. Halil Halid, a Turk and a diplomat, wrote in his diary published in 1903 of the Turkish antagonism for and anxiety about the Armenians, citing their nationalist aspirations and the threatening support from Great Britain.⁷ Halid refers to the Armenians as a “race” of people who are inherently keen adventurers⁸ whose ungrateful attitude toward the Sultanate and desire for political freedoms risked further denouement of the Empire at the hands of foreign powers. The Empire feared repeating the same mistakes as had happened with Mount Lebanon and the French: “We had heard everywhere from them [the Armenians] that the Christian Powers [...] were going to hand over that portion of the ‘decaying’ Ottoman empire to them, as they had handed over Ottoman territories before to other Christian races of the East. They were simply awaiting the prophesied moment of the partition of Turkey to establish their independence on their share of the divided territory.”⁹ The Armenians were allowed to settle their camps in the empty areas of Karantina and later Anjar and Bourj

⁷ Halil Halid, *The Diary of a Turk*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903), 126-8.

⁸ Halid, *Diary*, 125.

⁹ Halid, *Diary*, 128.

Hammoud within Lebanese territory. Despite the similarities between the Maronite and the Armenians, the Armenians were racialized by the Lebanese authorities as not only ethnically and culturally distinct, but were not to be allowed to participate in politics for a number of years and are still today grouped in the original cities and villages they arrived to.

France, Britain and Russia, expecting the demise of the Ottoman Empire, had secretly planned and organized the dismembering of the Empire through the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The decisions were published in 1917 and caused outrage, further encouraging nationalist movements in the region. Armenian, Arab, and Kurdish “nations”, Turkish, Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese (“Phoenecian”) nationalists, all rose to represent the political aspirations of their people who they considered to have been oppressed under the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰ Each of those nations created a historical narrative that justified their unity and their distinction from other nations, and each sought a state that could promote their nation’s common interest. Indeed, such an ideology of nationalism emerged with the modern state: “By defining a group of people as a nation deserving a state of their own, by endowing that group of people with a common identity and common interest, nationalism gave the modern state legitimacy and purpose.”¹¹ The notion of self-determination as a universal right emerging from Wilson’s Fourteen Points and following the devastation of the war intensified nationalist discourses and “empowered the drive to eliminate racial discrimination and national oppression in the international system.”¹² Of the Syrian resentment toward the “Turks” (who they no longer called “Ottomans”), a Syrian farmer was quoted saying, “The mounted gendarmes of the Turks were tyrants. Turkey hated the sons of

¹⁰ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 197.

¹¹ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 199.

¹² Niva, “Contested Sovereignties,” 157.

Arabs.”¹³ The suffering of the Syrians and Lebanese during the first world war—famine, racial discrimination, poverty, death—turned them away from the Sultanate, and toward themselves for political freedom.

Societal divisions in Lebanon and much of the Ottoman Levant had for centuries revolved around borders, both imposed and self-imposed. In the 18th century, the people of Mount Lebanon were separated by borders of knowledge and status. In the 19th century, the people were divided by the imagined and imposed borders of a civilizational clash, between Christian and Muslim, between Maronite and Druze, between the prosperous and the disenfranchised, turning sects into “races” and leading to the territorial border of the *mutasarrifiya*. In the 20th century, following the devastation of war and famine, new geographic borders were imposed on the region. The Ottoman Empire disintegrated and was dismembered by the European powers into mandatory states. France claimed the region of the Empire that included present-day Lebanon and Syria, justified by its “historical rights” there as both the “protector” of Lebanon’s Maronite population and the holder of various economic interests, including investments in silk production.¹⁴ France’s claim to the region was legitimized under the newly-formed League of Nations’ charter, of which Article 22 established the mandate system to entrust the “colonies and territories which as a consequence of the last war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the states which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world” to more “advanced nations.”¹⁵ The mandate system in itself is a deeply racist enterprise. Considering the overwhelming growth of Arab and particularistic nationalist movements seeking

¹³ Heike Liebau, *The World in World Wars: Experiences, Perceptions and Perspectives from Africa and Asia* (Brill, NV: Studies in Global Social History, 2010).

¹⁴ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 177.

¹⁵ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 180.

their own statehood and autonomy in the region over the previous two centuries, ceding their right to self-rule based purely on a Western scale of “development” implies the racist belief that the Arabs are simply incapable of governing themselves. Of course, most scholars and historians agree that “the mandate system was little more than thinly disguised imperialism.”¹⁶ France expanded the territory known as Greater Lebanon to include not only the Maronite-dominated Mount Lebanon but also Muslim-majority surrounding regions that were previously considered to be part of Greater Syria. France did so for multiple reasons: to make it economically and strategically advantageous, but also to keep the Maronites dependent on the French to protect their status as the dominant “race” in Lebanon.¹⁷ Again, the Christian versus Muslim civilizational clash ideology was enforced, creating competition for resources between the two “races.”

B. Independence to Today

Within a few decades, the Lebanese Constitution was written, the government and parliament divided, and with it all, sectarianism was institutionalized through a confessional system that politicized religious differences. The constitution required equal representation in government of both Christian and Muslims, regardless of changing balances reflected in the population. The state was dominated by the elites of only one of the confessions—the Maronites—and the feudal-style leaders representing the different sectarian political groups had to compete to ensure their people received their share of the country’s resources.¹⁸ The inevitable

¹⁶ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 181.

¹⁷ Gelvin, *Modern Middle East*, 181; Nubar Hovsepian, “State-Society Relations and the Reproduction of the Lebanese Confessional System,” in *The War on Lebanon: A Reader*, ed. Nubar Hovsepian (Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press, 2008), 45.

¹⁸ Hovsepian, “State-Society Relations,” 34-5.

unequal distribution of society's resources resulted in a system of stratification.¹⁹ Similar to ethnic stratification, the stratification by sect is generally one with distinct boundaries, where group membership is assigned at birth and typically doesn't change, and relations are largely defined by conflict.²⁰ Lebanon's pluralistic model highlights difference rather than assimilation, and conflict theorists agree that in such cases, society is held together by the power of dominant classes who impose their will on the subordinate classes.²¹ With the Maronite-dominated government supported by French power, the Muslim population was treated as a less powerful minority despite the fact that they made up around half of the population; the Muslims in this new state of Lebanon rejected the imposed borders and their position in the stratification system and sought solidarity with Arab nationalists. Lebanon became divided by two competing and opposing visions for the future of Lebanon: one particularist that promoted Lebanism and the other universalist that promoted Arabism.²² Conflict was written into the fabric of the new republic and is still prevalent today. By ascribing power to some sects over others, the racialization of sectarianism was encoded in law.

As sectarianism is a "culture" that was and continues to be produced, Lebanon's state system follows politics of cultural pluralism. The major categories of differentiation in a culturally plural system are grouped as ethnic, "race," religion, and region.²³ Ethnic commonality can include language, territory, political unit, or common cultural values or symbols.²⁴ It could be argued that much of the Arab world shares ethnic commonality, however Lebanese nationalists see themselves as having a Phoenician ethnicity distinct from the Arabs. The "race"

¹⁹ Marger, *Race and Ethnic Relations*, 37.

²⁰ Marger, *Race and Ethnic Relations*, 58, 108.

²¹ Marger, *Race and Ethnic Relations*, 109.

²² Hovsepian, "State-Society Relations," 35.

²³ Young, *Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, 47.

²⁴ Young, *Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, 48.

category of cultural pluralism descends as a “legacy of stereotypes developed by the Europeans in the age of expansion of Europe to world domination.”²⁵ As I’ve argued, “race” constructs began to be engrained in Lebanese society through the racialized divide of Christian and Muslim imported from Europe, as well as racial constructs imagined through Ottoman condescension. The religion category points to the significant ability of all religions to offer both a world view and a social identity, including ceremonies which constantly reaffirm the identity, differentiation from other religious groups, and a system of symbols.²⁶ The politicization of religious differences in Lebanon have further created distinct identities. Finally, the category of region marks identity through a shared and special history, ecological structure, and an already established tradition of administration.²⁷ Regionalism is notable due to the French decision to combine five different provinces when creating the borders of Greater Lebanon, putting together different regions with different histories, ecologies, and existing political structures. While these markers of identity are dynamic and their relation to the political system is constantly in flux, it is important to understand them in order to realize the tangible effects of a state system that politicizes those identities to allocate society’s resources. The tensions created by the convergence of the rational instruments of a nation-state and the primordial/particularistic ties of a pluralistic society,²⁸ which Samir Khalaf titles “Lebanon’s predicament,” is evident in the electoral laws. Since the Lebanese independence the electoral laws have changed nine times for fourteen different parliamentary elections, always regarded as a failure due to the impossible task the laws are meant to achieve: satisfying the two often contradictory forms of representation promised by the Constitution—equal representation of all Lebanese citizens and equal

²⁵ Young, *Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, 49.

²⁶ Young, *Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, 51.

²⁷ Young, *Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, 64.

²⁸ Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, 17.

representation of Muslim and Christian religions while “fairly” representing the different Lebanese sects.²⁹ The result has been the prioritization of confessional representations at the expense of its citizens, ultimately deepening the institutional sectarian divide; citizens only have a voice through their sects’ elite, and non-citizens are unable to participate at all. The confessional system of cultural pluralism in Lebanon has not only highlighted difference between communities, but it has also augmented the disparities between them, and ultimately institutionalized racialization processes within the state; racialization became a self-imposed process.

This paper responds to Ramon Grosfoguel’s call for moving beyond the study of racism that is exclusively defined by colorism,³⁰ focusing on other markers of “race” such as ethnicity, language, culture, and religion. Racialization in Lebanon shares a similar history with the emergence of sectarianism; though racialization is a distinct political system, it often overlaps with the culture of sectarianism. Both racial categories and sectarianism emerge as a result of Mount Lebanon’s modern turn in the 19th century, which produced differentiation along both religious and racial lines. The key difference is the influence of racialization creating a stratified system that allocates resources unequally, turning those sects into “races.” Those racial categorizations were supported by Orientalist discourse in Europe transmitted through colonial ideology and by the imperial condescension of the Ottoman Empire. Within the chronotope of 19th century Ottoman Lebanon, a model of racial triangulation (a theoretical model coined by Claire Jean Kim that describes racialization not as a single hierarchy but as a field of racial

²⁹ Elie Al-Hindy, "The Dilemma of Human Rights in Lebanese Electoral Laws," *Working Paper Series 21* (American University of Beirut, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2014), 4.

³⁰ William I. Robinson, "Introduction: Globalization and Race in World Capitalism," *Journal of World-Systems Research* 22.1 (2016): 6.

positions produced in relation to each other) could be applied, placing the European as the dominant power in a modern, liberal dynamic that valorize the white “race,” who racialize the Ottoman Oriental Other who in turn racializes the un-modern Lebanese. After the advent of the Tanzimat, the definition of Ottomanism was in flux, and Lebanon became more deeply divided, showing a shift in the racial categories. The Ottoman is still the Oriental Other in relation to Europe, while the Maronite Lebanese rise to a position of relative valorization over the Druze and Muslim Lebanese. Those racial categories determining the allocation of resources are constantly changing with imagined and fluid borders, proven by the “races” joining together during class struggles and their shared suffering during World War I and the famine.

Melissa Weiner, in her article "Towards a Critical Global Race Theory" which also works toward applying critical race theory in a global context, has usefully compiled ten indicators of racialization that can be applied in any manifestation of racializing mechanism. The indicators summarize what was previously historicized and also provide a jumping point for future work in analyzing racialization in the modern Lebanese context. They are titled as follows: citizenship laws; state control; external ascription and boundary permeability (analyzing who exerts power to categorize and enforce those categories); criminalization; geography and/or spatial segregation; socioeconomic status; popular and political discourse and images (to identify racial master narratives); daily interactions, experiences, and cognition (micro-level phenomena such as discrimination and double consciousness); international racialized relationships, and anti-racist efforts.³¹ The social and political change the both sparked and was produced by the Lebanese Civil War would make the mid-to-late 20th century state of Lebanon a chronotope for future study of racialization in the region. For example, the Kataeb Party, having played a major

³¹ Melissa F. Weiner, "Towards a Critical Race Theory," *Sociology Compass* 6/4 (2012): 337-341.

role in the Civil War, was unified by the myth of a Phoenician ancestry unique to the Christian Lebanese which distinguish them from other Arabs, fueling their anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim violence. It is no surprise, then, that the Kataeb Party's leader Pierre Gemayel admired the "discipline and order" he witnessed on his 1936 trip to Nazi Germany, which inspired him to found the Party that same year to mobilize young Christians holding similarly racist ideology.³² The Palestinian camps, initially considered temporary refugee camps following the 1948 war, after suffering decades of disenfranchisement and the massacres of the Civil War, were transformed into "permanent slums and shantytowns."³³ Palestinians in Lebanon are denied citizenship, even if they were born in Lebanon, and are therefore racialized through enforced segregation, denial of civic participation and work opportunities, and racist discourse that permeates much of the Lebanese popular and political discourse.

Even contemporary Lebanon could potentially serve as a useful chronotope for future analysis of racialization. Following Weiner's 10 indicators of racialization could reveal that the influx of Syrian refugees may be a racialized population. Migrant workers who suffer from unfair work conditions and whose basic human rights are violated³⁴ may also be a racialized population in Lebanon. The trash crisis which reemerged over the last few years, serving as a location where the excesses of capitalism are made visible,³⁵ can be analyzed to identify which social classes of people, potentially which "races," are marked as disposable through their proximity to the waste piles. Further, the trash crisis, as it has over time overflowed those

³² Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2002), 65-66.

³³ Nubar Hovsepian, afterword to *The War on Lebanon: A Reader*, ed. Nubar Hovsepian (Northampton, Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press, 2008), 396.

³⁴ For example, see KAFA's campaign "Unseen Lives: Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon." <http://www.kafa.org.lb/kafa-news/6/unseen-lives-migrant-domestic-workers-in-lebanon>

³⁵ Michelle Yates, "The Human-As-Waste, the Labor Theory of Value and Disposability in Contemporary Capitalism," *Antipode* 43.5 (2011).

segregated regions within the small geographic space of Lebanon's borders, has affected nearly everyone in the state, showing again that racial categories are constantly being renegotiated through changing chronotopes. Racialization processes should be acknowledged and analyzed in order to imagine a future freed of those tools of oppression. Fanon and Du Bois have advocated for the academic's role in the fight: "to race these disciplines and make them take race seriously."³⁶ Shih concludes that while the racialized oppressed may have a certain epistemological privilege that makes them see racial oppression more clearly, "the moment the entire society notices race and shares in this epistemology is when race itself has become theory."³⁷ Part of that process involves the responsibility of the academic to recognize each chronotope of racialization in every corner of the world without delinking it from the total reality and historical consequences of the colonial turn and the modern world-system.

³⁶ Shih, "Comparative Racialization," 1360.

³⁷ Shih, "Comparative Racialization," 1360.

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