AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN THE PERIPHERY: (RE)PRODUCING LIFE IN LEBANON

by

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A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Center of Arab and Middle Eastern Studies
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon

July 2020

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

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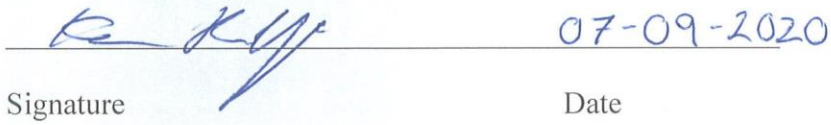

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the professors, students and people of the Department of Anthropology and CAMES, who I ended up having to split my time at AUB between; thank you for the support, debates, guidance, and insights which all have contributed to the formation of not only this thesis, but a range of invaluable thought processes, perspectives, and ideas that I will never forget. To my thesis advisor, Livia Wick; thank you for your support throughout my years at AUB, and for making me challenge and trust in my ideas as well as always stress the importance of well-being at the same time.

To my friends, comrades, and loved ones in Beirut and Copenhagen, but also beyond; I could not have done much of many life activities without your persistent presence, support, and emotional and intellectual involvement in my life, whether through online calls on questionable internet connections or by my side. All of you were always there regardless of these years' geographical split of my heart, and I thank you for that. To Maria, thank you for providing quick and valuable comments on the main arguments of this thesis. To Nadim, thank you for the endless support during the writing of this thesis as well as during its anxieties, and for the encouragement and love.

To my parents; thank you for always understanding, for your patience and endless support. It is always felt at any distance. To my sister, Marie; thank you for providing me with invaluable support and peace at all moments of life. I love you all.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Karen Ravn Vestergaard for Master of Arts

Major: Middle Eastern Studies

Title: Social Reproduction in the Periphery: (Re)Producing Life in Lebanon

Throughout different historical eras, women migrant domestic workers have been employed into private Lebanese households for at least a century to carry out daily care and housework for little (or no) pay. In this thesis, I seek to explore that situation through a critical analysis of the organization of domestic labor in Lebanon. Based on the Marxist-Feminist analytical concept of social reproduction, I analyze the modern configurations of domestic labor in households as constituted by larger market structures, and as positioned within social relations of (re)production on a local, regional and global scale. Accordingly, the analysis will examine the broader organization of "social reproduction" in Lebanon, meaning those processes and forms of labor needed for the daily and regenerative (re)production of life and labor power.

This thesis seeks to display that in the social and colonial formation of modern Lebanon, the centering of financial and trade interests in the political economy has simultaneously pushed the processes of social reproduction to a peripheral position with crucial consequences for the majority popular classes and social relations of (re)production. Such processes are visible through the long-lasting privatization of social welfare, in legislations on labor and family relations, (non-)citizenship laws, housing conditions, and in unequal access to reproductive autonomy and means of subsistence, particularly for women and those deemed non-citizens. It is shown that Lebanon as a financialized capitalist society, like elsewhere, results in an organization of social reproduction and domestic labor as both feminized, racialized, and either privatized or commodified. Hence, reproductive processes become a contested field of survival, dependent on people's structural position with regards to class, gender, citizenship, race, and sexuality, while enabling the political establishment to utilize social reproduction as a means to subordinate and gain political support.

By demonstrating the connections between global and local structures of feminized domestic labor, I show that such a configuration is co-constitutive of a large global labor force of temporarily employed (migrant) workers whose reproductive autonomy become significantly reduced to cut the costs of labor and (re)production in order to increase capital accumulation. As such, I argue that social reproduction in Lebanon appears to represent a rather permanent microcosm of current structures of social-reproductive conditions and crises on a global scale. In other words, I show that the organization of domestic labor and social reproduction in Lebanon ought to be perceived as directly structured by the capitalist mode of (re)production on all its various scales, especially in its current crisis-phase.

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INTRODUCTION

"They say it is love. We say it is unwaged work.
They call it frigidity. We call it absenteeism.
Every miscarriage is a work accident.
Homosexuality and heterosexuality are both working conditions ...
but homosexuality is workers' control of production, not the
end of work.
More smiles? More money. Nothing will be so powerful in destroying
the healing virtues of a smile.
Neuroses, suicides, desexualisation: occupational diseases of the
housewife." [1]
- Silvia Federici, "Wages Against Housework," 1975

"Let us (…) ask this of Marxism:
If workers' labor produces all the wealth in society,
who then produces the worker?"[2]
- Tithi Bhattacharya, 2017

A. Historical Context: Global Structures of Domestic Labor during the Neoliberal Era

Writing in 2016, feminist and political scholar Nancy Fraser intervened in public debates in the United States (U.S.) tackling what she altogether refers to as the "crisis of care," often "linked to ideas of 'time poverty', 'family-work balance', or 'social depletion.'"[3] While Fraser verifies the reality of a crisis of care, she argues that such a crisis ought to be understood from a much broader perspective: as a "crisis of *social*

[1] Silvia Federici, *Wages Against Housework* (Bristol, UK: Power of Women Collective / Falling Wall Press, 1975), 1, https://caringlabor.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/federici-wages-against-housework.pdf.
[2] Tithi Bhattacharya, ed., *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression* (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 1.
[3] Nancy Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," *New Left Review*, II, no. 100 (2016): 99–117.

reproduction."[4] Replacing "care" with "social reproduction" does not, to Fraser, imply downplaying the relevance of processes of "care" and care labor; rather, it expands what such a crisis in its entirety involves.

Fraser herself defines the processes of *social reproduction* as involving "a key set of social capacities: those available for birthing and raising children, caring for friends and family members, maintaining households and broader communities, and sustaining connections more generally."[5] Declaring that such manifold labor and processes historically have been cast as "women's work" and often remained unwaged, Fraser proceeds to argue that "the 'crisis of care' is best interpreted as a more or less acute expression of the social-reproductive contradictions of financialized capitalism."[6] Put differently, what Fraser seeks to expose is the following: the current crisis of care/social reproduction should be understood as currently intensified by the particular characteristics of contemporary (financialized) capitalism, while generally speaking the crisis-potentials of social reproduction "have deep systemic roots in the structure of our social order,"[7] that is, as part of a general (and permanent) crisis tendency of capitalism *per se*. Despite the cruciality of social reproduction for societies, the labor force, and capital accumulation, Fraser sees the social-reproductive crisis as ignored not only in intellectual debates on other current economic and ecological crises of capitalism but further—and paradoxically—undermined

[4] Fraser.
[5] Fraser, 99.
[6] Fraser, 99.
[7] Fraser, 100.

and directly destabilized by capitalism itself in its continuous orientation to unlimited accumulation.

If we are to proceed from Fraser's intervention, we might ask: what, in our social world, exactly constitutes not only the crisis, but generally this realm of "social reproduction?" Following Fraser's argument, it appears necessary to look at the totality of the contemporary form of capitalism to answer such a question. And she is not alone; particularly since the global feminist movements in the 1970s like "Wages for Housework,"[8] feminists in both intellectual and political work have increasingly turned their attention towards the political economy and social relations of (re)production to answer questions regarding structures of gender inequality and regimes of oppression. For "Wages for Housework" (co-founded by influential feminist thinkers like Silvia Federici), the struggle was perceived to be traced to the falsely binary, exploitative and gendered aspects of the capitalist divisions of labor between unrecognized/unwaged, naturalized domestic and reproductive labor (housework, child and elderly care, cleaning, etc.) primarily carried out by women in "private" households that remained separated (ideologically and politically) from labor carried out outside the home in what was imagined to be the actual "productive" sphere primarily by wage-earning male workers. The movements particularly pointed to the fact that the proclaimed "productive sphere" would not even be possible without the immense labor of social reproduction which

[8] For more information, see for example: Louise Toupin, "The History of the Wages for Housework Campaign," *Pluto Press* (blog), September 2018, https://www.plutobooks.com/blog/wages-housework-campaign-history/.

therefore served to be recognized, restructured, and waged, ultimately for the sake of eliminating the inherent oppressive regimes that the divisions of labor imposed.

The theoretical challenges to understandings of gender oppression and relations of labor that such movements represented have since been established as a key component of feminist thought. However, and leading back to the indications of Fraser's argument, such debates and struggles today have changed their character remarkably since the '70s according to changes in the global economy. What Fraser terms "financialized capitalism" is by many also referred to as *neoliberalism* that, as social reproduction scholar Sara Farris puts it, particularly works "as both a new political doctrine and organization of labor."[9] Scholars today widely agree that neoliberalism as the contemporary, hegemonic form of global capitalism has reigned since the 1970s and '80.[10] In response to the crisis of the '50s and '60s period of "embedded liberalism's" promises of growth through redistributive politics, controls of capital mobility, expanded public and welfare expenditures, and state interventions in the economy primarily in developed capitalist countries,[11] the last decades' robust neoliberal reorganization and financialization of the world economy was intended to expand capital accumulation in renewed ways and has especially taken the form of flows of capital, labor, and wages increasingly depending on global, cross-border movements.[12]

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[9] Sara Farris, "Neoliberalism, Migrant Women, and the Commodification of Care," *S&F Online*, no. 11.1-11.2 (Fall /Spring 2013 2012), https://sfonline.barnard.edu/gender-justice-and-neoliberal-transformations/neoliberalism-migrant-women-and-the-commodification-of-care/.

[10]See for example: David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Sara Farris, "Neoliberalism, Migrant Women, and the Commodification of Care."

[11] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 9–12.

[12] Susan Ferguson and David McNally, "Precarious Migrants: Gender, Race and the Social Reproduction of a Global Working Class," *Socialist Register* 51 (2015): 1–3.

Scholars furthermore often define the neoliberal era by increased processes of privatization, withdrawal of state-provisioned welfare, deregulation, liberalization of markets, financialization, and structural adjustment programs (often imposed as loan conditionality through international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in poor/developing capitalist countries).[13] The neoliberal reorganization of the global economy and labor has further resulted in an expansion of the formal labor force and a remarkable increase in international labor migration on a global scale.[14] David McNally and Susan Ferguson, writing on the contemporary structures of the "social reproduction of the global working class,"[15] argue that such processes ought to be understood as one of the main factors of an ongoing "massive expansion of the global labor reserve,"[16] referring to a growth in the large, global migrant labor force of temporarily employed that "constitutes a vulnerable and hyper-precarious section of the working class whose insecurity contributes to the lowering of general levels of real wages and job and social protections."[17] Supplementary to the hyper-precarious work conditions for migrant workers is strict border enforcements that deepen their conditions of "deportability," thus reinforcing racialized forms of precarity by making permanent their status as non-citizens nonetheless able to be recruited to work.[18]

[13] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2–3.
[14] Ferguson and McNally, "Precarious Migrants."
[15] Ferguson and McNally.
[16] Ferguson and McNally, 9.
[17] Ferguson and McNally, 5.
[18] Nicholas De Genova, "Spectacles of Migrant 'Illegality': The Scene of Exclusion, the Obscene of Inclusion," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 7 (2013): 1180–98.

Another crucial factor for the growth in labor migration is the concurrent transformation of millions of women into wage-earning migrant workers. Several scholars have termed this process the "feminization of international migration"[19] and perceive it, to a large degree, as an effect of the neoliberal era's increasing marketization and commodification of labor such as care and domestic labor,[20] or *reproductive labor*,[21] that historically otherwise have remained largely unwaged and treated as "non-social" labor activities, and often—repeating Fraser—perceived as a natural resource of "women's work" despite such labor's crucial role within the capitalist mode of production by (re)producing the worker and her labor power.[22] The markets for reproductive labor have grown expansively over the last decades and remain not only gendered by being mainly occupied by women, but further, they are deeply racialized. The commodification of processes of social reproduction is often linked to the neoliberal era's increase in withdrawals of public expenditure and cuts in, or privatization of, social and welfare services (largely implemented during the period of embedded liberalism)—mostly in the "Western center" (developed capitalist countries)[23]—where those have been otherwise intact, and as such has "devolve[d] the costs of social reproduction back to the working

[19] Sara Farris, "Neoliberalism, Migrant Women, and the Commodification of Care."

[20]It should be noted that—while it exceeds the scope of this thesis—the sex industry is another sector where migrant women remain largely overrepresented on a global scale. For more information, see: Rutvica Andrijasevic, *Migration, Agency and Citizenship in Sex Trafficking* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010); Elizabeth Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2007).

[21]For an elaboration on the term "reproductive labor," see: Celeste Murillo and Andrea D'Atri, "Producing and Reproducing: Capitalism's Dual Oppression of Women," *Left Voice*, September 11, 2018, http://www.leftvoice.org/on-reproductive-labor-wage-slavery-and-the-new-working-class.

[22] Maya Gonzalez and Jeanne Neton, "The Logic of Gender," *Endnotes*, September 2013, https://endnotes.org.uk/issues/3/en/endnotes-the-logic-of-gender.

[23]For an elaboration, see: Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

class."[24] Amongst other factors, the structural changes often accounted for such social-reproductive developments are the retreat of public expenditure in such sectors, the growth in women joining the formal labor market (thus constituting the modern ideal of the "two-earner family"[25]), declining birthrates, and a concurrent increasing number of elderly people.[26] Generally on a global scale, the neoliberal expansion of capital accumulation has forged processes of dispossession, privatization, and commodification to the front that inexhaustibly stretch into—and fragment—the organization, sustenance, and reproduction of yet millions of working class households, families, and communities; not least by increasingly relying on wage-earning family members' remittances sent from abroad.[27] If recurring to Fraser arguing that every form of capitalist society "harbors a deep-seated *social-reproductive* 'crisis tendency' or contradiction,"[28] Fraser particularly specifies that the current financialized form of capitalism constitutes a "new, dualized organization of social reproduction, commodified for those who can pay for it and privatized for those who cannot."[29] Not only do an increasing number of households depend on remittances for their livelihoods; they also either need to carry out more reproductive labor themselves or rely on low-paid migrant workers of social reproduction.

[24] Salar Mohandesi and Emma Teitelman, "Chapter 3: Without Reserves," in *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression* (London, U.K.: Pluto Press, 2017), 63.
[25] Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 104.
[26] Sara Farris, "Neoliberalism, Migrant Women, and the Commodification of Care."
[27] See for example: Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*, Book, Whole (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012); Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care."
[28] Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 100.
[29] Fraser, 104, 112.

Housework, or domestic labor, which the '70s feminist movements notably focused on, is no exception to such structural changes. Existing literature on the matter has especially paid attention to the neoliberal era's growing reliance on (mostly female) care and domestic workers migrating from "Third World" countries in the Periphery to households in the "West/"Center as a result of the last decades' neoliberal reorganization of the global economy. For example, amongst other aspects, the growth of European women entering the paid labor force is often linked to the simultaneous outsourcing of social-reproductive tasks, such as housework and care labor, to poor migrant women, and both processes seen as a result of "the global crisis of social reproduction."[30] However, the reliance on commodified domestic and care labor is no less visible for what concerns the "Rest"/developing populations (South and East Asia, Africa, South America, Middle East) despite obvious different structural conditions, not least since many countries here never experienced structures of embedded liberalism/welfare capitalism. Some literature has focused on the impacts of remittances sent to the workers' countries of origin as well as the collaboration between governments that increasingly since the '70s have been promoting migrant labor exportation, and specifically of women as migrant domestic workers, such as the large labor force of Filipina migrant domestic workers across the world.[31] However, the increasing employment of labor migrants and particularly female migrant domestic workers

[30]See: Sara Farris, "Social Reproduction, Surplus Populations and the Role of Migrant Women," *Viewpoint Magazine*, November 1, 2015, https://www.viewpointmag.com/2015/11/01/social-reproduction-and-surplus-populations/.

[31]See: Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work*, Second edition (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015).

also happen on a broad scale between and into different developing regions and countries in the Periphery.

The Middle East, or Arab, region is no exception; since the 70's oil boom/crisis and the nascent years of the neoliberal era, flows of non-Arab migrant labor into the region (in addition to intra-Arab labor migration) have accumulated and occupied large sectors in the Gulf states and, increasingly, in other countries of the region. The International Labor Organization recently estimated that 68.6 % of the total employment in the Arab states is informal or *informalized* (meaning employed in formal realms but de facto based on informal relations)[32] and, further, that the "proportion of migrant to local workers is amongst the highest in the world."[33] Migrant workers in the Arab region tend to mostly migrate from countries in South East Asia, East Asia, and Africa and a majority depend on a sponsor, usually the employer, concerning their legal stay and status due to the Kafala (sponsorship) system implemented in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates), Jordan, and Lebanon. The heavy reliance on migrant labor is further remarkable for the markets for domestic and care labor. While the Arab region is estimated to make a total 5 % of the world population, recent estimates suggest that up to 20 % of the world's total migrant domestic labor force is employed in Arab states.[34] Most domestic workers, almost always

[32] ILO, "Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture" (Geneva, 2018), 13, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_626831.pdf.
[33] International Labor Organization ILO, "Labour Migration (Arab States)," accessed April 17, 2020, https://www.ilo.org/beirut/areasofwork/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm.
[34] Sophia Kagan, "Domestic Workers and Employers in the Arab States: Promising Practices and Innovative Models for a Productive Working Relationship" (Beirut: International Labour Organization, 2017), 3,

female, are furthermore employed into private households as live-in workers under conditions that international as well as local organizations during the last decade continuously deem inhumane and highly exploitative. Despite such growing critical attention, the markets continue to remain and even grow; not least in the country of Lebanon.

B. Domestic Labor in Lebanon: An Overview

In Lebanon, a country of around 6 million inhabitants (including the many people with non-citizen status from within and outside the region), recent estimates suggest that 1 in 4 households have a migrant domestic worker employed.[35] The over 250,000[36] migrant domestic workers, of which a vast majority are women, today compose a category of workers who migrate to Lebanon (mainly from countries in South/East Asia and Africa) to perform domestic labor in private households, involving many different types of cleaning, caring, and cooking tasks. Generally, almost half of the total labor force in Lebanon is

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_619661.pdf.

[35] Ray Jureidini, "An Exploratory Study of Psychoanalytic and Social Factors in the Abuse of Migrant Domestic Workers by Female Employers in Lebanon" (Beirut, Lebanon: Kafa (enough) Violence & Exploitation, 2011), 22, https://civilsociety-centre.org/sites/default/files/resources/mdw-abuse-female-employers.pdf.

[36] ILO, "A Study of the Employers of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon: Intertwined" (Geneva, 2016), ix, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_524149.pdf.

estimated to be occupied by non-Lebanese and migrant labor primarily within the service and industrial sectors.[37]

While the labor force of domestic workers in Lebanon has grown extensively during the last decades, the presence of domestic workers in households upholds a long history that dates to at least the last century where employers of Lebanese middle and upper class households recruited workers—always a girl or woman—from within poor areas of the region and country, often to work for decades in the same household for little or no pay.[38] Such arrangements changed drastically during and after the '70s, and thus during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), where labor-importing companies started taking over the industry. Such companies, commonly also referred to as "recruitment agencies," today mediate the relation between the employer and employee and are part of a global industry of profit-making labor-importing agencies stationed in both sending- and receiving countries across the world.[39] The occurrence of agencies managing the industry in Lebanon caused an internationalization of the labor force, facilitated a more direct commodification/marketization of domestic labor, and a remarkable rise in households employing live-in domestic workers.

The industry works under the *Kafala* (sponsorship) system, a migrant labor-regulatory system that originated in the Gulf countries under the British colonial

[37] For more information on the current situation of migrant labor in Lebanon, see: Elisabeth Longuenesse and Paul Tabar, "Migrant Workers and Class Structure in Lebanon: Class, Race, Nationality and Gender," *HAL*, June 2014, 21.
[38] Ray Jureidini, "In the Shadows of Family Life: Toward a History of Domestic Service in Lebanon," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies (Indiana University Press)* 5, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 74–101.
[39]For more information, see: ILO, "A Study of the Employers of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon."

administration during the first half of the 20th century and spread across the region during the '70s.[40] Through this system, the migrant worker depends on a sponsor, who is usually the employer, to legally stay and work in the respective country at the expense of national labor rights and social protection, and as such facilitates deep conditions of "deportability" for the workers. While specific to the region, the conditions that the system facilitates serves as a prime example of the precarious conditions for the lives of millions of migrant workers around the world. In Lebanon, such conditions have contributed to domestic workers being highly dependent on their contracts through their sponsor which leaves them with almost no mobility. Some domestic workers work as freelancers, meaning they either have established arrangements with their sponsor/*kafeel* that allow them to work (and in some cases live) outside their employer's household, or are "runaways," that is, those workers who have escaped from their employer's household (almost always due to abuse and/or exploitation) and work illegally in the informal sector.[41]

Recent existing literature on the matter have particularly paid attention to the specificities of the living and working conditions for migrant domestic workers in Lebanese households governed by the Kafala system. As domestic workers specifically are exempted from the Lebanese Labor Law of 1946 in Article 7, they are until today left with no binding minimum wage nor formalized procedures to solve labor disputes and are further prohibited from unionizing. Several civil society organizations have reported migrant domestic

[40]See: Omar Hesham AlShehabi, "Policing Labour in Empire: The Modern Origins of the Kafala Sponsorship System in the Gulf Arab States," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, no. Journal Article (2019): 1–20, https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2019.1580183.

[41] Farah Kobaissy, "Navigating the Minefield of Power: Domestic Workers Labour Union Organising in Lebanon," *Civil Society Review*, no. 2 (2016): 5.

workers employed into households being subjected to numerous forms and degrees of (physical and mental) abuse and violence, frequent lack of paid wages and the withholding of the workers' passports, have exposed the high rate of deaths and suicides amongst domestic workers,[42] and have described the situation for the workers as involving "slave-like" conditions, e.g. "contract slavery" and "domestic servitude."[43] Additionally, several activist groups and civil society organizations have in recent years worked on community organizing among the workers and held campaigns for increased attention towards, as well as the improvement of, the conditions for domestic labor and migrant domestic workers.[44] These, among others, involve calls for reforming/abolishing the sponsorship system, the inclusion of domestic workers in the Labor Law, and the official recognition of the labor union for migrant domestic workers in Lebanon established in 2015 which the incessant exemption from the Labor Law prevents.[45]

[42]See: Human Rights Watch, "Lebanon: Migrant Domestic Workers Dying Every Week" (Beirut, Lebanon: Human Rights Watch, 2008), https://www.hrw.org/news/2008/08/26/lebanon-migrant-domestic-workers-dying-every-week.

[43]See: Ray Jureidini and Nayla Moukarbel, "Foreign Female Domestic Maids in Lebanon" (Beirut, Lebanon: The Lebanese NGO Forum, 2000), http://www.lnf.org.lb/migrationnetwork/mig6.html; Kathleen Hamill, "Trafficking of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon: A Legal Analysis" (Beirut, Lebanon: Kafa (enough) Violence & Exploitation, 2011), https://www.kafa.org.lb/sites/default/files/2018-12/PRpdf37.pdf; Jureidini, "An Exploratory Study of Psychoanalytic and Social Factors in the Abuse of Migrant Domestic Workers by Female Employers in Lebanon."

[44]See for example: Anti-Racism Movement, "'Migrant Domestic Workers' Community Organizing Within the Lebanese Socio-Legal Context: A Feminist Participatory Action Research Project" (Anti-Racism Movement, 2019), https://www.armlebanon.org/content/research-report-migrant-domestic-workers-community-organizing-lebanon.

[45] Human Rights Watch, "Lebanon: Recognize Domestic Workers Union" (Beirut, Lebanon: Human Rights Watch, 2015), https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/03/10/lebanon-recognize-domestic-workers-union.

C. Research Questions

The situation for migrant domestic workers in Lebanon has received remarkable public and academic attention compared to other countries in the region with similarly high numbers of live-in domestic workers. Literature and activism on the matter often mention the racialized structures that penetrate the Kafala system and the gendered aspect of the labor force of migrant domestic workers.[46] Scholarship on the subject further appears to apply an extensive focus on their contemporary working and living conditions[47] as well as networks and social relations between the workers and within households.[48]

However, analyses of the structural position of *domestic labor* within the larger Lebanese labor market/political economy as well as to global structures, flows, and divisions of labor, are rather sparse. Indeed, it is possible to argue for a tendency within current literature to contain the macro-level contextualization of domestic workers and migrant labor in Lebanon to a national level that privileges 'national' social relations (thus

[46]Refer to: Sumayya Kassamali, "Migrant Worker Lifeworlds of Beirut" (New York, Columbia University, 2017); Jureidini, "An Exploratory Study of Psychoanalytic and Social Factors in the Abuse of Migrant Domestic Workers by Female Employers in Lebanon"; "'Migrant Domestic Workers' Community Organizing Within the Lebanese Socio-Legal Context: A Feminist Participatory Action Research Project"; Amrita Pande, "'The Paper That You Have in Your Hand Is My Freedom': Migrant Domestic Work and the Sponsorship (Kafala) System in Lebanon," *International Migration Review* 47, no. 2 (2013): 414–41.

[47]Refer to: ILO, "A Study of the Working and Living Conditions of MDWs in Lebanon: "Intertwined: The Workers' Side"" (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2016), https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_524143.pdf.

[48] Refer to: Amrita Pande, "From 'Balcony Talk' and 'Practical Prayers' to Illegal Collectives: Migrant Domestic Workers and Meso-Level Resistances in Lebanon," *Gender and Society* 26, no. 3 (2012): 382–405; Lina Abu-Habib, "The Use and Abuse of Female Domestic Workers from Sri Lanka in Lebanon," *Gender & Development* 6, no. 1 (1998): 52–56, https://doi.org/10.1080/741922630; Jureidini, "In the Shadows of Family Life."

tending towards "methodological nationalism"[49]) and which, further, mostly account for the current sponsorship system as the main structural conditions for the workers. The effects of such restrictions are that the social reality of domestic labor is being treated as a rather isolated phenomenon, thereby avoiding understanding the situation for domestic workers with regards to its relations with flows and developments in the local and global labor force and market structures. Furthermore, by mainly emphasizing the sponsorship system as the structural background for the workers' conditions, many analyses fail to account for the broader structural conditions reinforcing the normalization of hiring live-in domestic workers in Lebanon that dates to before the introduction of the current sponsorship system.

This thesis, therefore, seeks to conduct a critical analysis of the situation of migrant domestic workers and domestic labor in Lebanon by applying the Marxist-Feminist theoretical and analytical concept of "social reproduction." Social reproduction as an analytical approach provides tools to analyze the *relationship* between various spheres of market relations rather than exposing their distinction. Emphasizing "labor of social reproduction"—the labor and processes needed for the (re)production of the labor force—otherwise vastly hidden in normative economic and political analyses, social reproduction analyses often look at relationships between (what ideologically is imagined and treated separately as) "reproductive" and "productive" labor, and thus for example between the household and the market.[50] Hence, *domestic labor* within this framework is treated as constituting social relations of labor and (re)production which serves particularly relevant

[49] Adam Hanieh, *Lineages of Revolt: Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013), 10.
[50] See: Bhattacharya, *Social Reproduction Theory*.

for the case of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. By applying such a framework to domestic labor in Lebanon, this thesis seeks to contribute to existing literature in two primary ways. First, by thoroughly examining the structural conditions that continuously lay grounds for the specific arrangement and normalization of live-in female domestic workers, and—in doing so—secondly by analyzing how the situation for domestic workers in Lebanon is constituted by conditions that exceed the scale of the Kafala system, thus exposing a novel contextualization for the labor force that can expand existing critiques. Applying social reproduction as a theoretical and analytical framework will, therefore, particularly unveil the indispensable entanglement of social relations in households (between the domestic worker and her employers) with social relations of (re)production and labor on a broader scale, both locally and globally. The main research question for this thesis is, therefore:

How is "social reproduction" in Lebanon organized, and how are the arrangements for domestic labor connected to the larger Lebanese and global labor market structures?

By posing such a question, this thesis seeks to examine the history and status of domestic workers in Lebanon categorized as both migrant and reproductive labor to interrogate the relationships between "reproductive"/"productive" labor and the household/market as mentioned above. It thus seeks to trace ideological distinctions between production/reproduction and separate spheres (public/private, market/non-market) in the Lebanese political economy (in relation to the global), class relations, and segmentation of the total labor force along lines of gender, but also of race, citizenship and

sexuality.[51] Analyzing the situation of migrant domestic workers and domestic labor in Lebanon as guided by the Marxist-Feminist social reproduction approach will furthermore direct the focus towards "social relations of (re)production in the wider network of the social whole."[52] This focus will lead this thesis' analysis towards inquiring into the historical development of the role of domestic workers in Lebanese households with regards to the changing and persistent conditions of domestic workers (such as the impact of the sponsorship system and domestic labor as waged/commodified), the role of the household in the market and society, and the organization of and legislation on labor, family relations, and citizenship.

This thesis ultimately seeks to discuss the scope of current scholarship on, and campaigns for, domestic labor and migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. In so doing, it seeks to contribute to existing literature with an original examination of the situation for migrant domestic workers in virtue of a critical analysis of social reproduction and domestic labor in Lebanon.

D. Marxist-Feminism and Social Reproduction

Based on this thesis' argument that an analysis of domestic labor in Lebanon and its entanglement with broader processes and social relations of labor and (re)production is

[51] Bhattacharya, 44–45.
[52] Bhattacharya, 3.

needed, it will primarily lean on the theoretical framework of "social reproduction" as presented within the Marxist-Feminist approach.

Marxist-Feminism is considered to stem from the urge to expand Marxist theory and analysis of the processes needed for the (re)production of labor power/the labor force. This framework particularly emphasizes how gender inequality and the binary gender relation is rooted in capitalist divisions of labor. More specifically, the focus has originally laid on the historical delegation of, mostly, unwaged domestic and reproductive labor to women in the fictitious "private sphere." The notion reproductive labor includes all manifold forms of housework, cleaning, care and affective labor activities necessary for the conditions of livelihood and the (re)production of the worker and her labor power.[53] This labor has also been termed "labor of social reproduction" and is today carried out and organized in a wide range of different forms and spheres throughout the world. Social reproduction theorist Tithi Bhattacharya defines the framework as altogether concerned with human labor dispensed to the sphere of "the production and reproduction of labor power" (the labor force) and this sphere's relationship to labor dispensed to the sphere of "the production of commodities" (goods and services).[54] Bhattacharya further defines these spheres as two separate spaces and processes of capitalist production that nonetheless are "united in both the theoretical and operational senses;" that is, as part of the production and

[53]For an elaborate example of the approach and theory, see the work of autonomist Marxist-Feminist Silvia Federici: Silvia Federici *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*, Book, Whole (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012); Silvia Federici, "The Reproduction of Labour-Power in the Global Economy, Marxist Theory and the Unfinished Feminist Revolution," *Caring Labor: An Archive* (blog), 2010, https://caringlabor.wordpress.com/2010/10/25/silvia-federici-the-reproduction-of-labour-power-in-the-global-economy-marxist-theory-and-the-unfinished-feminist-revolution/.

[54] Bhattacharya, *Social Reproduction Theory*, 13.

reproduction of society as a whole. In capitalist societies, the argument further entails the understanding of the two spheres as equally necessary and constitutive of the processes needed for the creation of surplus value.

Social reproduction theory thus opposes analyses extensively focusing on social relations of labor concerning commodity production by adding a focus on, as Susan Ferguson puts it, "the ways in which wider social reproduction of the system—that is the daily and generational reproductive labor that occurs in households, schools, hospitals, prisons, and so on—sustains the drive for accumulation."[55] Implied here is the argument that such labor is not only ignored analytically; it is further naturalized and devalued politically despite its indispensable role in the complex network that the systemic totality relies on.[56]

A question which scholars of social reproduction remain divided on concerns the proper approach to the question of whether labor dispensed to "the production and reproduction of labor power" generates (exchange) value in the same way as other forms of (most often waged) labor (such as industrial) is perceived to do in a Marxian sense. Scholars arguing that it does generate a value build the argument on the understanding of labor power as an exchangeable commodity, which is what reproductive labor and social reproduction "(re)produces," and its value determined by the *costs* of the labor processes

[55] Bhattacharya, 2.

[56]Found in Bhattacharya, 2.

needed for its existence.[57] Other scholars of social reproduction differ from that argument and instead claim that such labor rather only has its use value, as opposed to generating a direct exchange value, which is determined by the *labor time socially necessary* for its (re)production of labor power facilitated outside the "sphere of commodity production" (thus not value-generating in a Marxian sense).[58] A third position to the question upholds a somewhat mediating position by arguing that reproduction both operate in commodified/marketized forms as well as in a sphere not directly mediated by the market, but nonetheless indirectly hierarchized in various degrees by the demands of the capitalist mode of production.[59] From this perspective, the labor activities reproducing "the use value of labor power" (regardless of its form) is perceived as enveloping "the process of transforming dead labor, that is commodities purchased with the wage, into living labor capacity found in the market."[60] Such labor activities are further characterized by not necessarily being able to become subsumed/reduced in time (take childcare, for example) as other labor processes.

Despite such internal theoretical debates, it stands firm that using social reproduction as a theoretical framework involves the uncovering of the numerous forms of labor constituting the sphere of "the production and reproduction of labor power." Consequently, the separateness of the spheres in a spatial sense ought to be understood as

[57]For an elaboration of this argument, see for example: Silvia Federici, "Social Reproduction Theory: History, Issues and Present Challenges," *Radical Philosophy* 2, no. 4 (Spring 2019), https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/social-reproduction-theory-2.
[58]For an elaboration, see for example: Bhattacharya, *Social Reproduction Theory*, 7, 8–9.
[59]See: Gonzalez and Jeanne Neton, "The Logic of Gender: On the Separation of Spheres and the Process of Abjection."
[60] Gonzalez and Jeanne Neton, 7.

both changing and particular *historical forms of appearance* such as workplace and home, public and private, the economic and the social. As forms of appearance, they manifest themselves as ideological distinctions that nonetheless are intertwined. Social reproduction theory as a framework thereby proposes the analysis of labor in either of the spheres to "be analyzed integratively."[61] To offer a theoretical framework for the analysis of social relations of labor between both spheres has thus forged analytical terms like "market and extramarket relations" and "production and reproduction" to the front.

The motivational drive for social reproduction theory is simultaneously the understanding of different categories of oppression—gender, race, sexuality, ableism—as systematically related and co-produced with the production of surplus value, thus as part of the systemic totality.[62] Hence, oppression is analyzed in simultaneity with the analysis of class (i.e. exploitation), through labor and different market/social relations, within the systemic totality of the "two spheres." For example, unpaid housework—as many other aspects of the work of social reproduction—is understood to historically having been cast as women's work, and thus a crucial source to understanding the exploitation and oppression of women under capitalism. Paid domestic labor—understood as involving both house and care work as services—is within social reproduction theory understood as most often further involving oppressive mechanisms based on race and citizenship and further, depending on the employment conditions, as often grounded in master-servant relations.[63]

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[61] Bhattacharya, *Social Reproduction Theory*, 9.

[62] Bhattacharya, 3, 14.

[63] Carmen Teeply Hopkins, "Mostly Work, Little Play: Social Reproduction, Migration, and Paid Domestic Work in Montreal," in *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*, Tithi Bhattacharya (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 134–36.

Domestic labor and housework thus explicitly challenge ideological distinctions between workplace/home as elaborated by feminist scholars like Silvia Federici.[64]

Social reproduction theory, as presented by Marxist-Feminism, will provide relevant tools to the analysis of domestic labor in Lebanon and its connections with not only the general organization of the sphere of "social reproduction," but further with social relations of (re)production in the systemic totality on a local and global scale. It further proves useful for the effort to avoid isolating or narrowing analyses of the position of domestic workers in its insistence on carrying out analyses of labor in either of the spheres "integratively."

E. Method and Outline

In order to carry out an analysis of the connections between the organization of domestic labor in Lebanon with the broader divisions of labor and market structures, this thesis seeks to carry out a critical reading of literature on migrant domestic workers, the political economy, conditions for households/families, labor and citizenship, and welfare and social service structures in Lebanon. Leaning on the theoretical framework as described above, such a reading will be put in juxtaposition with the insights gained from Marxist-Feminism and social reproduction theory and thus particularly seeks to link structural conditions between a variety of different economic spheres, shifts, logics, and structures on a local and global scale. As such, I intend to carry out a critical reading of existing analyses

[64]Refer to: Silvia Federici, "Precarious Labor: A Feminist Viewpoint," *In the Middle of a Whirlwind* (blog), 2008, https://inthemiddleofthewhirlwind.wordpress.com/precarious-labor-a-feminist-viewpoint/.

of various aspects of the politico-economic arrangements in Lebanon—with an extensive focus on the sphere of "social reproduction"—while linking it to broader historically contingent processes.

This methodological approach stems from the theoretical framework of social reproduction. Bhattacharya defines social reproduction theory as both a theoretical framework and a *methodology* that provides a framework for the analysis of social realities within, and of, "the complex network of social processes and human relations that produces the conditions of existence for that entity."[65] On this point, social reproduction theory scholar Martha Giménez clarifies the Marxist roots of the framework when explaining that social realities should be investigated empirically through specific historical social relations and conditions while simultaneously—thus dialectically—theorized as a partial aspect, and concentration, of a complex totality.[66] The method, thereby, falls within the scope of the historical materialist approach "as, essentially, a method of analysis that applies itself to concrete historical situations."[67] The framework of social reproduction theory, in this way, uses historical materialism while expanding the focus on social/personal relations and "everyday life" in addition to the focus on the economy and material conditions implied in the approach. Its focus on political economy, in this way, has made some term the social reproduction approach a "feminist political economy approach."

[65] Bhattacharya, *Social Reproduction Theory*, 2.
[66] Martha E. Gimenez, "Capitalism and the Oppression of Women: Marx Revisited," *Science & Society* 69, no. 1 (January 2005): 15–17.
[67] Bhattacharya, *Social Reproduction Theory*, 20.

Building on such insights, this thesis takes domestic labor in Lebanon as a social reality in a concrete historical situation as its main scope of analysis. The thesis is built up through three chapters. In the first chapter, I present an overview of the "Domestic Labor Debate" that has been ongoing within Marxist-Feminism for several decades which particularly focuses on the conceptualization and organization of housework/domestic and reproductive labor within the political economy and capitalist society, and further involves still ongoing debates on the productive value of domestic and reproductive labor in a Marxian sense. This will be followed by an examination of the industry of mainly live-in domestic workers in Lebanon, and the chapter will proceed to discuss the political and ideological implications of the organization of (commodified/privatized) domestic labor in Lebanon in juxtaposition with the conceptual and political debates within Marxist-Feminism.

The second chapter of this thesis will proceed to analyze the broader social and political-economic context of domestic labor in the modern history of Lebanon, and as such carry out critical readings and original comparisons of existing literature on: the principal logics behind and modern history of the Lebanese political economy, structures of privatized welfare and social services, divisions of labor, the role of the (sectarian) state and class relations, the (para/non-state) organization and legislations on family relations and (non-/)citizenship, access to reproductive justice, and household conditions. It is as such in this chapter that I will present an analysis of the organization of "social reproduction" in Lebanon as structured by, as well as structuring, the political economy and everyday social relations of (re)production for the majority classes.

The final chapter will collide the various analyses of the previous chapters and carry out an overall analysis of the discursive implications of the organization and structural conditions of social reproduction, domestic labor, and domestic workers in Lebanon. It will compare the results with existing literature on the subject to suggest alternative approaches to the struggle for better conditions for social reproduction, livelihood and for domestic workers. Furthermore, this chapter will connect the overall analysis to present contexts and impacts of the financial and economic crisis that Lebanon is currently facing, the ongoing uprising, and challenges stemming from the global COVID-19 pandemic. As will be described, the current crisis phase of Lebanon and globally poses instant challenges as well as confirms overall structures of domestic labor.

CHAPTER I

DOMESTIC LABOR IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

"The social organization under which the people of a historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by the stage of development of labour, on the one hand, and of the family on the other."[68]

– Friedrich Engels, 1884

Housework, in all its various formations, has long upheld a contradictory and complex status—both within the everyday workings of households and families, as well as within political and intellectual debates on its contribution to the political economy and general reproduction of society and life under capitalism. Involving anything from child/elderly/sick/community care, cooking, cleaning, and biological procreation, housework—or domestic labor as it has come to be called—refers to those manifold labor processes needed for the daily and repetitive production and reproduction of humans and workers' livelihoods.[69] In her recent book on reproductive politics in the U.S., feminist critic Laura Briggs claims that when "we talk about the economy, we are talking about reproductive politics, because families and households are where we live our economic

[68] Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publ. House, 1972), 71–72.

[69] See for example: Diemut Elisabet Bubeck, "The Domestic Labour Debate," in *Care, Gender, and Justice* (Oxford University Press, 1995), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198279907.001.0001; Lise Vogel, "Domestic Labor Revisited," *Science & Society* 2, no. 64 (Summer 2000): 151–70; Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*.

situation,"[70] while social reproduction theorist Claudia Von Werlhof often appears in literature on the matter with her famous quote: "Once we have understood housework, we will understand the economy."[71] The following section will provide an overview of the origins and developments of the theoretical discussions that occurred, and still today flourish, from debates on housework and other such labor activities; particularly within what has come to be known as Marxist-Feminism.

A. The Origins of the Family and (of) Marxist-Feminism

In his major work "Capital" and extensive focus on social relations of the production of commodities under capitalism, Karl Marx referred several times to the processes of the "reproduction" of "social reality,"[72] but only noticed reproductive/housework processes as the overall necessary "means of subsistence" for the worker along with the conversion of those means into *labor power*.[73] He writes: "The labour-time requisite for the production of labour-power reduces itself to that necessary for the production of [its] means of subsistence."[74] But, as Maya Gonzalez and Jeanne Neton recently have written, "a cart full of "means of subsistence" does not produce labour power as a ready-made commodity."[75] In other words, the activities and living labor necessary for

[70] Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics: From Welfare Reform to Foreclosure to Trump*, 1st ed., vol. 2 (University of California Press, 2017), 4.
[71]As quoted in: Toupin, "The History of the Wages for Housework Campaign."
[72] Gonzalez and Jeanne Neton, "The Logic of Gender: On the Separation of Spheres and the Process of Abjection," 3.
[73]See: Karl Marx, *Capital*, Translated by Ben Fowkes, vol. I (London: Penguin Books, 1976), 274–76.
[74]As correctly quoted in: Gonzalez and Jeanne Neton, "The Logic of Gender: On the Separation of Spheres and the Process of Abjection," 6.
[75] Gonzalez and Jeanne Neton, 6.

the (re)production of labor power (apart from the "raw materials" needed) are not accounted for in Marx's overall framework for the workings of capitalism.

While labor power—particularly in its function as a commodity—serves as one of the cornerstones of Marx's overall theory of capitalism, the incompleteness of a thorough theorization from Marx and Marxists of the specific processes and labor needed for the daily (re)production of workers and their labor power has motivated a wide array of theoretical works mainly by Marxist-Feminists seeking to expand and include such processes into the main framework of Marxist critiques of capitalist political economy. In her decade-long and wide array of works on the topic, Silvia Federici has consistently pointed out the usefulness and simultaneous limitations of Marx's work and the Marxist tradition with regards to the (re)production of labor power and gender relations under capitalism. In an article named "Marx and Feminism" from 2018, Federici writes on the subject:

> "Marx acknowledges that labour-power, our capacity to work, is not a given. Being daily consumed in the work-process, it must be continuously (re)produced, and this (re)production is as essential to the valorisation of capital as "the cleaning of machinery" (Marx 1867, 718), for it is the production of the capitalists' most precious means of production: the worker itself. However, he places its realisation solely within the circuit of commodity production. The workers – Marx imagines – use their wages to buy the necessities of life – and by consuming them they reproduce themselves. In other words, the production of labour-power, the production of the worker, is accomplished through the consumption of commodities produced by waged workers. […] At no point in Capital does Marx recognise that the reproduction of labour-power entails women's unpaid domestic work – to prepare food, wash clothes, raise children, make love. On the contrary, he insists on portraying the waged worker as self-reproducing."[76]

[76] Silvia Federici, "Marx and Feminism," *TripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society* 16, no. 2 (2018): 470.

Like many others, Federici grounds her own work in the critique of Marx (and other critical scholars of political economy) for carrying out an exclusive focus on waged industrial labor/workers in the analysis of capitalist class and social relations that, thereby, ignores the complex collection of labor processes needed for labor power to exist. As Federici points out in the above, the ignorance of such processes further results in the omission of how capitalist divisions of labor are, amongst other structures, highly *gendered*, and thus a crucial (if not determinate) factor for the oppression of women under capitalism. Federici is particularly known for her reinterpretation of Marx's notion of the violent processes of "primitive accumulation," expanding the notion to cover not only the colonization and expropriation of workers' lands and means of reproducing/sustaining, but further the expropriation of women's *bodies* that transformed women's labor and their reproductive function into "a machine for the production of new workers." To Federici, this resulted in the structural degradation and subordination of women to men in the social/sexual divisions of labor under capitalism.[77] And, unlike Marx who predicted that processes of primitive accumulation would "recede with the maturing of capitalist relations,"[78] Federici consistently argues how such processes unceasingly return in "every phase of capitalist globalization" and, thus, sees the degradation of women along with other processes of primitive accumulation as a "necessary condition for the existence of capitalism in all times."[79]

[77] Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*, 1st ed. (New York: Autonomedia, 2004), 12.
[78] Federici, 12.
[79] Federici, 12–13.

While the limitations of Marx's work have served as a crucial factor for the development of Marxist-Feminist thought, Friedrich Engels' book "The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State" from 1884—which he developed over some of Marx's unfinished work after his decease—has highly influenced the same body of literature with its focus on the material conditions for women's subordination under capitalism.[80] In doing this, Engels asserts the importance of the production and reproduction of life, as he writes:

> "The determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, itself is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species."[81]

Writing on the impact of Engels' overall contribution, Martha Giménez lays out what she sees as two major theoretical and methodological guidelines for Marxist-Feminism in Engels' work: first, his statement on the "twofold character" of the mode of production as, respectively, one of the production of "the means of existence" and one of "human beings themselves,"[82] and secondly, his claim that "the oppression of women emerges, historically, with the development of class society."[83] While the former argument of Engels has received critiques from some Marxist-Feminists like Lise Vogel for obliquely representing a "dual

[80]See: Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*; Janet Sayers, Mary Evans, and Nanneke Redclift, *Engels Revisited: New Feminist Essays* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987).
[81] Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, 70.
[82]See: Engels, 71.
[83] Martha Giménez, "Marxist and Non-Marxist Elements in Engels' Views on the Oppression of Women," in *Engels Revisited: New Feminist Essays*, Janet Sayers, Mary Evans&Nanneke Redclift (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987), 38–39.

systems perspective"[84] on the different modes of production and on patriarchy and capitalism as distinct systems and, further, for not adequately elaborating on the relationship between the two supposed modes of production,[85] Engels' latter statement on the oppression of women as instituted by class relations still serves as a useful example for the historical and political perspective on gender inequality under capitalism and its origins. Giménez provides a delicate summary of Engels' overall argument:

> "Changes in material conditions making possible the accumulation of surplus wealth lead to the development of social classes and, concomitantly, to the development of the monogamous family, the privatization of household labour, and the transformation of women from respected and acknowledged contributors to communal welfare to domestic servants of their families. This drastic change is institutionalized through the replacement of matrilineal by patrilineal descent ensuring the inheritance of wealth by men's direct heirs: their children. Monogamy and the sexual repression of women to guarantee the legitimacy of heirs are the essence of this change which symbolized, for Engels, the 'world historical defeat of the female sex' (Engels 1884:120)."[86]

Engels' contribution is thus, first and foremost, his historical reading of gender inequality that particularly pays attention to changes in the organization of the family and the household, and of novel modes of production (and thus new class and social relations) that occurred with the invention of private property and the accumulation of surplus value in the nascent stages of capitalism. Giménez further defends Engels' idea of a "twofold" mode of production by presenting his argument as based on the Marxist premise of historical materialism, meaning that it should be interpreted as the nature of production's "most fundamental moments or aspects" that dialectically, and thus simultaneously, exist at a

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[84]See: Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women - Toward a Unitary Theory* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

[85] Giménez, "Marxist and Non-Marxist Elements in Engels' Views on the Oppression of Women," 40.

[86] Giménez, 39.

"metatheoretical" level, while "their mode of articulation in concrete instances, however, varies historically, according to the specific characteristics of different modes of production."[87] While defending Engels' general analysis, Giménez buttresses the existing critiques by arguing that the way Engels poses the problem of the oppression of women "as that of one sex oppressing and exploiting the other is misleading because it transforms the problem of sexual inequality into an ahistorical battle between the sexes."[88] This critique is further visible in current Marxist-Feminist literature and social reproduction analyses, for example by those who seek to display how capitalist social relations in various ways reinforce and constitute different forms of oppression (such as race and sexuality) to thereby provide a more complex, dynamic, and historically specific approach to the relationship between gender and class.[89]

Despite such critiques—which nonetheless have served as a crucial point of departure for the theoretical body of Marxist-Feminism—Engels' extensive work on the family and households as crucial aspects of the general structure of societies and the economy still echoes in most literature on the matter. During the 1960s and '70s, the women liberationist struggles inspired a wide set of writings today commonly referred to as the "Domestic Labor Debate" that particularly sought to theorize the status of housework, childcare and other activities performed in households primarily by women.[90] Overall, the debate carried on Engels' project of seeking to explore the relationship between housework

[87] Giménez, 38–40.
[88] Giménez, 44–45.
[89]See for example: Bhattacharya, *Social Reproduction Theory*.
[90] Vogel, "Domestic Labor Revisited," 152–53.

and capitalism, or between domestic labor and the market economy. By conceptualizing the household as a site of production, questions particularly occurred on the character of domestic labor in a Marxian sense; did it produce a surplus value, or did it rather uphold a use value? The question was, and still is, specifically relevant within Marxist theory due to its classic understanding of labor productive of value as predominantly central to the workings of capitalism and class relations. Federici, along with other autonomist feminist Marxists like Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James[91] have long claimed the position of defending housework/domestic labor as productive of surplus value in arguing that it produces the commodity *labor power*—and thus the labor force—as such. The radical autonomist feminist Marxist tradition, generally, stems from the attempt to oppose Marxist Autonomists perceiving the ongoing restructuring of the global economy as a step towards the autonomization of labor and the rise of "cognitive capitalism."[92] Instead, as explained by Federici, they argue that the restructuring of the global economy more adequately should be perceived as an attack on our basic means of production, the land, the house, and the wage with the aim of expanding the global labor force and reducing the cost of labor, while still highly depend on human labor.[93] Specifically on the question of reproductive labor as surplus value producing, Federici sums up her argument by describing the capitalist system as:

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[91]See for example: Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, 3rd ed. (Bristol, UK: Falling Wall Press, 1975).

[92] George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici, "Notes on the Edu–Factory and Cognitive Capitalism," *Transversal* (blog), May 2007, https://transversal.at/transversal/0809/caffentzisfederici/en.

[93] Silvia Federici, "On Primitive Accumulation, Globalization and Reproduction," *FRIKTION*, September 2017, https://friktionmagasin.dk/on-primitive-accumulation-globalization-and-reproduction-c299e08c3693?gi=13e1c51559aa.

> "a social system that does not recognize the production and reproduction of the workers as a socio-economic activity, and a source of capital accumulation, but mystifies it instead as a natural resource or a personal service, while profiting from the wageless condition of the labor involved."[94]

Here, Federici particularly uses the difference between waged and unwaged labor to explicate what she understands as the fundamental condition for the sexual divisions of labor under capitalism that subordinate women and institute their unpaid domestic labor as a "pillar upon which the exploitation of waged workers, "wage slavery," has been built, and the secret of its productivity."[95] In many ways, the Domestic Labor Debate circulated around the same question: how might labor processes like those involved in domestic labor be theorized from—and included within—a Marxist perspective, given that much of such labor remain unwaged and, as such, largely uncounted for in analyses of capitalist production processes? However, some feminist scholars have critiqued the theoretical question in itself for not taking into account the many forms that domestic labor has taken in different historical moments of capitalism, for example as carried out outside the household as waged or performed by other workers than domesticized and wageless women, or "housewives." For example, Susan Ferguson writes that:

> "labor's daily and generational renewal […] finds ways to organize historically specific embodied subjects — differently gendered and racialized subjects — in and through hierarchically and oppressively structured institutions and practices, such as private households, welfare states, slavery, and global labour markets."[96]

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[94] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*, 8.

[95] Federici, 8.

[96] Susan Ferguson, "A Response To Meg Luxton's 'Marxist Feminism and Anticapitalism,'" *Studies in Political Economy* 94, no. 1 (2014): 165.

Such critiques complicated and exhausted the ongoing debates as they sparked even further inquiries, for example which kinds of reproductive labor activities should be reconceptualized as labor productive of value—was gathering water for subsistence or child care also commodity-producing, and if so, for whom; who was the direct consumer?[97] Some Marxist-Feminists (like Vogel and Ferguson, for example) preferred to avoid the tendency to perceive domestic and reproductive labor activities as directly "productive" with the intention to transcend such terms by introducing new ones, such as "socially necessary labor." These intended reconceptualizations of reproductive labor lean on a broader argument buttressed by Paul Smith who claims that unpaid domestic labor as "the reproduction of labor power takes places outside the capitalist mode of production"[98] and, as such, is not directly affected by changes in the market price of labor power.[99] Other scholars engaged in the debate, like Gonzalez and Neton, have suggested to conceptualize and distinguish unwaged and waged labor as being treated as either "social" (commodified) or "non-social" (naturalized) labor, thus both part of the capitalist mode of production but differentiated in the organization of dual "productive/reproductive" spheres as *gendered* "whose dissociation is necessary to make the production of value possible."[100]

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[97] Vogel, "Domestic Labor Revisited," 153.

[98] Paul Smith, "Domestic Labour and Marx's Theory of Value," in *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production*, Annette Kuhn&AnnMarie Wolpe (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 215.

[99]For an elaboration of this position in the debate, see for example: Smith, "Domestic Labour and Marx's Theory of Value"; Teeply Hopkins, "Mostly Work, Little Play: Social Reproduction, Migration, and Paid Domestic Work in Montreal," 133–35; Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women - Toward a Unitary Theory*.

[100] Gonzalez and Jeanne Neton, "The Logic of Gender: On the Separation of Spheres and the Process of Abjection," 8–10, 14–15.

Regardless of such unresolved intellectual disputes over the proper theoretical framework for the analysis of "reproductive labor" and the housework/market-relationship, the Domestic Labor Debate came to lay grounds for what today popularly is known as *social reproduction theory* that, in its most broad definitions, appears to comfortably resonate with several, if not all, of the theoretically different positions described above, by focusing on both "the reproduction of life and capitalist relations *at once*; that is, of both laborers and labor power."[101] Alongside others, Federici argues in an article from 2019[102] that social reproduction theory today involves so many different political approaches to the question of the role and understanding of "social reproduction" that claiming to "look at social reality from this viewpoint *is not in itself to take a Marxist or a radical stand generally speaking."*[103] Even within the Marxist-Feminist approach to social reproduction, the debates on whether to perceive reproductive labor as productive of surplus value or not are still intact. On this note, social reproduction scholar Alessandra Mezzadri—building on approaches similar to Federici's—argues that it is misleading to claim that realms of social reproduction are a distinct category from the capitalist mode of production when particularly looking at "the Rest" (as opposed to "the West"), meaning the majority developing world in the Periphery.[104] Mezzadri argues that the widespread and high levels of informal and precarious employment of peoples here directly affect the reproduction of such informal workers' livelihoods and households, thus depicting the conflation of false

[101] Alessandra Mezzadri, "On the Value of Social Reproduction: Informal Labour, the Majority World and the Need for Inclusive Theories and Politics," *Radical Philosophy*, no. 204 (2019): 37.
[102] Federici, "Social Reproduction Theory: History, Issues and Present Challenges."
[103] Federici.
[104] Mezzadri, "On the Value of Social Reproduction: Informal Labour, the Majority World and the Need for Inclusive Theories and Politics."

distinctions between production/"work" and social reproduction/"life," and instead sees social reproduction as subject to the laws of value.[105] She writes:

> "While in the West the externalization of costs of social reproduction has been explained in terms of a crisis of care or crisis of social reproduction more broadly, in contexts that neither experienced the welfare state nor its disciplining role on capital, this externalization can be better understood as directly serving the purpose of shaping the capitalist relation in ways that impose unpaid, wageless work and life as a direct subsidy to production. Again, the effect is one in which exploitation rates can be expanded, through a cut in wages and social contributions, with losses naturalized and internalized by the laboring poor and their social and economic networks."[106]

In other words, Mezzadri seeks to argue that *the costs of labor* is what defines value under capitalism rather than the wage, as other Marxists and Marxist-Feminists tend to argue.[107] Furthermore, Mezzadri points out the argument's relevance in light of the current, global neoliberal era wherein levels of precarity and informality have increased and "have found new channels of transmission" that are "systematically continuing to reproduce labor as a highly precarious relation" in particularly developing regions, but increasingly also in developed contexts.[108] Federici, in agreeing with Mezzadri's claim, adds that "to deny the productivity of unpaid work activities is to assume that much of the world population is irrelevant to capital accumulation, which means that it cannot make the claim that the wealth that capitalism produces is also the fruit of its labour."[109] On a similar note, social reproduction scholar Rada Katsarova has argued that, particularly in our current times,

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[105] Mezzadri, 39.
[106] Mezzadri, 38.
[107] Mezzadri, 36.
[108] Mezzadri, 37–38.
[109] Federici, "Social Reproduction Theory: History, Issues and Present Challenges," 56.

"infrastructures of access to social services and social-reproductive needs have been turned into coercive instruments of dispossession and racialization."[110] Such current structures have made Federici recently call for "the reclamation and commoning of the means of reproduction," expanding the reproductive sphere to involve all *means* for the (re)production of life including, for example, access to lands and water, which is similar to such arguments from within ecofeminism.[111]

Despite continuous internal disagreements, the overall Marxist-Feminist framework nonetheless provides useful tools to investigate domestic labor and other processes of the "social reproduction" sphere as a social reality integrated in, and constituting, the global political economy. The following section will provide an overview of the history as well as contemporary structures of domestic labor and domestic workers in Lebanon and beyond.

B. Servants of Domestic Labor: Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanese Households and Beyond

Unpaid domestic labor carried out by women, often as "housewives," in privatized family households were set as the primary point of inquiry for Marxist-Feminism and the Domestic Labor Debate to locate the source of the oppression of women under capitalism. However, critics have pointed to the limits of such a scope as mostly directly applicable to

[110] Rada Katsarova, "Repression and Resistance on the Terrain of Social Reproduction: Historical Trajectories, Contemporary Openings," *Viewpoint Magazine*, no. 5 (2015), https://www.viewpointmag.com/2015/10/31/repression-and-resistance-on-the-terrain-of-social-reproduction-historical-trajectories-contemporary-openings/.

[111] See: Silvia Federici, *Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons* (Oakland, California: PM Press, 2019); Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (Halifax NS: Fernwood Publications, 1993).

white middle-class women's realities as it particularly failed to take into account the "empirical reality that Black women, immigrant women, and poor women have been engaged in paid market work in large numbers for many decades."[112] Furthermore, several aspects of the last decades' reorganization of the world economy and global labor force have further challenged the groundworks of the '70s debates, particularly—as put by social reproduction scholar Mignon Duffy—the "increasing numbers of women in the paid labor force and the heightened visibility of the role of paid workers in reproductive labor."[113] Such critiques have since been incorporated into much of the literature, not least concerning paid domestic workers; Angela Davis' seminal piece, "Woman, Race and Class" from 1981 provided the lucid example of the many Black women in the U.S. who performed household labor as wage labor for *other* households (those of wealthy white families), and thus elucidated the complex relations between gender, class, *and* race.[114]

Paid domestic labor—carried out by workers in roles like servants (often enslaved), nannies, butlers, gardeners, freelance cleaners, or live-in domestic workers—has for long composed a theoretical and political challenge to understandings of labor relations of social reproduction.[115] As much as it has been researched and proved that much labor of social reproduction remains unwaged, naturalized, and based on binary and oppressive gender

[112] Mignon Duffy, "Doing the Dirty Work: Gender, Race, and Reproductive Labor in Historical Perspective," *Gender and Society* 21, no. 3 (2007): 314.
[113] Duffy, 315.
[114]See: Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class*, 1st ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1983); David McNally, "Intersections and Dialectics: Critical Reconstructions and Social Reproduction Theory," in *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*, Edited by Tithi Bhattacharya (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 109–10.
[115] Raffaella Sarti, "Historians, Social Scientists, Servants, and Domestic Workers: Fifty Years of Research on Domestic and Care Work," *International Review of Social History* 59, no. 2 (2014): 279–314.

ideals, history shows that domestic and care labor, particularly, have seen various configurations throughout time in both colonized and imperial contexts of the world. Creating what Maria Mies calls processes of "'housewifization' as the flip side of colonialism,"[116] the capitalist family ideal—based on the centuries-old idea of separate, gendered "domestic/market spheres"—has instigated domestic labor being carried out by unwaged women of the family, but also as carried out by waged (usually female) workers, particularly as some form of servitude. The specific organization of domestic labor is as such tied to the historically different formations of capitalist societies.

Nancy Fraser has famously drawn differences between the organization of social reproduction according to the different historically specific configurations of capitalist society which she, amongst other aspects, sees as linked to changing ideals of the role of the family and, concurrently, changing imaginaries of the ideologically separated spheres.[117] Specifically, Fraser draws differences between what she perceives as three major regimes of "social reproduction-cum-economic production in capitalism's history:"[118] the regime of liberal competitive capitalism during the 19th century, state-managed capitalism during the 20th century, and finally the current regime of financialized capitalism.[119] To Fraser, the social-reproductive conditions for these three regimes have taken different institutional forms and "normative orders:" the first capitalist regime elaborated ideals of the "separate spheres" along with the "bourgeois imaginary of domesticity" and women's

[116] Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, Third (London: Zed Books, 2014), 74.
[117] Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 103–4.
[118] Fraser, 103.
[119] Fraser, 103–4.

place within that, while it simultaneously left workers and their families to reproduce themselves singlehandedly both in light of colonial expropriation in the periphery and industrial exploitation in the "European core." The second regime's social-reproductive conditions differed from such structures as a consequence of the forces pushing for "large-scale industrial production and domestic consumerism"[120] while continuing colonial and post-colonial expropriation in the periphery. Effectively, significant aspects of social reproduction began to be managed by states supplemented with "corporate provision of social welfare"[121] and instituted a renewed family ideal based on the concept of "the family wage," though mostly achievable for wealthy households. Lastly, Fraser characterizes the current globalizing and financialized regime of capitalism with the centrality of debt as a measure to lower wages and enable/pressure states to enforce austerity measures, the relocation of manufacturing to low-wage regions (outsourcing), the entrance of women to the paid labor force, and the externalization and disinvestment in social welfare and care work. In other words, workers and their families are bound to perform reproductive labor themselves or buy it off in marketized forms. The current regime's family ideal has, as a result, changed to that of the "two-earner family."[122]

Departing from Fraser's general interpretation of the different capitalist regimes of social-reproductive conditions, the organization of domestic labor and its workers have changed in both unprecedented manners and in accordance with such historical developments. In an elaborate account of research on "domestic servants" throughout

[120] Fraser, 104.
[121] Fraser, 104.
[122] Fraser, 104.

global modern history, historian Raffaella Sarti shows that most research assumed the decline and, ultimately, disappearance of traditional live-in "domestic servants" working in households, particularly as a result of the 20th century regime of state-managed capitalism.[123] The employment of domestic workers was for long particularly associated with the master/servant relationship within the household and was especially sharpened within colonial contexts with race and ethnicity elaborating the unequal household relationship, by servants being non-white and their employers white colonizers.[124] Wealthy households in many European societies similarly often employed, almost always young female, domestic servants up until the 19th century.[125] Research on the matter has often counted for what was seen as a "class divide between mistress and maid" but simultaneously noted the "common female oppression in patriarchal households," referring to the sexist subordination of both the housewife and the female domestic worker to the "domestic sphere."[126] Due to the surge in structural changes of states taking over some aspects of the organization of social reproductive tasks, industrialization, and forces struggling against colonial structures, many scholars expected the employment of domestic servants to vanish and deemed such arrangements inappropriate for "modernity."[127] However, paid domestic labor and live-in domestic service have not disappeared; on the contrary, they have experienced a growth globally and a revival both based on older

[123] Sarti, "Historians, Social Scientists, Servants, and Domestic Workers: Fifty Years of Research on Domestic and Care Work," 284.
[124] Sarti, 295–96.
[125] Madeline Zilfi, "Servants, Slaves, and the Domestic Order in the Ottoman Middle East," *Hawwa - Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World/BRILL* 2, no. 1 (2004): 25.
[126] Sarti, "Historians, Social Scientists, Servants, and Domestic Workers: Fifty Years of Research on Domestic and Care Work," 295.
[127] Sarti, 298, 307.

versions associated with domestic slavery and renewed forms of the labor relation.[128] Accordingly, new concepts such as "global care chains" and "transnational motherhood" have emerged to particularly explain the "international division of reproductive labor"[129] and global dimension of today's labor force of domestic workers that leave many workers to support not only the household they serve, but further the family and household they have left behind through remittances.[130] Furthermore, and as previously mentioned, current global structures of paid domestic labor confirm their continuous gendered and racialized structures; as in the current situation of domestic workers in Lebanon.

In Lebanon, despite a dearth of official data on the matter, the domestic service economy has an equally long and rather persistent history. Sociologist Ray Jureidini provides the earliest account within scholarly research on female live-in domestic workers carrying out care and housework in Lebanese households which dates to 1905.[131] However, literature on the widespread use of servants and enslaved workers, also within households, during the broader Arab region's Ottoman era (14th – early 20th century) suggests that they most probably uphold an even longer history.[132] Historian Madeline Zilfi, while not particularly elaborating on the area of today's Lebanon, describes domestic household

[128] Sarti, 300.
[129] Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work*, 29, 41.
[130] Arlie Russell Hochschild, "Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value," in *Justice, Politics, and the Family*, Daniel Engster&Tamara Metz (London: Routledge, 2015), 130–46; Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work*.
[131] Jureidini, "In the Shadows of Family Life," 82.
[132] Zilfi, "Servants, Slaves, and the Domestic Order in the Ottoman Middle East," 11–13.

structures in the region during the (both early-modern and modern) Ottoman period as first and foremost structured along the lines of being "women's place" and domestic labor "women's work," too.[133] Generically, Zilfi writes, women's "daily activities belonged to the contractual exchange of marriage: husbands provided for their wives' upkeep, and wives "kept" house and were sexually available,"[134] while more specifically on the issue of housework, Zilfi describes that among "other ambiguities of domestic work, women's housework, regardless of how arduous, time-consuming, or gainful, was not traditionally classified as work. The literature of practical ethics […] assures us that women's domestic work was inseparable from wifely and womanly duty."[135] Comparing the early-modern and modern discourse on "the domestic," Zilfi proceeds to argue that such structures of domestic labor "highlights the old divide between household work on the one hand, and wage-earning, market-oriented production, "true" work […] on the other hand" in a Marxian sense.[136] Furthermore, Zilfi elaborates on the normalized presence of young, female live-in domestic workers within middle and upper class households in the region in various forms and numbers, often children as urban migrants or kin-relatives of the effective householder, who were at the absolute "bottom of the wage scale" compared to any other worker in the region, including other forms of (male) "servants"/workers employed into households.[137] Live-in domestic workers, being on call day and night, were highly reliant on their employers, "as on parents, for food, shelter, and protection," and

[133] Zilfi, 11–13.
[134] Zilfi, 13.
[135] Zilfi, 12–13.
[136] Zilfi, 13.
[137] Zilfi, 13, 15–16.

Zilfi further insists on the modern period's continuity of how such patriarchal controls "were woven into the fabric of domestic service as they were in the pre-modern family."[138]

Effectively, Zilfi argues that the structures and devaluation of domestic labor as well as the limitation of women and, thus, often female domestic workers to the "domestic sphere" in many ways were similar to such gendered structures of the "domestic" that developed throughout Europe, particularly during the period of what Fraser terms the "regime of liberal competitive capitalism."[139] However, what does appear to differ from such structural developments in Europe, argues Zilfi, was the rather persistent pattern of feminized slavery particularly in the form of female workers as "servants" in the "domestic sphere" in the Arab region well into the late 19th century that—despite recent growth and recurrences in renewed forms—in comparison saw decreases in the European context. Zilfi, therefore, concludes that "in the Middle East, the persistence of slavery into the late nineteenth century as a predominantly female and domestic labor institution added a distinctive element to the nature of domestic labor and women's role within it."[140]

Despite having undergone significant structural changes, live-in domestic workers have remained a consistent component of many Lebanese households throughout the last century. In his historical account of domestic service in (what today is known as) Lebanon since the early 20th century, Jureidini describes the arrangements for live-in domestic workers in middle and upper class families up until the beginning of the Lebanese Civil

[138] Zilfi, 18.
[139] Zilfi, 25, 28.
[140] Zilfi, 1.

War (1975-1990) as characterized by child labor; the workers being young, always female and often staying within the employing family's household for decades and sometimes even a lifetime.[141] Households recruited workers on their own from families in poorer areas of the country and the broader nearby regional area and was thus characterized by interregional, internal, and rural-urban migration.[142] Domestic workers in Lebanese households were usually of Palestinian, Kurdish, Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, or (in some cases) Ethiopian origins.[143] Remarkable for this organization of domestic service was, further, that domestic workers' salaries either were handed to their parents or that workers worked without receiving salaries; instead, Jureidini explains, the labor relation (which in many instances also involved the worker's family) was rather based on a "patron-client relationship" where workers, especially in the case of being kin-related to the employing household, "were often treated as adopted daughters, being cared for, socialized, and educated until they were married off"[144] (for those who had such an opportunity). Such arrangements were further visible throughout the broader region in the previous century, as illustrated by Zilfi.[145] Jureidini argues that these structures reproduced household relations "of servitude in terms of both gender and class or social status."[146] While data and research on the labor force of domestic workers in Lebanon from the first half of the 20th century is lacking, their presence did become officially "recognized" in the Lebanese Labor Law of

[141] Jureidini, "In the Shadows of Family Life," 77–78, 81–82.
[142] Jureidini, 76.
[143] Jureidini, 77, 80.
[144] Jureidini, 77.
[145] Zilfi, "Servants, Slaves, and the Domestic Order in the Ottoman Middle East," 17.
[146] Jureidini, "In the Shadows of Family Life," 78.

1946 by being exempted from its scope of application in its Article 7, amongst other categories, as "domestic servants employed in private houses."[147] Some scholars, comparing this exclusion to similar laws in Egypt, have argued that "domestic work is explicitly excluded because it is classified as a 'personal' relationship, not as an employment relationship."[148] Still intact today, this exclusion in practice means, among other aspects, that domestic workers are prohibited from unionizing, bereft of basic labor rights and the Lebanese minimum wage, and have no access to proper legal recourse for solving labor disputes. In other words, domestic labor appears to be treated as "non-social" labor in both its commodified and privatized form.

Concurrently with the nascent years of the neoliberal restructuring of the world economy, the domestic service economy in Lebanon changed significantly when the Lebanese Civil War arose during the '70s. The employment of local and Arab domestic workers was brought to a halt (much due to the exodus of such workers as a consequence of the war) but rather than vanishing, the gap was replaced with the entrance of migrant workers recruited from countries primarily in South East Asia following similar developments in the Gulf countries. In the beginning of this development, domestic workers primarily migrated from Sri Lanka and later on the Philippines and Ethiopia whose governments to different degrees agreed upon such arrangements due to remittances from the workers that assisted their struggling local economies.[149] Such agreements have later on

[147] Alix Nasri and Wissam Tannous, "Access to Justice for Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon" (Geneva: International Labour Organization, Caritas Lebanon, 2014), 17, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_395802.pdf.
[148] Mary Romero, Valerie Preston, and Wenona Giles, eds., *When Care Work Goes Global: Locating the Social Relations of Domestic Work* (London: Routledge, 2016), 96.
[149] Jureidini, "In the Shadows of Family Life," 80.

proved to be a source of disputes over issues of, for example, government and travel fees, workers' protection, minimum wages, and rights, which have led to significant nationality differences in the fees attached to the recruitment of a migrant domestic worker to Lebanon and her expected salary. Some cases of disputes (often concerning breaches of agreements and cases of abuse) have led countries to ban domestic labor migration to Lebanon, leading to illegalized channels and routes for the continuous recruitment processes.[150] The option to employ workers from outside the region was facilitated by the emergence of labor importing companies, also called "recruitment agencies;" the first agency for Sri Lankan workers in Lebanon noted in literature dates to 1978 during the nascent years of the Civil War.[151] Such companies operating in the private sector today constitute a wide-ranging global industry profiting on the continuous growth in international labor migration during the current, global neoliberal era. While official data on such developments in the domestic service economy in Lebanon are sparse (to say the least), it is evident that the internationalization of paid domestic labor has been persistent ever since. The involvement of "agencies" with connections in the various sending-countries instigated the introduction of more formal contractual terms for domestic workers in terms of the need for work/residency permits; permits which the employer was (and still is) solely responsible for due to the concurrent introduction of the Kafala (sponsorship) system regulating foreign migrant labor still intact until today.[152] The Kafala system functions as the legal framework for most migrant and foreign workers generally speaking in Lebanon, as well as in Jordan

[150] ILO, "A Study of the Employers of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon," 17–18.
[151] Jureidini and Moukarbel, "Foreign Female Domestic Maids in Lebanon."
[152] Pande, "'The Paper That You Have in Your Hand Is My Freedom': Migrant Domestic Work and the Sponsorship (Kafala) System in Lebanon," 417–18.

and the GCC countries. However, scholars and civil society organizations have argued that the system rather should be understood as a "regulatory procedural mechanism" as it, in reality, does not secure any basic labor or human rights—which the exclusion of domestic workers from the Lebanese Labor Law (1946) further confirms.[153] Sociologist Amrita Pande, writing on migrant domestic workers in Lebanon, argues that the Kafala system's delegation of responsibility for migrant domestic workers onto the (most often female) employer in the household makes the private employer the mediator between the state and domestic workers and, as such, "absolves the host government from providing the worker any kind of labor protection."[154] The system, similar to other such "guest worker migration programs" throughout the world, further reinforces the temporary, deportable and disposable nature of migrant workers, making their position particularly precarious as a form of "included exclusion."[155]

Ever since the internationalization of the labor force of domestic workers, the number of Lebanese households relying on and employing domestic workers have increased significantly, particularly since the '90s. While the variations of the workers' different African and South/East Asian nationalities continue to multiply, the feminization of the labor is continuous.[156] The most typical labor activities for migrant domestic workers

[153] "'Migrant Domestic Workers' Community Organizing Within the Lebanese Socio-Legal Context: A Feminist Participatory Action Research Project," 10.
[154] Pande, "'The Paper That You Have in Your Hand Is My Freedom': Migrant Domestic Work and the Sponsorship (Kafala) System in Lebanon," 417–18.
[155] Pande, 418; De Genova, "Spectacles of Migrant 'Illegality': The Scene of Exclusion, the Obscene of Inclusion," 9–10.
[156]See: Pande, "'The Paper That You Have in Your Hand Is My Freedom': Migrant Domestic Work and the Sponsorship (Kafala) System in Lebanon"; ILO, "A Study of the Working and Living Conditions of MDWs

in Lebanese households involve cleaning, food preparation, and cooking tasks as well as child and elderly care, including taking children to and from school, and to a lesser degree taking care of people with disabilities or sicknesses, gardening, and animal care.[157] Estimates based on data registering granted work permits suggest that more than 250,000 migrant domestic workers currently work and reside in Lebanon, while the actual numbers probably remain much higher due to many workers who work without or after expired work permits (often due to having fled abusive conditions in domestic confinement), either as freelance domestic workers (not tied to a specific household) or in other occupations at the informal labor market.[158] Historian Fawwaz Traboulsi has recently termed the current organization of the domestic service economy in Lebanon a form of "commodity-type exploitation." In doing so, Traboulsi particularly refers to the role of the more than 500 agencies[159] in the country that, while "paying some 35,000 thousand dollars to the state to secure permission to import 150 employees each, per year," reciprocally receive, for example, "1,000 dollars for bringing in a Sri Lankan maid and 2,000 dollars for every Filipino."[160] To Traboulsi, the commodity-type exploitation within the industry for migrant domestic workers especially expresses itself in the "initial three month period when the maid is "sponsored" by the agency, during which the householder can exchange "the

in Lebanon: "Intertwined: The Workers' Side""; Hamill, "Trafficking of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon: A Legal Analysis."

[157] ILO, "A Study of the Working and Living Conditions of MDWs in Lebanon: "Intertwined: The Workers' Side"," 17.

[158] ILO, "A Study of the Employers of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon."

[159] ILO, 14.

[160] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *Social Classes and Political Power in Lebanon* (Beirut, Lebanon: Heinrich Boell Foundation - Middle East, 2014), 60, https://lb.boell.org/en/2014/05/04/social-classes-and-political-power-lebanon.

goods" if unsatisfactory."[161] As such, the commodification of domestic labor in Lebanon appears to define its value from the costs tied to the domestic worker in question, making her labor power purely "abstract" with crucial consequences for her rights and daily life, as we shall see.

Analogous to the increase in numbers of migrant domestic workers as well as the internationalization and heightened commodification of the labor force, literature on the matter has similarly grown during the last few decades. Both scholars, international and local organizations, and news media sources have, to various degrees, attempted to draw increased attention to multiple aspects of the situation for migrant domestic workers in Lebanon: to cases of abuse, lack of basic rights, limitations of movement, suicides and deaths among domestic workers,[162] and generally the workers' challenging working and living conditions that especially stem from the restriction to the household they are employed into as both their space of work and home. To complement such critiques and the dearth in data, the International Labor Organization (ILO) published a report in 2016 with a detailed account of the working and living conditions for migrant domestic workers based on a broad questionnaire among migrant domestic workers in the areas of Beirut and Mount Lebanon.[163] Amongst several aspects, it is shown that migrant domestic workers are "relatively young (average age 29),"[164] and that they "earn an average salary of 180 USD

[161] Traboulsi, 60–61.
[162] Alice Su, "Slave Labour? Death Rate Doubles for Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon," *The New Humanitarian*, May 15, 2017, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/feature/2017/05/15/slave-labour-death-rate-doubles-migrant-domestic-workers-lebanon.
[163] ILO, "A Study of the Working and Living Conditions of MDWs in Lebanon: "Intertwined: The Workers' Side"."
[164] ILO, 6.

with significant inter-nationality discrepancies"[165] (thus way below the Lebanese minimum wage as most other foreign/migrant workers on temporary employment/residency in the country). Of those salaries—if paid, domestic workers send "three quarters of their salaries to their home countries."[166] The report further shows that "half of the MDWs [migrant domestic workers, ed.] complained that their papers were held against their wishes."[167] Other significant conditions for domestic workers in Lebanon that have drawn attention regard occasional withholding of salaries and severe lack of daily breaks and weekly days off even though the contracts that agencies provide assures both as their rights; contracts which, according to ILO's report, only "60 % reported having been able to read and understand."[168] Furthermore, only half of the interviewees reported having their own sleeping quarters in the household they work for.[169] Pande additionally draws attention to the regulation of pregnancy concerning women migrant workers in the Arab region and specifies that Lebanese legislation "asserts that should a migrant domestic worker fall pregnant while in Lebanon, she must immediately return to her country of origin."[170] In other words, the tight control of, as well as depleted conditions for, domestic workers' daily lives, means of subsistence, and their social-reproductive strategies and autonomy proves to be rather normalized. Such conditions are just a sample of what literature and reports have exposed recently, and what have led several organizations and scholars to claim

[165] ILO, 19.
[166] ILO, 35.
[167] ILO, 22.
[168] ILO, 18.
[169] ILO, 27.
[170] Pande, "'The Paper That You Have in Your Hand Is My Freedom': Migrant Domestic Work and the Sponsorship (Kafala) System in Lebanon," 418.

resemblances between the working and living conditions for migrant domestic workers in Lebanon with notions of "trafficking," "servitude," "bonded/forced labor" and "modern slavery."[171]

Literature on migrant domestic workers in Lebanon has, furthermore, particularly focused on the social relations within households between the employees and the employer, particularly the relationship between the female employer ("housewife"/"Madame") and domestic worker, and has sought to show how such relationships reproduce and replicate abusive and authoritative positions with specific regards to racist structures in Lebanese society and the socio-legal framework concerning foreign and migrant workers.[172] Other research has sought to map the survival strategies and community organizing amongst domestic workers in the networks they create despite difficult and isolated living and working conditions.[173] This latter focus particularly stems from recent years' activism and civil society work on the matter. The last decade has, for example, seen the foundation of a labor union for migrant domestic workers in 2015 as the first of its kind in the entire Arab region, though still not officially recognized due to the continuous exemption of domestic workers from the Lebanese Labor Law prohibiting their unionization. Recent years have further experienced the establishment of local organizations such as Kafa in 2015 that

[171]See for example: Hamill, "Trafficking of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon: A Legal Analysis"; Jureidini and Moukarbel, "Foreign Female Domestic Maids in Lebanon."
[172]See: Jureidini, "An Exploratory Study of Psychoanalytic and Social Factors in the Abuse of Migrant Domestic Workers by Female Employers in Lebanon."
[173]See: Pande, "From 'Balcony Talk' and 'Practical Prayers' to Illegal Collectives: Migrant Domestic Workers and Meso-Level Resistances in Lebanon"; Micheline Kamil Ziadee, "Migrant Infrastructures in Beirut" (Beirut, Lebanon, American University of Beirut, 2017); "'Migrant Domestic Workers' Community Organizing Within the Lebanese Socio-Legal Context: A Feminist Participatory Action Research Project."

target legal patriarchal structures discriminating against women and particularly migrant domestic workers, and the Anti-Racism Movement (ARM) in 2010 and the Migrant Community Center (MCC) in 2011, alongside a variety of self-organized support networks and organizations for domestic workers.[174] Especially ARM and MCC have since their establishments organized multiple events, campaigns, and projects with the aim of empowering migrant domestic workers in Lebanon, critiquing the Kafala system and migrant workers' living and working conditions, and enhancing their options for community organizing.[175]

Another aspect to the situation of migrant domestic workers which literature has vastly extended its focus on are the characteristics of the employers of migrant domestic workers in Lebanese households. In his research, Jureidini categorizes the typical household employer's social status before the Civil War as aligned with middle and upper class social positions and most often organized in terms of the woman/housewife staying in the household rather than as employed in a wage-earning occupation.[176] He further argues that this pattern to a certain extent continued even during and after the increasing employment of domestic workers since the '70s. More specifically, Jureidini points out that despite growth in the rate of female participation in the formal (waged) Lebanese labor force that "increased by 50 % between the 1960s and 1975," other more recent numbers

[174] Mouna Maaroufi and Neva Löw, "Challenging Infrastructures of Domestic Labor: Implications for Labor Organizing in Lebanon and Belgium," *Journal of Labor and Society* 22, no. 4 (2019): 864; "'Migrant Domestic Workers' Community Organizing Within the Lebanese Socio-Legal Context: A Feminist Participatory Action Research Project."
[175] See: Maaroufi and Löw, "Challenging Infrastructures of Domestic Labor: Implications for Labor Organizing in Lebanon and Belgium"; Traboulsi, *Social Classes and Political Power in Lebanon*, 61.
[176] Jureidini, "In the Shadows of Family Life," 90–91.

show that the total rate of female participation in waged labor "had only increased to around 20 % by 2005," and that between 2005-06, "only 29 % of the female employers of migrant domestic workers were in the workforce"[177] (meaning the formal waged labor force). In other words, Jureidini's argument proves to align with the ideal of women's "domesticity" as a persistent pattern. Other more recent numbers, however, challenge such an argument: in the abovementioned study by the ILO in 2016, it is shown that of the female employers of migrant domestic workers who participated in the survey, 53 % occupy either full-time or part-time waged occupations.[178] This number significantly differs from the national rate of female participation in the formal labor force estimated to be around 20 %. At the same time, the numbers also show that "around half of the Lebanese households in the sample can afford to employ a domestic worker without the added income of a working spouse."[179] Other research mentioning current demographics of employers of migrant domestic workers generally (still) categorize them as belonging to middle and upper class positions of Lebanese society, where domestic workers with higher fees attached to their recruitment and employment (such as Filipino workers) often are employed into wealthier households and, hence, workers with less expensive fees attached usually are employed by less wealthier families.[180]

[177] Jureidini, 91.
[178] ILO, "A Study of the Working and Living Conditions of MDWs in Lebanon: "Intertwined: The Workers' Side"," 27.
[179] ILO, 27.
[180]See: "'Migrant Domestic Workers' Community Organizing Within the Lebanese Socio-Legal Context: A Feminist Participatory Action Research Project," 17; ILO, "A Study of the Employers of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon."

Such indications of the demographics of employers connote with several of the theoretical notions of the organizations of domestic labor, especially with family ideals based on "the family wage," and more currently also the "two-earner family." The organization of domestic labor in Lebanon further appears to fall along the lines of a larger social-reproductive sphere through the persistent patterns of feminized domestic servitude, ideologically separated gendered "spheres," and the creation of the "domestic" treated as involving personal, "non-market" social relations. It is furthermore evident that the feminization and racialization of domestic labor as commodified service is no exception in the case of Lebanon. In other words, it appears to have followed the global increase in precarious, international labor migration and the concurrent increasing commodification of feminized domestic and care labor since the '70s, leading to a continuous devaluation of the labor and of domestic workers, both in terms of their working, living, and social-reproductive conditions.

However, to adequately analyze the specific set of structural conditions reproducing the persistent normalization of hiring live-in domestic workers in Lebanese households as a particular configuration of domestic labor throughout the last century, a fuller picture of the organization of "social reproduction" in Lebanon is indeed needed. Based on the insights presented in this chapter, the following chapter will carry out an analysis of the broader social-reproductive conditions within the arrangements of the Lebanese political economy. It will do so with specific regards to its implications for social relations of (re)production concerning class, gender, race, citizenship, and sexuality, and more particularly through an analysis of the organization of social welfare and services, citizenship and family relations,

access to reproductive justice,[181] and household conditions as both constituted by local and global changing historical conditions.

[181]The concept of "reproductive justice" is overall concerned with the individual's right to personal bodily autonomy in safe environments/communities, and will be elaborated in the third section of Chapter II. For references, see: Loretta J. Ross, "Understanding Reproductive Justice" (Atlanta: SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health, May 2006), https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/rrfp/pages/33/attachments/original/1456425809/Understanding_RJ_Sistersong.pdf?1456425809.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN THE SHADOWS OF THE LEBANESE ECONOMY

"There is a continuity, in fact, between the devaluation of the reproduction of labor power that takes place in the home and the devaluation of the labor employed in the many plantations that capitalism has constructed in the regions it has colonized, as well as in the heartlands of industrialization.

In both cases, not only have the forms of work and coercion involved been naturalized, but both have become part of a global assembly line designed to cut the cost of reproducing the waged workers.

On this line, the unpaid domestic labor ascribed to women as their natural destiny joins with and relays the work of millions of campesinas, subsistence farmers, and informal laborers, growing and producing for a pittance the commodities that waged workers consume or providing at the lowest cost the services their reproduction requires."[182]
- Silvia Federici, 2019

As argued in the former chapter, the organization of domestic labor in Lebanon appears to share certain global structural conditions with the organization and devaluation of reproductive labor and the creation and feminization of the "domestic sphere." However, the rather persistent position of live-in female domestic workers in Lebanese households throughout the last century concurrently speaks to the existence of distinctive features of politico-economic arrangements in a local sense. This chapter seeks to present an overview

[182] Federici, *Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*, 156.

of relevant literature and research on such arrangements in Lebanon with a particular focus on the organization of central aspects of social reproduction, such as social welfare and family and citizen legislations. It will do so as it pursues of an overview of relevant, critical literature/research on the modern history of the Lebanese political economy and class relations as the broader context, which especially needs to be understood in its geopolitical position in the global economy.

A. The Lebanese Political Economy: Trade Markets in the Center, Social Reproduction in the Periphery

Most historians and scholars agree that the modern history of the political economy in Lebanon first and foremost deserves to be understood from the impact of external dominating powers.[183] Up until the country of Greater Lebanon was established under the French Mandate in 1920, the equivalent area was—as the rest of the Arab region—ruled by the Ottoman Empire, with the exception of the territory of Mount Lebanon that had achieved semi-autonomous status through interferences of European foreign powers since

[183]For examples of such accounts, see the works of: Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007); Traboulsi, *Social Classes and Political Power in Lebanon*; Joseph Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God* (London: Pluto Press, 2016); Carolyn Gates, *The Historical Role of Political Economy in the Development of Modern Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1989); Toufic K Gaspard, *A Political Economy of Lebanon, 1948-2002: The Limits of Laissez-Faire* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004); Ussama Samir Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); Melani Claire Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2014); Costas Lapavitsas, Lebanon is a severe case of subordinate financialization that must avoid the IMF, interview by Jude Kadri, Monthly Review, March 6, 2020, https://mronline.org/2020/03/06/lebanon-is-a-severe-case-of-subordinate-financialization-that-must-avoid-the-imf/.

1860[184] and which, while having transformed into a Christian-Druze 'mixed region,' de facto was ruled by (what had come to be) the Maronite/Christian majority after fierce battles.[185] Primarily constituted by France and England, the European powers' heightened interest in the area of Lebanon particularly stemmed from the geostrategic location of Beirut as a "bridgehead" to gain control and access markets in the region. As their interests especially focused on the expanding markets in Syria and as well as in Beirut/Mount Lebanon (particularly due to the Maronites' development of silk and other commercial and financial production[186]), Fawwaz Traboulsi writes that the "Beirut-Damascus axis became the main avenue of international trade in the eastern Mediterranean."[187] The establishment of new routes for international trade through Beirut strengthened by the European colonial powers collided with the simultaneous and gradual demise of the Ottoman Empire during the end of the 19th century. The Ottoman Empire gradually failed to uphold its power due to increasing colonial dependency and penetration of European capital, and after several failing modernizing attempts it suffered its ultimate defeat in 1920 after World War I.[188] Immediately falling under French occupation alongside with Syria (controlled as one economic unit), Greater Lebanon brought together seventeen religious groupings that were divided into different sects.

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[184] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 42–43; Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 9.

[185]For elaborate accounts and debates on the specific events and battles in Mount Lebanon up until 1860 that ultimately led to the foundations of the sectarian political system, see: Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*; Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 3–40.

[186] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 19.

[187] Traboulsi, 52.

[188] Traboulsi, 52–54; Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 9.

The French Mandate upheld close alliances with the Christian bourgeoisie within the Maronite population, who in return earned privileged positions in the trade structures and within the novel political establishment strategically based on sectarian patterns of rule (as already exemplified in the relationship between the Druze and Maronites in Mount Lebanon).[189] The French Mandate, in lines with the interest of European capitalism, further strengthened the role of Beirut already in place as the regional hub for international import, foreign trade, and as the main gate to the Syrian markets (chiefly intermediated by the Maronite population of Mount Lebanon) and ascribed a central role to the tertiary sector of finance and banking, tourism, and service.[190] The new trade routes facilitated import/export both ways, though throughout the development of trade in Beirut, "import exceeded export by a factor of three."[191] As a result of its new defining role, the city of Beirut experienced rapid urban development with a growing population, not least due to large numbers of internal rural migrants seeking employment options and refugees from civil strife and crises in the nearby region.[192] In addition to the impact of the European and particularly French powers' dominant role and interests, Traboulsi further links the increasing influence and unique position of Beirut to its "indigenous bourgeoisie." He explains that much "of the city's role in the colonial economy and the opportunities of wealth and profit it offered were exploited by its merchant class" whose internal balance of economic power, as previously mentioned, favored its Christian component over their Muslim counterparts.[193]

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[189] Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 9–11.
[190] Gates, *The Historical Role of Political Economy in the Development of Modern Lebanon*, 16–17.
[191] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 52.
[192] Traboulsi, 55–57.
[193] Traboulsi, 58.

In parallel with this composition of what Traboulsi calls the "merchant aristocracy" developed a "financial, commercial and manufacturing bourgeoisie"[194] who would acquire great influence on the primary structures of the Lebanese political economy after independence achieved in 1943.

In the years leading to independence, the area of today's Lebanon experienced popular protests and strikes opposing the rule of the French Mandate particularly due to harsh socio-economic conditions for the majority of the working class population. The bourgeoisie from various sectarian sections increasingly supported the uprising's demand for independence and largely targeted the economically privileged position of the French who earned most fruits of profit and fiscal exemptions.[195] In combination with the growth of opposition to their colonial rule, World War II weakened France's position further and mellowed the conditions for Lebanon's independence. The transition to independence, however, did not seek to meet the demands of the majority population but instead favored the interests of the narrow, local commercial/financial oligarchy. This oligarchy, while still closely linked to Western capital, came to uphold great political and state power along sectarian lines (thus further entrenching particularly the Maronite community's domination) and control over most parts of the country's economic sectors.[196] The arrangement involved a minimal role of the state, and its policies—as formulated by Middle East scholar Joseph Daher—"reflected the interests of these political and economic elites, who aimed to

[194] Traboulsi, 59.
[195] Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 11; Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 100–103.
[196] Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 13–14; Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 113–18.

maintain and strengthen Lebanon's position as a key financial intermediary between the Arab world and Europe"[197] as a simultaneous way to assure and increase their families' wealth. As a consequence of the continuation of Lebanon's intermediary role for trade, the service sector (particularly banking) came to dominate the local economy, while sectors such as industrial production became underprioritized. In the agricultural sector, large landowners (mostly owned by urban elite members) were favored on behalf of traditional sharecroppers, thus resulting in the displacement of such workers from their livelihoods, a growth in the already ongoing large-scale rural to urban migration, and an expansion of the growing, precarious urban working class particularly employed within the booming service sector.[198] Such arrangements for the economy, in combination with ongoing inflation in the aftermath of World War II, further deepened levels of poverty and unemployment particularly in the expanding suburbs of Beirut and the regions of South Lebanon, Akkar and Bekaa, creating an internal center/periphery-relation between those regions and Beirut and Mount Lebanon.[199]

While the increasing levels of social, regional, and sectarian inequalities continued during the following decades after independence as a consequence of the politics in place, Lebanon experienced some attempts to moderate such disparities during the beginning of the '60s, particularly under the presidency of Fuad Shehab (1958-1964). Throughout his presidency, a variety of reforms sought to improve livelihood conditions through the

[197] Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 14; Gates, *The Historical Role of Political Economy in the Development of Modern Lebanon*, 32.
[198] Gaspard, *A Political Economy of Lebanon, 1948-2002*, 90–91; Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 14–15.
[199] Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 15.

development of social and economic infrastructures, investment in hospitals and public education, and the establishment of the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) in 1963 as a supplementary amendment to the Lebanese Labor Law of 1946.[200] Passed under the first ruling government after independence (led by President Bishara El-Khuri and Prime Minister Riad Al-Sulh), the introduction of the Labor Code happened during popular protests and well-organized strikes responding to the social and economic crisis at the time.[201] But rather than taming such broad-shared discontents or meeting the protesters' demands, the Labor Law became, and still is, subject of various critiques.[202] For example of its strict regulation on labor relations and the freedom of trade unions, its failure to address unemployment and many basic rights of workers, and arbitrary distinctions between public/private sector workers as well as female/male workers in several legislations. Critiques have further targeted the Law's explicit exclusion of groups of workers from its legislation, which other than domestic workers (see former chapter) account for agricultural workers, businesses with only family members employed, government employees, and day and temporary workers, as well as legislation on non-Lebanese/foreign workers exempting them from the law's regulations and who instead must obtain renewable short-term work permits.[203]

[200] Daher, 17; Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 138–41.
[201] See: Robert J. Lampman, "The Lebanese Labor Code of 1946," *Labor Law Journal* 5, no. 7 (1954): 491.
[202] Lampman, 497.
[203] LEADERS Consortium, "The Labour Sector in Lebanon: Legal Frameworks, Challenges, and Opportunities" (Beirut, 2017), 10, 11, 32, https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/labour-sector-lebanon-legal-frameworks-challenges-and-opportunities.

Despite the popular labor movements and Shehab's reform programs, the primary arrangements prioritizing finance, service, and trade remained in place, and social movements continued to evolve, carrying out protests and strikes that especially targeted the high living costs that salaries and minimum wages within various sectors did not meet. The various movements' demands further involved calls for freedom of trade unions that were tightly monitored, and targeted the dominant position of the ruling commercial/financial oligarchy controlling the economy through the sectarian power-sharing system which, for the majority working class, proved inefficient to address such popular concerns.[204] The "laissez-faire" economic system in place simultaneously meant minimal price and investment control that "directly impacted on the standards of living of the majority of Lebanese" as well as the costs of living which between 1967 and 1975 had doubled.[205] The significantly low wages in various sectors can further be explained by the dynamics of emigration/migration in Lebanon, as many Lebanese graduates and workers emigrated to find employment for improved living conditions in the Gulf countries, "Western Center"/Europe, or African countries, and when returning often came to uphold middle class or even higher social positions and, hence, in many cases refused to uptake low-wage labor.[206] In return, non-Lebanese labor took up a wide array of low-wage labor positions in the unorganized informal sector; as of before the Civil War, Syrian workers, for example, constituted large parts of the agricultural and construction workers, as further

[204] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 145–47, 157.
[205] Traboulsi, 160.
[206] Traboulsi, 159–60.

exemplified by the multifarious migratory character of live-in domestic workers (see previous chapter).

The broad social discontent with the political-economic situation and deepening social inequalities in Lebanon eventually translated itself into the beginning stages of the Lebanese Civil War that erupted in 1975 and lasted until 1990. In addition to such growing discontents over the social crisis in place, political tensions had further intensified over the question of support to the growing presence of the Palestinian resistance movement, including armed groups since the events of "Black September" in 1970 in Jordan, and generally the presence of Palestinian refugees since the 1948 *Nakba*[207] in mainly Beirut and Southern Lebanon.[208] Both the question of support to the Palestinian resistance, while reflecting the broader division in the Arab region over the Palestine question, and questions concerning the proper response to the social crisis in place—exposing the "failure of the timid modernizing policies of President Fuad Shehab in the early 1960s"[209]—came to constitute the primary sources of the deepening political conflict that led to the outbreak of the war. Such questions furthermore, effectively, came to intersect and reflect tensions over the future of the sectarian political system in place, and led to two overall "populist" components: The Christian Phalange Party and its allies who opposed the presence of the resistance, including the Maronite community seeking to maintain its dominating economic and political role, and, on the other side, the Lebanese National Movement led by Druze

[207]For more information, see: Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006).
[208] Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 19–20.
[209] Samer Frangie, "Theorizing from the Periphery: The Intellectual Project of Mahdi 'Amil," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44, no. 3 (2012): 469.

leader Kamal Jumblatt and its allies, composed of other nationalist and leftist movements, who supported the Palestinian resistance and opposed the sectarian political system.[210] While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to appropriately account for the causes, development, and impacts of the Lebanese Civil War, its effects on the nature and intellectual conceptualization of class and sect relations in a Lebanese context provide important lessons to understand the organization of social-reproductive conditions (as will be discussed in the succeeding section of this chapter).

For many, the Lebanese Civil War rapidly appeared to represent a sectarian-based, rather than class-based, battle. Practically, scholars have argued that this particularly happened due to the continuous overrepresentation of Christians in the local business elite contrasting with the concurring Muslim (particularly Shi'a) majority of the poor and working class. Other factors often referred to were the presence of an Arab nationalist discourse on reformist questions, and the weakened options to organize labor particularly in the informal sector, thus also to organize across sectarian lines.[211] In intellectual debates on the Civil War, critics point to both theoretical and historical lessons opposing the sectarian-based reading of the war, such as the works of Marxist intellectual Mahdi 'Amil. 'Amil, being a member of the Lebanese Communist Party that played an active role in the Civil War, warned against such representations by arguing that, as it effectually happened, the "bourgeoisie would attempt to give a confessional aspect to the class struggle in order to

[210] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 155, 187; Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 20.
[211]See: Frangie, "Theorizing from the Periphery: The Intellectual Project of Mahdi 'Amil," 469–72; Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 22–23.

maintain its own dominant position," thus imposing "itself as the representatives of subordinated classes, making the latter dependent on its political and confessional representation."[212] The conceptualization of the sectarian political system in Lebanon as one that, in effect, obscures class relations/struggle was part of a larger intellectual project of 'Amil that sought to "provide an appropriate adaptation of Marxism to the realities of the Arab world and in particular of the Lebanese social formation."[213] It was, further, a simultaneous move to account for Marxism's general problem with the "relation between theory and political practice" and the "interplay between the universal and the specific" which from the perspective of Lebanon and the Arab region's position in the periphery, for 'Amil, represents what he called a Colonial Mode of Production (CMOP).[214] Samer Frangie, writing on the intellectual project of 'Amil, explains his concept of CMOP as one which, leaning on dependency theory, "represents a colonial formation, or a capitalist formation whose development is governed by the structural relations of dependency with the imperial center" and, thus, showing how the "universal and the specific are united in a material structure of dependence," while "enabling a Marxist reading of the periphery as the geographical contemporary of the West rather than its historical past."[215] In other words, writes Frangie, such a framework allowed a "theorist like 'Amil to collapse the crises of the local bourgeoisie, the CMOP, and global capitalism, seeing them as different instantiations

[212]As referred to and explained in: Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 22–23.
[213] Frangie, "Theorizing from the Periphery: The Intellectual Project of Mahdi 'Amil," 468.
[214] Frangie, 468.
[215] Frangie, 468–69.

of the same crisis."[216] According to Frangie, 'Amil more specifically argued that "the establishment of the Lebanese social formation as a colonial formation occurred as the global capitalist mode of production entered its crisis phase with the transition to imperialism," thus making the social formation in Lebanon:

> "a formation "in crisis" which explains why the emerging colonial bourgeoisie did not have an antagonistic relationship, in the manner of the European bourgeoisie, with the previously dominant classes but rather adopted an "accomodationist" attitude toward the religious ideology of these classes."[217]

Building on this framework, 'Amil (along with other theorists) presented sectarianism—as constituted in the Lebanese context—as a specific colonial social formation used as a dominating tool by the local bourgeoisie to remain in power in accordance with contemporary capitalist structures of dependency.

Keeping the insights of 'Amil and his contemporaries in mind, the outcome of the Lebanese Civil War appears to be one of defeat for the majority working class struggle. The turn towards sectarian politics, not least following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the continuous defeats of the coalition of the National Liberation Movement, was further entrenched by the various militias with sectarian affiliations upholding increasing control of resources, distribution, and trade in different regions and areas of the capital Beirut. The militias' control, while being rather easily obtained in the war-context due to the minimal and centralized role of the state and its provisions,[218] would soon turn into large business enterprises.[219] Furthermore, the Civil War resulted in a large-scale social

[216] Frangie, 469.
[217] Frangie, 472.
[218] See: Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*, 44–49.
[219] Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 23–25.

dislocation of the demography of the population in Lebanon, which in the words of Daher led to "an increasing homogeneity of the various districts and a corresponding segregation of the population along sectarian lines—patterns that would endure the post-Civil War environment."[220] The war further resulted in expulsion of human surplus by several reasons. First, estimates suggest that nearly a third of the population left the country during the war, while it resulted in various massacres in the Palestinian camps, and (what is believed to be) the over 70,000 deaths (some account for hundreds of thousands), nearly 100,000 injured and around 20,000 who "disappeared" during the Civil War.[221]

The Ta'if Agreement of 1989—a "National Reconciliation Accord" put in place by the Arab League initiative and backed by the U.S. (in its role as the current imperial power globally)—facilitated a new political consensus between the Lebanese elite. It ultimately resulted in the end of armed conflicts, and furthermore confirmed Syria's dominant position in Lebanon supported by the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Syria.[222] As a result of the agreement, the sectarian political system ultimately became further entrenched while simultaneously strengthening the political position of the Sunni and Shi'a elites in the political system, since small parts of these communities who had otherwise upheld the large majority of the poor—particularly the Shi'a population—had changed their structural class position to join ranks of the bourgeoisie. The entrenchment of the sectarian political system was followed by a general continuity of the pre-war arrangements of the Lebanese political economy,

[220] Daher, 25.

[221] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 238; Anthony Elghossain, "Finding Lebanon: Hope, Dignity, and the Right to Know," *Middle East Institute*, June 29, 2020, https://www.mei.edu/publications/finding-lebanon-hope-dignity-and-right-know.

[222] Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 37.

leaning even more in favor of the tertiary and rentier activities and, writes Traboulsi, "at the expense of the productive sectors, which suffered most of the destruction from the war."[223] Furthermore, the Ta'if Agreement directed the country's economy on a path of neoliberal/economic liberalization and privatization measures, which Daher writes "had been pursued elsewhere in the Middle East since the 1980s, with an emphasis on increased integration into the global economy and private sector growth"[224] and as such in line with similar global trends in the nascent neoliberal era. Moreover, it sought to reestablish Lebanon's financial position in the region by further opening up to foreign investment flows for particularly the banking, financial, and real estate sectors, and urban reconstruction.[225] The outcome, not surprisingly, was a growing public debt and failure of the various succeeding governments to tackle the continuous social and economic problems such as poverty and high inequality levels, low wages, unemployment, and poor quality of social services.[226] Sufficient to mention is the support of the neoliberal reform processes that followed after the Civil War which not only came from local main political actors, but also from international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank through the Paris I/II/III Conferences (2001, 2002, 2007) organized to seek external support to the growing public debt and revitalization of the economy, and from regional investors, in particular the Gulf states.[227] The continuation of such policies is visible throughout the following years, while the political stability of the elites in power became threatened after the assassination

[223] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 238.
[224] Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 37.
[225] Daher, 37–38.
[226] S.E. Baroudi in: Daher, 39.
[227] Daher, 70.

of Sunni Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005 (eventually succeeded by his son, Saad Hariri) which led to protests demanding the removal of Syrian troops in the country. The question split the ruling parties into two main alliances (referred to as March 8 and March 14) and ultimately meant the withdrawal of all Syrian troops.[228] The Israeli Invasion of Lebanon in 2006 caused severe destructions of lives and infrastructure in mainly South Beirut and had further political implications, especially for the increasingly popular role of Hezbollah, the Shi'a-affiliated militarized and political party with growing influence and de-facto monopoly on representing the armed resistance against Israel.[229]

The entanglement of regional political conflicts/developments in the Lebanese political economy has been further visible in light of the Syrian Uprising in 2011. Since late 2012, Lebanon has experienced a massive influx of Syrian refugees, adding to the high numbers of foreign workers and refugees with temporary status in the Lebanese demography and labor force.[230] The spike resulted in a change in the terms for Syrians entering Lebanon since 2014 who in previous decades could enter more or less freely, but who now need to obtain renewable residency permits along similar lines of other foreign workers (despite nationality differences for the specific terms).[231] Generally speaking, the social and economic consequences of the specific configuration of the Lebanese political economy are reflected in the situation for the over one million temporary foreign workers

[228] Daher, 138, 140.
[229] Daher, 40.
[230] Longuenesse and Tabar, "Migrant Workers and Class Structure in Lebanon: Class, Race, Nationality and Gender," 6.
[231] "The Labour Sector in Lebanon," 33; Longuenesse and Tabar, "Migrant Workers and Class Structure in Lebanon: Class, Race, Nationality and Gender," 6.

who since the Civil War increasingly have occupied various sectors of low-wage labor positions—particularly in construction, agriculture, industry, and service—bereft of all social protection.[232] Cheap/informal foreign labor provides options for employers to reduce their costs of production in the highly unregulated and competitive profit-seeking market, both in a local and global sense, which is further evident by the "continuous lack of government policy to protect local production or the national labor force" in Lebanon.[233] The conditions for foreign workers in Lebanon, especially defined by severe precarity and temporality, fall along the lines of contemporary structures of the global economy which, as aforementioned, has seen a massive expansion of the global labor reserve during the last decades as a result of accelerating processes of dispossession and primitive accumulation.[234] This expansion, write Ferguson and McNally, has "facilitated the construction of neoliberal forms of migrant precarity, which contribute centrally to the reorganization of the global labour market in ways that facilitate the reproduction of capital at the expense of the reproduction of working-class households."[235]

As for the larger popular and working classes in Lebanon generally speaking, living standards have been declining for years, despite changes in the relationship between areas and wealth/poverty that, while economic growth continue to be centered in Beirut and

[232] Longuenesse and Tabar, "Migrant Workers and Class Structure in Lebanon: Class, Race, Nationality and Gender," 6; Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 41.
[233] Longuenesse and Tabar, "Migrant Workers and Class Structure in Lebanon: Class, Race, Nationality and Gender," 16–17; John Chalcraft, "Syrian Workers in Lebanon and the Role of the State: Political Economy and Popular Aspirations," in *Migration et Politique Au Moyen-Orient*, Françoise de Bel-Air, Contemporain Publications (Beirut: Presses de l'Ifpo, 2014), 81–103, http://books.openedition.org/ifpo/4777.
[234] Ferguson and McNally, "Precarious Migrants," 9–10.
[235] Ferguson and McNally, 9.

Mount Lebanon, today sees poverty most densely located in some areas of North Lebanon, particularly the city of Tripoli.[236] In a recent article, Joseph Daher summarizes some overall stark inequality numbers:

> "Between 2010 and 2016 the incomes of the poorest households stagnated or dropped, and unemployment remained stubbornly high: only one third of the working-age population had a job, and joblessness among those under thirty-five ran as high as 37 percent. Between 40 and 50 percent of Lebanese residents lacked access to social assistance. Temporary foreign workers, estimated at 1 million, were denied all social protections. According to a study by the Central Statistical Office, half of workers and more than a third of the country's farmers were below the poverty line."[237]

Concerning the other end of the scale, Daher writes that:

> "Between 2005-2014 the richest 10 percent pocketed, on average, 56 percent of the national income. The wealthiest 1 percent, just over 37,000 people, captured 23 percent of the income generated — as much as the poorest 50 percent, more than 1.5 million people."[238]

Such numbers indicate that while foreign workers meet severely harsh living and working conditions, such circumstances are—despite obvious differences—shared amongst a much bigger bulk of the overall popular classes in Lebanon, disclosing the high levels of inequality and precarity spanning into the everyday social-reproductive structural conditions for workers, families, households, and livelihood.

On that note, when mentioning the differing status of Lebanese nationals/workers to "deportable" foreign workers in Lebanon, it appears necessary to reemphasize the impact of sectarianism. Sectarianism, as the constitutional structure complementing the state structure

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[236] Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 75.

[237] Joseph Daher, "'The People Want the Fall of the Regime,'" *Jacobin*, October 24, 2019, https://jacobinmag.com/2019/10/lebanon-protest-movement-inequality-austerity; أديب نعمه, "دراسات الفقر في لبنان: الاجتهادات سيّدة الموقف," *الأخبار*, August 6, 2018, https://al-akhbar.com/Capital/255591.

[238] Daher, "'The People Want the Fall of the Regime.'"

based on the laissez-faire free market economy, impacts the status of Lebanese nationals in terms of which sect/"community" they belong to, rather than being addressed as "citizens" as such. This organization of the national population has wide effects on people's social and social-reproductive life as political and social rights are achieved through one's community belonging.[239] In practice, sectarianism in Lebanon is shaped by a specific legal context of a Personal Status Code that subscribes anything from legislation on marriage, divorce, child custody, inheritance, birth, and death to the respective laws of the 15 different religious courts of each sect/community (in accordance with the Civil Personal Status Law[240]), and furthermore works as the channel to access political representation. Local feminist movements have for decades deemed such legal structures gender-discriminatory for various unequal outcomes for women's rights,[241] as will be elaborated in the succeeding sections of this chapter. Effectively, writes Middle East scholar Hannes Bauman, "the political economy of sectarianism is one where a small politically connected elite appropriates the bulk of economic surplus and redistributes it through communal clientelism."[242] Sociologist Rima Majed further explains that in the case of Lebanon, such workings of sectarianism effectively "lie in the system of non-state (or para-state) welfare

[239] Rima Majed, "The Political (or Social) Economy of Sectarianism in Lebanon," *Middle East Institute*, November 7, 2017, https://www.mei.edu/publications/political-or-social-economy-sectarianism-lebanon.
[240]See: Human Rights Watch, "Unequal and Unprotected: Women's Rights under Lebanese Personal Status Law" (Beirut: Human Rights Watch, January 19, 2015), https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/01/19/unequal-and-unprotected/womens-rights-under-lebanese-personal-status-laws.
[241]See for example: Rola Yasmine and Batoul Sukkar, "In the Pursuit of Reproductive Justice in Lebanon," *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research*, Winter 2018, https://kohljournal.press/pursuit-rj-lebanon; Mira Zaghbour, "Feminism and the October Revolution: The People Demand and Do Not Negotiate," *Beirut Today*, November 11, 2019, https://beirut-today.com/2019/11/11/feminism-october-revolution-demand-not-negotiate/; "Unequal and Unprotected: Women's Rights under Lebanese Personal Status Law."
[242]As quoted in: Majed, "The Political (or Social) Economy of Sectarianism in Lebanon."

and security, known as clientelism" that creates a system of dependence where, "while the upper ruling class uses sectarianism as a tool of control to maintain their position, the working classes abide by the sectarian rules of the game in order to access welfare and protection or to avoid sanctions."[243] Majed further agrees with the thesis of 'Amal, arguing that sectarianism effectively, by continuously reproducing itself this way, enables itself to "co-opt most attempts to organize according to class interests from below."[244] Drawing on recent events, Majed compares this argument to the fallout of protests and the establishment of the "You_Stink" movement during the trash and sanitation crisis in 2015-16 and the Beirut Medinati campaign during the Beirut municipal election of 2016 consisting of civil society activists. Both initiatives experienced severe repression from the state and its political elites for their potential to attract followers across sectarian lines despite the fact that both movements, in reality, mainly attracted the (urban) middle classes who, writes Majed, already "are able to liberate themselves from the system of patronage and clientelism."[245] The argument proves even further interesting and relevant when taking into account the recent massive popular uprising in Lebanon, often referred to as *thawra tishreen* ([the October Revolution]), that has spread across the country's regions, sectarian lines, and social classes since October 2019 demanding wide-ranging socioeconomic and structural changes. While the movement still currently is in place, severe challenges exist for the protesters and movement(s) with regards to the increasing and severe financial and

[243] Majed.
[244] Majed.
[245] Majed.

social crisis in place, repression from political elites, and the COVID-19 pandemic enforcing lockdown, restricted mobility, and quarantine measures upon people.

However, before entering the discussion on such recent and current debates—that undoubtedly throw light on the contemporary effects and structures of the consistent laissez-faire economic system in Lebanon for the majority working class population (not least for migrant domestic workers), the following section will elaborate on structures of welfare and social services in Lebanon. As indicated in the above, such structures uphold a peculiar role related to clientelism in the general economic, social, and political structures of Lebanon which are essential to include in the overall discussion of the organization of domestic labor and social-reproductive conditions. In the Lebanese political economy, the centering of trade and financial interests has, as we shall see, effectively pushed public concerns of social reproduction and welfare to the periphery, making it a field of contestation and a means to gain political support that has broad implications for the organization of social reproduction and, ultimately, domestic labor in households.

B. Social Reproduction as a Means of Control: The Privatization of Social Welfare in Lebanon

Similar to the organization of domestic and care labor (see former chapter), welfare and social services in Lebanon have a long history of being privatized and accessed through alternative sources than state-provisioned programs. In the Ottoman and colonial periods before independence, religious institutions, missionaries, clerics, and foreign relief agencies played a key role in the provision of welfare services, while in more recent times—

especially after the Civil War—NGOs and sectarian parties have entered the scene to provide social welfare, "particularly for those who lack insurance or sufficient means to resort to the private market."[246] In her book on the relationship between sectarianism and social welfare in Lebanon, political scholar Melani Cammett argues that the laissez-faire economic system after independence—which, as aforementioned, resulted in limited state capacities—concurrently facilitated a "highly fragmented and relatively unregulated" welfare regime defined by the "prevalence of nonstate providers."[247] Cammett further traces the roots of the structures of Lebanon's welfare regime through the long-lasting presence and powerful role of the religious communities in the area of what today is Lebanon, currently entrenched in the power-sharing system along sectarian lines "providing ample opportunities for sectarian organizations to supply social services and to take credit for the public benefits."[248]

Generally for the Middle East as a region, social policy scholar Rana Jawad writes that scholarship on welfare and social policies often depict its structures in light of the "constant pressure of international intervention in the region since the deepening ties to European trade began in the 18th century," which has "contributed to unequal wealth redistribution in the Middle East and the dominance of a consumerist urban elite over largely wageless peasants."[249] As a result, writes Jawad, scholarship often describes the realm of social policy in the region as "highly residual in nature, with the primary focus of

[246] Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*, 38.
[247] Cammett, 39.
[248] Cammett, 39–41.
[249] Rana Jawad, *Social Welfare and Religion in the Middle East: A Lebanese Perspective* (Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2009), 256.

governments on economic policy and economic growth" and further "highly politicized […] and vulnerable to clientelist abuse as well as manipulation for political gain by political figures."[250] Social policy goals for the region are, therefore, often "about welfare redistribution and the provision of basic needs," in other words focusing on "the urgent developmental and survival needs of the populations in the region, which require […] more attention to basic needs such as housing, food, education, and job creation."[251]

While the social policy framework for the broader region in several ways resonates with welfare and social service structures in Lebanon, scholars like Jawad and Cammett insist on the peculiarity of Lebanon's history among the remaining Arab countries, especially—writes Jawad—due to its "liberal social and political systems, its dynamic laissez-faire economic sector, which has always been open to trade with the outside world, the relative freedom of press and the high levels of education of its population."[252] Moreover, Jawad subscribes the country's unique role to the fact that "Lebanon has also hosted the wars of the Middle East, being vulnerable to international interference from both East and West."[253] Cammett further argues that, despite the persistent pattern of nonstate actors providing social and welfare services, the state has since the post-independent period played a distinct role in the different historical forms of the welfare regime in Lebanon, particularly for the historical eras of the pre-Civil War period (1943-1975), the wartime period (1975-1990), and the post-war period (1990-to the present).[254] During the period up

[250] Jawad, 256.
[251] Jawad, 256.
[252] Jawad, 69.
[253] Jawad, 69.
[254] Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*, 38.

until the establishment of Greater Lebanon under French colonial rule and the later achievement of independence, the specific institutionalization of social welfare had implications on the subsequent historical eras by creating social disparities among the population as the religious communities did not have equal means to develop social institutions. Cammett uses education as an example of such disparities in the colonial period of what is now modern-day Lebanon, explaining that Christian sects and particularly the Maronite community historically had the most developed educational institutions since the 16th century—especially due to their ties with French missionaries who supported their establishment of schools. The development of educational institutions in the Muslim communities, Cammett writes, took off later and saw the first modern Sunni school established in 1870—which swiftly came to administer many other aspects of social life and the Sunni community's political interests, while the Druze community established its own educational institutions by the mid-19th century.[255] Overall, Cammett writes that the "gap between the Christian and Muslim communities narrowed significantly from the Mandate period through the first three decades of independence."[256] The Shi'a community was a "glaring exception" and "had fewer social institutions than other groups;" a discrepancy that was further visible in wealth distribution among the communities and regions at the time (see above). This discrepancy served as one of the main motivations for the emergence of the Shi'a-based party Harakat al-Mahrumīn (Movement of the Dispossessed) in 1974—later known as Amal—led by the cleric Moussa al-Sadr, which "established a vast network of social and educational institutions that aimed at correcting

[255] Cammett, 39–40.
[256] Cammett, 41.

historical community disparities and the marginalization of the Shi'a in Lebanese society, economy, and politics."[257]

The two first post-independent governments (led by Bishara el-Khoury and Camille Shamoun, respectively) did little to correct such regional and sectarian imbalances as they "did not prioritize socioeconomic development," with a few exceptions such as standardizing and expanding measures within the educational sector, but vastly overlooked the health and other social sectors.[258] The succeeding government led by Fuad Shehab accelerated state development efforts remarkably, since to Shehab, "social policy was a key tool for national integration." [259] The Shehab government's redistributive and social development efforts are particularly articulated in its establishment of the NSSF in 1963, a national social insurance program (though only covering a selected group of the population and workers), along with impactful educational reforms in the public school system and significant investments in regional development, economic infrastructure, and projects seeking to unify the domestic market.[260] However, despite such efforts—which saw significant pushbacks from influential local leaders and members of the ruling oligarchy,[261] the overall picture of Lebanon's welfare regime in the post-independent era remained one of a fragmented, underdeveloped, and underprioritized system of social protection for the majority popular classes.[262]

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[257] Cammett, 40–41.
[258] Cammett, 42.
[259] Cammett, 42.
[260] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 141.
[261] Traboulsi, 141–42.
[262] Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*, 44.

The outbreak of the Civil War, writes Cammett, "brought about the partial and, for some programs, total breakdown of the public social welfare institutions established in the 1960s, weakening the already feeble state administrative capacity and enhancing the importance of nonstate social provision."[263] The public health infrastructure, for example, suffered partially because of physical destruction and desertion of government facilities during the war, and in part from the way the Ministry of Public Health was organized where, as Cammett explains, because "its operations were centralized, the ministry could not easily coordinate the distribution of medical supplies, medication, and personnel, nor could it communicate and enforce health-related regulations during the war."[264] As a result, the Civil War experienced a resurgence of confessional groups developing their own social welfare programs and even primary/secondary schools and private universities, alongside the growing role of "domestic and international NGOs providing social provision."[265] Increasingly, various sectarian militias—some of them concurrently, or shortly after, established as political parties—played a key role in the provision of basic needs in the various territories they controlled, along with their increased control over resources, state income-generating functions, and trade in the country.[266] Rather than merely "resource endowments," Cammett writes that political calculations were a big part of the reason for militia decisions to initiate welfare provision; for example, she writes, "some militias promoted the provision of social services as a way of convincing in-group residents to

[263] Cammett, 44.
[264] Cammett, 45.
[265] Cammett, 45, 48.
[266] Anne Marie Baylouny, *Privatizing Welfare in the Middle East: Kin Mutual Aid Associations in Jordan and Lebanon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 62–63; Daher, *Hezbollah: The Political Economy of Lebanon's Party of God*, 25.

remain in their homes," especially while armed battles were happening.[267] Political scholar Anne Marie Baylouny argues that the "militias efficiently provided a wider range of public goods, effectively discrediting the Lebanese state."[268] Along with the role of militias, Cammett shows that major public health initiatives, "such as vaccinations or maternal and child care, were donor-driven and often administered by international NGOs rather than state agencies."[269] Effectively, she writes, the "variable development of militia social welfare programs created and exacerbated regional disparities in access to public goods and social services."[270]

The surge in nonstate providers of welfare and social services during the Civil War had profound implications for the post-war welfare regime in Lebanon. After 1990, their importance grew while the state implemented public programs that largely cofacilitated the continuation of privatized welfare provision. Cammett writes:

> "Through these programs, the state assured a minimum of social protection for the poor and provided a key source of financial support for nonstate providers. Inadequate regulatory capacity, however, created a form of hyperprivatization that led to macro-level inefficiencies and minimal oversight of nonstate providers."[271]

Effectively, the social welfare programs initiated by militias during the war turned into institutionalized welfare agencies and social centers, and organizations affiliated with other political parties began to launch their own welfare programs. This is particularly demonstrated in the education sector, where private schools educate the majority of

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[267] Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*, 48.
[268] Baylouny, *Privatizing Welfare in the Middle East: Kin Mutual Aid Associations in Jordan and Lebanon*, 62–63.
[269] Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*, 45.
[270] Cammett, 48.
[271] Cammett, 50.

Lebanese students with minimal state control, and within the health sector where nonstate organizations (NGOs and political organizations) "predominate in the *provision* of health care" while "the public sector is the major source of *financing* for the health system."[272] While the amount of state support to the various private health care institutions varies widely, it has further faced recent repercussions due to the Lebanese state's outstanding public debt which has resulted in the decline of government capacity to cover hospitals' costs, leading "some private hospitals to routinely refuse patients without sufficient personal funds or private insurance to cover hospitalization costs."[273] As previously mentioned, and despite challenges in data collection on health insurance coverage of the population, it is estimated that more than 50 percent of Lebanon's popular classes lack coverage, while all workers and people with temporary residence permit most often lack all social protection.[274] This large amount of the population thus often only have access to basic health services (with severe differences in the extent and quality of services), especially because of the increasing role of NGOs providing access to medical care/primary health services for poor communities. The entrenchment of political and community organization along sectarian lines (particularly in the aftermath of the Civil War) has played a crucial role in such structures, as several scholars argue that citizens who demonstrate loyalties to sectarian organizations expect and precede receiving social benefits, thus creating a system of communal clientelism and patronage.[275] The welfare regime in the

[272] Cammett, 50–55.
[273] Cammett, 55.
[274] Traboulsi, *Social Classes and Political Power in Lebanon*, 31, 58–59; Daher, "'The People Want the Fall of the Regime'"; Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*, 55–56.
[275]See: Melani Cammett and Sukriti Issar, "Bricks and Mortar Clientelism: Sectarianism and the Logics of Welfare Allocation in Lebanon," *World Politics* 62, no. 3 (2010): 381–421; Majed, "The Political (or Social)

post-war era is thus characterized by limited state regulation and a "wide scope for private actors to supply and take credit for health care."[276] Consequently, Cammett argues that sectarian parties and other nonstate actors "with political and financial interests in the status quo capitalize on and help to perpetuate the underdevelopment of public welfare functions."[277]

As such, despite differences in its forms and degrees of state involvement, the welfare regime and social service provision have remained a highly privatized realm within the political economy of modern Lebanon. More often than not, the extent, quality, and access to social welfare depend on people's social position (particularly regarding class and citizenship) and, in quite some cases, sectarian affiliation/belonging. The following section will present an overview of how the devolvement of crucial aspects of social reproduction to para/nonstate actors in Lebanon has facilitated further structural and particularly gendered relations of dependency within the everyday organization of family relations, "the domestic sphere," citizen regulations, and in people's access to reproductive justice and autonomy.

Economy of Sectarianism in Lebanon"; Traboulsi, *Social Classes and Political Power in Lebanon*; Jawad, *Social Welfare and Religion in the Middle East: A Lebanese Perspective*, 241; Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*, 134–35.

[276] Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*, 57.

[277] Cammett, 57.

C. Reproductive Justice Delayed: Familial Dependency and Feminized Housework

The implications of the confessional governance system supporting the laissez-faire economy in Lebanon stretch into the organization of other primary social-reproductive conditions and rights, particularly concerning family relations and regulations. Local and international organizations as well as feminist movements have long critiqued the Lebanese Personal Status Law governed by religious courts as the de facto family law system in Lebanon where "Christian courts are administratively and financially independent and Muslim courts, although historically affiliated and funded by the state, are operationally independent of state institutions."[278] Practiced and directed by 15 different religious courts rather than as part of the centralized Lebanese legal framework, critiques have particularly sought to expose the laws as treating Lebanese citizens differently in key aspects of their lives and especially as gender-discriminatory, pointing to continuous unequal outcomes for women and even children on behalf of the submission to the authority of the husband's interests and needs in the institution of (heterosexual) marriage.[279] In their research report from 2015 on the current system of personal status laws' discriminatory impact on women, Human Rights Watch writes:

> "Across all confessions, women faced legal and other obstacles when terminating unhappy or abusive marriages; limitations on their pecuniary rights; and the risk of losing their children if they remarry or when the so-called maternal custody period (determined by the child's age) ends. Women were also systematically denied adequate spousal support during and after marriage—with religious courts often unfairly denying or reducing payments, including if a judge found a woman to be

[278] "Unequal and Unprotected: Women's Rights under Lebanese Personal Status Law," 2.

[279] See: Lebanon Support and Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (RDFL), "A Historical Overview of Women's Achievements in Lebanon" (Beirut: Lebanon Support, May 3, 2017), https://www.rdflwomen.org/eng/a-historical-overview-of-womens-achievements-in-lebanon/; "Unequal and Unprotected: Women's Rights under Lebanese Personal Status Law"; Yasmine and Sukkar, "In the Pursuit of Reproductive Justice in Lebanon."

> "recalcitrant" by leaving the marital home and refusing to cohabit with her husband or filing for severance."[280]

More specifically, Human Rights Watch confirms the critiques carried out by various local organizations that specifically target women's fewer rights than men to access divorce, high chances of losing maternal custody rights for their child/children in the termination of marriage, high fees during legal proceedings, lack of legal response to domestic abuse/violence and marital rape—equally inadequate within Lebanese civil and criminal law, and furthermore the discrimination that women face in relation to distribution of marital property following a divorce and during marriages.[281] On the latter note, Human Rights Watch writes:

> "The absence of any religious or civil law in Lebanon valuing women's non-monetary contributions to the marriage at the time of termination—including household and family care, lost economic opportunity and her contribution to her husbands' career—contributes to the discrimination against women."[282]

The unequal distribution of property and nonrecognition of the concept of "marital property" often further stems from the fact that property reverts to the spouse whose name it is registered, which typically is the husband, and as such with no calculations of who has *contributed* to the daily (re)production of the household.[283]

In addition to the allocation of legal family proceedings to the para/nonstate religious courts, critiques have also targeted other parts of Lebanese legislation as gender-

[280] "Unequal and Unprotected: Women's Rights under Lebanese Personal Status Law," 1.
[281] 3–8.
[282] 6.
[283] 6.

discriminatory, particularly with what concerns access to other social-reproductive aspects of people's lives. Lebanese citizen laws, for example, have—in addition to facilitating systems of "welfare clientelism/patronage" and precarious/temporary conditions for "non-citizens" as abovementioned—a wide impact on racially and economically marginalized communities' access to reproductive justice. The term "reproductive justice" occurred within racial justice and feminist movements in the U.S and across the globe during the last decades and particularly concerns reproductive and sexual rights—such as the right to sexual education, safe homes, parental/pregnancy care, and contraception—that activists long have claimed are structurally restricted for especially racialized and poor communities.[284] Moreover, reproductive justice stems from other earlier occurring demands for the recognition of, and necessary means to, reproductive labor, as it presents an approach that, in the words of Black women's health activist Loretta Ross, "links sexuality, health, and human rights to social justice movements […] by placing abortion and reproductive health issues in the larger context of the well-being and health of women, families, and communities."[285] Laura Briggs, in presenting the notion as an activist politics, writes that reproductive justice as such both covers the right to contraception as well as the right to parent children "with the necessary social supports in safe environments and healthy communities, and without fear of violence from individuals or the government. This approach is exemplified by calling the police shooting of Black youth a reproductive

[284] Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics: From Welfare Reform to Foreclosure to Trump*, 2:23, 27–30; Yasmine and Sukkar, "In the Pursuit of Reproductive Justice in Lebanon."
[285] Ross, "Understanding Reproductive Justice"; Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics: From Welfare Reform to Foreclosure to Trump*, 2:23.

justice issue."[286] In other words, reproductive justice targets what some also denote as *reproductive oppression*, notions that both refer to how "reproductive health issues affect people disproportionately according to social configurations and hierarchies of class, race, and gender,"[287] and more specifically, writes Ross, targets "the control and exploitation of women, girls, and individuals through our bodies, sexuality, labor, and reproduction."[288]

In an article from 2018[289] on reproductive justice in the context of Lebanon, Rola Yasmine and Batoul Sukkar from the local feminist organization The A Project[290] argue that there is a clear dissonance between individuals' rights and the existing laws in Lebanon, even though Lebanon has signed up to the practical instruments of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1966. Specifically from a reproductive justice-lens focusing on "communities," they contend that the "Lebanese law has failed to protect and substantiate the basic human rights of women, refugees, migrants, queers, transgenders, working-class people, incarcerated people, people with disabilities, people living with HIV, and sex workers."[291] Particularly on the gender-discriminatory impact of Lebanese citizenship laws, Yasmine and Sukkar write:

> "When Lebanese women acquired the right to vote [in 1953, ed.], they gained political participation and representation, but not the social entitlements of citizenship. This is clearly exhibited by their inability to pass their nationality to their non-citizen spouses and children, while Lebanese men can. Like many other countries in West Asia and North Africa region, Lebanon relies on nationality passed through parental bloodline (jus sanguinis), rather than from being

[286] Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics: From Welfare Reform to Foreclosure to Trump*, 2:23.
[287] Ross, "Understanding Reproductive Justice."
[288] Ross, 2.
[289] Yasmine and Sukkar, "In the Pursuit of Reproductive Justice in Lebanon."
[290] See: https://www.theaproject.org/
[291] Yasmine and Sukkar, "In the Pursuit of Reproductive Justice in Lebanon."

> naturalized, i.e. born in the country in question (jus soli). In Lebanon, the legally-blessed parental bloodline that transfers citizenship is paternal. As long as Lebanese women marry non-Lebanese men, their children, like any non-citizen in Lebanon, face state harassment in their legal residency, employability, property ownership or inheritance, education opportunities, and access to health."[292]

As such, citizenship laws (alongside family laws) facilitate gendered relations of dependency within family relations that, effectively, restrict women's bodily/reproductive autonomy and prioritize the presence of a Lebanese husband. The reality of such laws further manifest in the restricted access to abortion in Lebanon which is only perceived justifiable if the pregnant woman's life is in danger, and as such has created illegal and dangerous channels for women to access abortion.[293] The citizenship laws, as Yasmine and Sukkar mention, have further consequences for those permanently deemed non-citizens—particularly Palestinians, Syrians, and migrant workers—who suffer from severe restrictions to accessing social welfare and reproductive health and autonomy, not least in the case of women and queer people within such communities. Female migrant domestic workers working and living in family households represent a dire illustration of such restricted social-reproductive conditions, as explained in the previous chapter. A further example regards access to maternal health and delivery; on this matter, Yasmine and Sukkar write that many migrant and refugee women "are hesitant about delivering in hospitals for fear of having to pay for unnecessary tests and unreasonably high hospital bill, or being asked about the legal status of their residency and their sponsor (in the case of

[292] Yasmine and Sukkar.

[293] Lebanon Support and Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (RDFL), "A Historical Overview of Women's Achievements in Lebanon"; Yasmine and Sukkar, "In the Pursuit of Reproductive Justice in Lebanon."

MDWs [migrant domestic workers, ed.])."[294] Additionally, housing/household conditions for poor and marginalized communities in Lebanon, such as in refugee camps and Beirut and Tripoli's suburbs, suffer from poor infrastructure, being overpopulated, and from often being more exposed to health risks deriving from high levels of contaminated air and environmental pollution that Lebanon's residents long have been subject to.[295] Such health and environmental conditions can, amongst other aspects, be traced to waste mismanagement, limited access to clean water, and continuous processes of privatization and dispossession throughout all historical eras of modern Lebanon that have displaced people from accessible means of reproduction and livelihood conditions.

The reproductive oppression of women from particularly working class and racialized communities in Lebanon, as such, both stem from the social (colonial) formation of the political economy and confessional governance system that have created an organization of social reproduction as a peripheral, privatized and domesticized sphere. Such an organization facilitate particularly gendered systems of dependency through the restriction of women and other individuals' reproductive autonomy, stretching into family and kinship relations. Meanwhile, according to anthropologist Suad Joseph who is known for her extensive work on kinship and family relations in the modern Arab region and Lebanon particularly, it is further clear in everyday dynamics of family life that the family—or more generally the kin—has upheld a defining role for people, particularly due

[294] Yasmine and Sukkar, "In the Pursuit of Reproductive Justice in Lebanon."
[295] Yasmine and Sukkar.

to the absence of the state and its institutions, especially during the Civil War years.[296] In her work, Joseph has further sought to show how family relationality involves nationalist/capitalist ideals for the social relations within the family/household along marital ideals and "a patriarchal structure with a male breadwinner and a domestic housewife/mother."[297] In the context of modern Lebanon (as situated in the Arab region), the ideal, argues Joseph, establishes motherhood as a common denominator for women valued by society, and further structures other familial relations along what she calls ""patriarchal connectivity"-relationally oriented feminine and masculine selves organized for gendered and aged hierarchy."[298] On a similar note, some literature has sought to show how dominant notions of *motherhood* have created options for women to participate in civil society activism in the "public" while simultaneously confirming their domesticity. In her research on women's role in civil society activism in Southern Lebanon from 2006 (amongst both secular and religious women's organizations) and on what she calls a "culture of motherhood,"[299] feminist scholar Zeina Zaatari argues that modern, dominant discourses on motherhood perceive women as mothering not only their families, but further the society and nation as a whole. Zaatari further builds her insights on the work of Joseph and refers to the impact of both Arab nationalism and nationalist discourses more

[296]See: Suad Joseph, "Problematizing Gender and Relational Rights: Experiences from Lebanon," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State, and Society* 1, no. 3 (1994): 271–85; Suad Joseph, "Gender and Relationality among Arab Families in Lebanon," *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 3 (1993): 465–86; Suad Joseph, "Brother/Sister Relationships: Connectivity, Love, and Power in the Reproduction of Patriarchy in Lebanon," *American Ethnologist* 21, no. 1 (1994): 50–73.

[297]See: Joseph, "Problematizing Gender and Relational Rights: Experiences from Lebanon"; Zeina Zaatari, "The Culture of Motherhood: An Avenue for Women's Civil Participation in South Lebanon," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 2, no. 1 (2006): 35.

[298] Joseph, "Gender and Relationality among Arab Families in Lebanon," 466.

[299] Zaatari, "The Culture of Motherhood: An Avenue for Women's Civil Participation in South Lebanon."

broadly—especially "during moments of crisis and conflict." [300] For example, she mentions the work of feminist and political scholar Shireen Hassim who, in the context of South African women's organizations during national/liberation struggles, argues that "there is an underlying tension between the power that motherhood is accorded in nationalist symbolism, and the powerlessness that women experience in society."[301] Or, put in another way: women may be perceived as carrying a crucial role in the (national/liberation) struggle as main breeders, but nonetheless in the same context are often kept outside of "the main circles of power and decision making."[302] Several feminist scholars, like Zaatari, have noticed similar structures in the context of the Arab region.[303] In the context of Lebanon, Zaatari argues, such a perception of the role of mothers (while enabling participation in some civil society work outside the home) has simultaneously "relegated housework to a nonessential part of motherhood's role, especially for social classes able to afford a maid [migrant domestic worker, ed.]."[304] Zaatari explains this with both the capitalist system's valorization of paid/waged labor and a simultaneous dominant focus within Arab and Lebanese feminist movements as well as prominent feminist thinkers (particularly since the '60/'70s) on the call for women to work outside the home, building on the idea of women's emancipation as tied to "conceptions of modernity, financial need, and economic

[300] Zaatari, 33–34.

[301] Shireen Hassim, "Family, Motherhood and Zulu Nationalism: The Politics of the Inkatha Women's Brigade," *Feminist Review* 43 (1993): 20.

[302] Zaatari, "The Culture of Motherhood: An Avenue for Women's Civil Participation in South Lebanon," 36.

[303]For an elaboration on the notion of motherhood in relation to imperialism particularly in the context of the Arab region and specifically Egypt, see for example the works of: Sara Salem and Mai Taha, "Social Reproduction and Empire in an Egyptian Century," *Radical Philosophy* 2, no. 4 (Spring 2019): 47–54; Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011).

[304] Zaatari, "The Culture of Motherhood: An Avenue for Women's Civil Participation in South Lebanon," 43.

empowerment."[305] Such calls appear to be reminiscent of later ideals of the "two-earner family"[306] which especially has drawn attention in North American and European contexts of the neoliberal era due to the lowering of wages, austerity measures, and disinvestment in state-managed welfare, resulting in a surge of women into the paid labor force and a simultaneous growth in the employment of low-paid migrant workers of domestic/reproductive labor.[307] In the context of the Arab region and particularly Lebanon, writes Zaatari, such demands and "efforts did not necessarily lead to very high rates of employment but did manage to denigrate the role of the housewife and the domestic element,"[308] and, effectively, she continues, "unpaid labor in the household then becomes an obstacle to overcome."[309] Zaatari thus concludes that "the elevation of the role of motherhood to the realm of sanctity seems to capture women within the domain of the domestic and thus patriarchy."[310] In an interview with Al-Raida Journal from 1995,[311] the prominent Lebanese women's rights advocate Laure Moghaizel indirectly elaborates on the connection between such notions of motherhood, the structural conditions for social/family life, and the effects on women's role in society in the context of Lebanon:

> "The war had an impact on the economic aspect of women's lives; there has been an increase in the percentage of working women due to dire economic need. We have an increase in the number of women in universities, but I don't think that is necessarily a result of the war. However, I don't see any improvement in the way

[305] Zaatari, 42.

[306] Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 112.

[307] For elaborative accounts on such structures, see: Farris, "Social Reproduction, Surplus Populations and the Role of Migrant Women"; Sara Farris, "Neoliberalism, Migrant Women, and the Commodification of Care"; Ferguson and McNally, "Precarious Migrants."

[308] Zaatari, "The Culture of Motherhood: An Avenue for Women's Civil Participation in South Lebanon," 43.

[309] Zaatari, 46.

[310] Zaatari, 36.

[311] Hania Osseiran, "'The War Was Unforgivable': An Interview with Maitre Laure Moghaizel," *Al-Raida Journal* XII, no. 70 & 71 (Summer & Fall 1995): 14–16.

> society looks at women. Women were powerless, and still are, in all domains: in the trade unions, in the municipalities, in politics, even in the family. As long as the Personal Status Code is not altered, women will remain in a subordinate position."[312]

As depicted in the previous chapter, in Lebanon and the broader Arab region oppressive relations have further existed within the household, as exemplified between the housewife and domestic worker constituting a "common female oppression" with an inherent power relation between the two. The institution of the family as structured along marital relations where the male spouse's economic and social interests are prioritized within the socio-legal framework has, as shown, further implications for the organization of housework and domestic labor that—as demonstrated in legislations on divorce—is naturalized and devalued through the marriage contract and subscribed to the female spouse's responsibilities. If economically privileged to afford such arrangements, domestic labor can be passed onto a low-paid female migrant domestic worker who (paradoxically) left her own household and family to support their means to livelihood on behalf of her own reproductive autonomy.

The simultaneous feminization and devaluation of domestic labor shows further in households who cannot afford to buy off domestic and care labor in marketized forms. In a comprehensive research project from 2006[313] on the relationship between domestic/care labor, paid work and gendered divisions of housework within "disadvantaged

[312] Osseiran, 16.
[313] Rima R. Habib, Iman A. Nuwayhid, and Joumana S. Yeretzian, "Paid Work and Domestic Labor in Disadvantaged Communities on the Outskirts of Beirut, Lebanon," *Sex Roles* 55, no. 5 (2006): 321–29.

communities" located in the suburbs of Beirut (Hay el-Sellom, Nabaa, and Burj el-Barajneh camp), the authors conclude from their findings that women across all communities perform and assume the primary responsibility of household labor regardless of whether they simultaneously perform waged labor outside the household.[314] More specifically, the article argues that women involved in waged labor do significantly less maintenance and repair labor but continue to uphold the main responsibilities of the household and domestic labor responsibilities; often, parts of the labor are delegated to other members of the household that in their survey exposed "that housework is feminized, not only in adulthood, but also in the early stage of childhood;"[315] the insight appears reminiscent to Joseph's argument on gendered and aged hierarchical relationality within the (Lebanese) family. Such findings were constant among the respondents, despite differences in men's participation in some household tasks which interestingly increased when engaged in waged labor, except regarding those tasks defined as "core household tasks" such as cleaning, meal preparation, and laundry which women continue to mostly perform.[316] These tasks are also those that live-in domestic workers employed into wealthier households in Lebanon primarily uptake, and it seems suggestive of perceiving the most essential "core" household tasks as those that specifically are configured as feminized and naturalized. The structural connection between such an organization of domestic labor and other core aspects of social reproduction in Lebanon is especially demonstrated in the gradual surge in the employment of live-in domestic workers in wealthier Lebanese households—along with

[314] Habib, Nuwayhid, and Yeretzian.
[315] Habib, Nuwayhid, and Yeretzian, 325.
[316] Habib, Nuwayhid, and Yeretzian, 326–27.

the occurrence of recruitment companies—that particularly happened during the historical periods since the Civil War which saw further decreases in the already limited state-provisioned social welfare.

The organization of social reproduction and particularly domestic labor in Lebanon certainly appears to fall along the lines of the Marxist-Feminist main framework perceiving such labor and matters as historically and globally feminized, devalued, and domesticized, in other words treated as "non-market" activities in capitalist society. At the same time, the organization of social reproduction in Lebanon (paradoxically) exposes its intricate link to the Lebanese social formation—especially defined by its geopolitical location and relation to global formations of capitalist dependency, and the political-economic arrangements and governance system that have in turn stemmed. More specifically, the feminization and devaluation of domestic labor in Lebanon can be perceived as a consequence of the increasing privatization of social welfare, of family laws, and of social reproduction more generally alongside the simultaneous centering of finance and international trade. Such arrangements, in addition to the citizenship laws that further facilitate reproductive oppressive structures for women, queers and "non-citizens," have further reduced the costs of labor and production, and particularly the costs of reproducing the labor force. As such, the organization of social reproduction in Lebanon in several ways appears to fall along the lines of what Nancy Fraser calls a "dualized organization of social reproduction, commodified for those who can pay for it and privatized for those who cannot."[317] But while Fraser mainly ascribes this dualized organization of social reproduction to the current

[317] Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 104, 112.

financialized era of global capitalism, it appears to represent a rather persistent pattern of social reproduction throughout the modern historical eras of Lebanon.

What is further evident of the Lebanese formation is how the reduction of the costs of (reproducing) the labor force inexhaustibly links itself to the restriction of women and poor, marginalized, and racialized communities' access to reproductive justice and autonomy. When Mahdi 'Amil described the making of the Lebanese social formation as "a formation "in crisis"," or more specifically as occurring in simultaneity with when "the global capitalist mode of production entered its crisis phase with the transition to imperialism,"[318] it could—from the perspective of social reproduction—fittingly be translated to what Fraser calls the permanent "social-reproductive 'crisis tendency' or contradiction" under capitalism.[319] The core of this crisis tendency—as inherently a contradiction—appears to resonate appropriately with the organization of social reproduction in Lebanon alongside the centering of trade-related and financial interests, as Fraser elaborates the contradiction as the following: "on the one hand, social reproduction is a condition of possibility for sustained capital accumulation; on the other, capitalism's orientation to unlimited accumulation tends to destabilize the very processes of social reproduction on which it relies." [320] The social formation of Lebanon in the Periphery, in other words, seems to expose the intricate link between the devaluation of the reproduction of labor power (by treating it as non-social), informalized and migrant labor, and the reproductive oppression of the working class under capitalism—especially for women and

[318] Frangie, "Theorizing from the Periphery: The Intellectual Project of Mahdi 'Amil," 472.
[319] Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 100.
[320] Fraser, 100.

marginalized, racialized, and poor communities; and most particularly for migrant domestic workers.

CHAPTER III

"SUPER-EXPLOITATION" IN THE PERIPHERY: THE (PERMANENT) CRISIS OF HOUSEWORK AND THE COSTS OF LABOR

"Neḥna el-quwa el-ʿāmele" [We are the labor force]
"Being your domestic worker does not mean I am your property"
"We are not a member of your family – we are workers"
- Signs held at the International Domestic Workers' Day March in Beirut, June 24, 2018[321]

On the evening of June 3rd 2020, local social media outlets for leftist activist groups (many founded as part of the protest movements since October 2019) started sharing calls for support and awareness about an urgent matter: dozens of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers were being abandoned by their employers and left on the streets in front of the Ethiopian Consulate in Beirut—most without their papers, earned wages, nor any other financial means to meet basic needs or to repatriate. Earlier on the same day, the international human rights NGO Amnesty International published an article[322] urging the Lebanese Ministry of Labor to respond to the situation and to enforce the unified standard

[321]Various local organizations organized the march/protest as in previous years, such as Anti-Racism Movement and Kafa, with a particular focus on the breach of migrant domestic workers' rights under the Kafala system. For more information, see: Nicholas Frakes, "'Kafala Is Slavery': Protesters March for Domestic Workers' Rights in Lebanon," *Th New Arab*, June 26, 2018, https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/society/2018/6/26/protesters-march-for-domestic-workers-rights-in-lebanon.

[322] Amnesty International, "Lebanon: Abandoned Migrant Domestic Workers Must Be Protected," *Amnesty International*, June 3, 2020, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/lebanon-abandoned-migrant-domestic-workers-must-be-protected/.

contract for domestic workers signed by the Ministry of Labor in 2009,[323] which—supposedly—guarantees the workers' right to their wages, accommodation, and stipulates the employer to provide the worker with tickets to return home after determined contract.

Many of the workers in front of the consulate explained that their employers claimed they could not afford to have them employed and cover necessary fees any longer due to the increasing financial and economic crisis in Lebanon causing a dramatic ongoing devaluation of the Lebanese pound, which has only intensified under the simultaneous lockdown measures imposed by the government since March 2020 to prevent the spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic.[324] A pandemic which, as argued by Tithi Bhattacharya, in its immediate effects and exposure of a global health(/)care crisis has shown the centrality of "life-making activities" and reproductive labor for the workings of capitalism,[325] and has exposed the crucial consequences of privatized or public organizations of national welfare systems.[326]

Not surprisingly, referring to the unified standard contract did not result in any changes of the situation: a few weeks later, the Anti-Racism Movement (ARM)—in calling

[323] OHCHR, "Creative Solution: A Unified Contract to Protect Domestic Migrant Workers in Lebanon," *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR)*, March 2009, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/UnifiedContractLebanon.aspx.
[324] Abbie Cheeseman, "'Thrown Away like Garbage': The Plight of Foreign Workers in Crisis-Hit Lebanon," *The Telegraph*, June 14, 2020, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/thrown-away-like-garbage-plight-foreign-workers-crisis-hit-lebanon/.
[325] Tithi Bhattacharya, Social Reproduction and the Pandemic, with Tithi Bhattacharya, interview by Sarah Jaffe, Dissent Magazine, April 2, 2020, https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/social-reproduction-and-the-pandemic-with-tithi-bhattacharya.
[326] Alessandra Mezzadri, "A Crisis like No Other: Social Reproduction and the Regeneration of Capitalist Life during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Developing Economics* (blog), April 20, 2020, https://developingeconomics.org/2020/04/20/a-crisis-like-no-other-social-reproduction-and-the-regeneration-of-capitalist-life-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/.

for prompt and decisive action from the Lebanese government and governments of countries of origins—wrote that "More than 100 migrant workers of different nationalities have been abandoned by their employers or showed up at their consulate since the beginning of June 2020," and that "Migrant community groups reported that over 70 women have been abandoned by their employers even before June."[327] Additionally, a rapid survey conducted by ARM in mid-April 2020 among hundreds of live-in and live-out migrant workers in Lebanon showed that at least 60 % had lost their jobs since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2019 (40 % of them since the COVID-19 lockdown), while ARM generally concluded that currently, "most migrants are being pushed into severe poverty, unable to secure their most basic needs, including food and shelter" and, further, without options to repatriate due to the pandemic-related closure of borders and airports, and besides that high travel costs and government fees.[328]

The intensified exposure of the disposable nature that characterizes migrant and migrant domestic workers' conditions in Lebanon has been linked by some activists to the Black Lives Matter protest movements that since May 26, 2020, have been spreading across the U.S. and globally as responses to the police killings of Black people (particularly triggered by the events of George Floyd, a Black man killed by a white police officer in Minneapolis, the U.S. on May 25, 2020) and to systemic racism more generally, as activists

[327] Anti-Racism Movement, "Prosecute Employers Who Abandon Domestic Workers Now!," *Anti-Racism Movement*, June 15, 2020, https://www.armlebanon.org/content/prosecute-employers-who-abandon-domestic-workers-now.

[328] Anti-Racism Movement, "The Impact of the Economic Crisis and Coronavirus Lockdown on Migrant Workers," *Anti-Racism Movement*, April 26, 2020, https://www.armlebanon.org/content/impact-economic-crisis-and-coronavirus-lockdown-migrant-workers.

compared the Arab region's Kafala system to modern slavery.[329] The protest movements sparked off in the midst of global debates drawing attention to the current pandemic context being a "racial justice issue" as Black Americans and racialized, poor communities generally showed to face higher risks of exposure to the virus;[330] the link to *reproductive* justice issues seems palpable. Furthermore, the urgent situation in Lebanon lays clear how over a million migrant domestic workers and migrant/foreign workers generally live under conditions that, as a consequence of lowering costs of labor and (re)production, barely meet their own basic needs of reproduction. The sudden surge in household employers abandoning their domestic worker as a response to the growing economic crisis threatening their own social position and financial security, moreover, discloses an important lesson to be remembered: domestic labor and housework in Lebanon, organized along feminized and privatized lines as either unwaged or commodified in forms of domestic/"legal servitude,"[331] appear to be tightly affected and structured by the changes in the cost and market price of labor power. In other words, the current situation seems to suggest that the reproduction of labor power takes place in accordance with (and "inside") the capitalist mode of production—including its (inherent, and currently intensified) crisis-tendencies. This insight stands in contrast to the claims by Paul Smith[332] and other social reproduction

[329]See: Laudy Issa, "How Kafala Dehumanizes and Takes Power Away from Migrant Workers," *Beirut Today*, June 6, 2020, https://beirut-today.com/2020/06/05/how-kafala-dehumanizes-and-takes-power-away-from-migrant-workers/; Lama Hajj, "Support The Black Lives Matter Movement By Supporting Migrant Workers In Lebanon," *Beirut.Com* (blog), June 4, 2020, https://www.beirut.com/l/60153.

[330] Kenya Evelyn, "'It's a Racial Justice Issue': Black Americans Are Dying in Greater Numbers from Covid-19," *The Guardian*, April 4, 2020, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/08/its-a-racial-justice-issue-black-americans-are-dying-in-greater-numbers-from-covid-19.

[331] Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work*, x–xi.

[332] Smith, "Domestic Labour and Marx's Theory of Value," 215.

theorists insisting on the externalization of such labor processes from the capitalist mode of production. To adequately understand such dynamics in the current context of Lebanon, a quick overview of the current, worsening crisis and simultaneous uprising in the country throw light on the matter.

A. The Lebanese Formation: A Microcosm of the Permanent Crisis of Social Reproduction

When the largest popular protest movement in decades set off throughout Lebanon at October 17, 2019, it joined relays with a range of uprisings already happening or about to happen within the same year across the globe and especially throughout the developing populations of the "Periphery." While different in their specific demands and critiques, most global public attention analyzed the movements as responses to increasing systemic social problems, high inequality rates, corruption and anti-democratic conditions, deteriorating environmental conditions, and continuous neoliberal measures often facilitated by international actors/institutions and imposed by local authoritarian governments.[333] Moreover, and certainly in the case of Lebanon, scholars have pointed to the financialization of the world economy during the last decades as a crucial factor to understand the economic crises (often linked to high public debt) that spurred protests in

[333]See for example: Amnesty International, "Protests around the World Explained. Why Is Everyone Protesting?," October 25, 2019, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/10/protests-around-the-world-explained/; BBC News, "Why Protesters Are on the Streets Worldwide," *BBC News*, November 11, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-50123743.

developing countries.[334] For example, economist Costas Lapavitsas in a recent interview[335] draws focus to Lebanon's policy on the exchange rate based on the fixed peg to the U.S. dollar currency as destructive for the country's economy and generally notes that:

> "A fixed peg is a policy characteristic of financialization and dictated by the interests of financial capital in many developing countries. It is the preferred policy of big banks and financiers in a number of developing countries with the aim of entering the world market. Stabilizing the exchange rate is closely connected to controlling inflation, and so financial capital can secure profits and take them out of the country safely, while industrial capital pays the penalty of low competitiveness. These phenomena are characteristic of subordinate (or derivative) financialization in developing countries, reflecting the dominant role of finance capital and profit making by financial institutions. Lebanon is a severe case of subordinate financialization and has ruined its economy by promoting financial interests."[336]

As previously described, the centering of finance, the banking sector, and international trade in the Lebanese political economy that to various extents has dominated throughout its modern history has simultaneously resulted in, amongst many other aspects, underdeveloped productive domestic industries (such as the industrial and agricultural sector), a major informal sector of low-wage labor and a concurrent fragmentation of organized labor, high living costs and unemployment rates, damaged infrastructures, and a peripheral organization of social reproduction as feminized and privatized/commodified. Furthermore, the initiatives taken by the Lebanese government to deal with its debt—

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[334]See: Nisreen Salti, "No Country for Poor Men: How Lebanon's Debt Has Exacerbated Inequality," *The Carnegie Middle East Center*, September 17, 2019, https://carnegie-mec.org/2019/09/17/no-country-for-poor-men-how-lebanon-s-debt-has-exacerbated-inequality-pub-79852; Simon Hinrichsen, "Lebanon's Spectacular Economic Collapse," *Jacobin*, May 20, 2020, https://jacobinmag.com/2020/05/lebanon-sovereign-debt-default-borrowing-crisis; Lapavitsas, Lebanon is a severe case of subordinate financialization that must avoid the IMF; Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care"; Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

[335] Lapavitsas, Lebanon is a severe case of subordinate financialization that must avoid the IMF.

[336] Lapavitsas.

estimated to be equivalent to over 150 % of the domestic GDP already in 2018[337] and at the time of writing to reach levels of 175 %[338]—have continued to follow the lines of austerity measures, for example through increasing taxation on basic commodities for the majority population. As in several other countries (such as Chile, Ecuador, Iran, and Iraq), new tax implementations eventually led the popular classes to mobilize against the deepening socio-economic crisis.[339] In addition to new taxations, Lebanon had up until the popular protest movement sparked off in October experienced the growing crisis in other forms, such as shortages of U.S. dollar reserves and a simultaneous devaluation of the local currency, a month-long crisis in bread and fuel shortages, and local banks freezing housing loans.[340] The protest movement mobilized millions of people "across sectarian, regional, and class divides"[341] to the streets in cities and towns during its first week and carried out major strikes, road blockages across the country, shutdowns of schools, universities, and banks, and established a myriad of new organizations and activist groups evolving to mobilize and carry out demands for systemic change. Instantaneously, the country's crisis sank deeper. Despite the resignation of former Prime Minister Saad Hariri on October 23, 2019, and the forming of a new "technocratic" government on January 22, 2020, led by Prime Minister

[337] See: https://tradingeconomics.com/lebanon/government-debt-to-gdp

[338] Hinrichsen, "Lebanon's Spectacular Economic Collapse."

[339] Daher, "'The People Want the Fall of the Regime.'"

[340] Elia El Khazen, The Lebanese October Revolution against Sectarian Realism and Neoliberal Authoritarianism: Interview with Elia El Khazen, interview by Mattia Gallo, Historical Materialism, January 14, 2020, http://www.historicalmaterialism.org/interviews/lebanese-october-revolution-against-sectarian-realism-and-neoliberal-authoritarianism; Mona Khneisser, "Lebanon's Protest Movement Is Just Getting Started," *Jacobin*, November 7, 2019, https://jacobinmag.com/2019/11/lebanon-protest-movement-saad-hariri-arab-spring.

[341] Khneisser, "Lebanon's Protest Movement Is Just Getting Started."

Hassan Diab,[342] Lebanon's crisis has deteriorated significantly as exposed with regards to the Lebanese currency that—amid COVID-19 related lockdown measures—over the past months has lost more than 60 % of its value (in the time of writing, it has lost up to 80 % on the black market[343]).[344] The currency crisis has resulted in rapid inflation in products/commodities' prices, significant losses in the value of workers' and households' wages/financial means, and growing unemployment rates. A survey from June 2020 by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) showed that three out of four Syrians in Lebanon have lost their job or have no income.[345] Effectively, estimates suggest that by the end of 2020 up to 75 % of the population will require aid/assistance, while people living under the poverty line are expected to encompass around half of the population sooner or later.[346] The dire situation became further exemplified by migrant workers employed by the private waste-management company RAMCO who attempted to carry out a week-long labor strike between April and May, 2020, to protest against the significant losses in wages rendering them unable to financially support their families (through remittances) nor themselves; the

[342] Farah Najjar, "Lebanon Announces Formation of New Government," *Al Jazeera*, January 22, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/01/lebanon-announces-formation-government-200121200947113.html.
[343] The Daily Star, "Currency Collapse Shows No Signs of Abating," *The Daily Star*, June 30, 2020, https://www.dailystar.com.lb/Business/Local/2020/Jun-30/508307-currency-collapse-shows-no-signs-of-abating.ashx.
[344] Al Jazeera, "Lebanon Currency Crisis: Dozens Hurt in Second Night of Clashes," *Al Jazeera*, June 13, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/06/lebanon-currency-crisis-dozens-hurt-night-clashes-200613054206453.html.
[345] Abbie Cheeseman, "'People Will Die within Months': Lebanon Heads for Famine as Pandemic Accelerates Hunger," *The Telegraph*, June 20, 2020, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/people-will-die-within-months-lebanon-heads-famine-pandemic/.
[346] Habib Battah, "Who Is to Blame for Lebanon's Crisis?," *Al Jazeera*, May 23, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/blame-lebanon-crisis-200520161851075.html.

local riot police rapidly and violently put an end to it.[347] While the protest movements continue in various forms and numbers, they meet growing degrees of repression from the government, national security forces, and political elites.

On a global scale, the popular movements and socio-economic crises as intensively experienced in Lebanon are further worth being understood in the context of the last decades' neoliberal expansion of the "global reserve army of labor"[348] and the simultaneous lowering of wages. While such workings happen across the globe, Marxist economist John Smith has recently sought to specify that in the context of the Periphery/developing regions such processes effectively result in "wages below the value of labor power."[349] More specifically, Smith explains the lowering of wages with increasing processes of outsourcing production to developing countries in the Periphery, which has led to suppressing levels of consumption for low-waged workers there to increase surplus value and consumption as a source of profit in imperialist/Center economies.[350] In other words, Smith insists on the prevalence of imperialist structures in the current, global economy between the Center/Periphery or developed/developing capitalist countries. This claim is also what leads him to categorize the form of exploitation of workers in the developing world as a form of "super-exploitation."[351] From the perspective of social reproduction, the argument appears

[347] Timour Azhari, "Long Marginalised, Migrant Workers in Lebanon Strike over Pay," *Al Jazeera*, May 20, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/ajimpact/long-marginalised-migrant-workers-lebanon-strike-pay-200519203511280.html.
[348] Ferguson and McNally, "Precarious Migrants."
[349] John Smith, "John Smith's Response to David Harvey on Imperialism," *Radical Political Economy* (blog), March 20, 2018, https://urpe.wordpress.com/2018/03/20/john-smiths-response-to-david-harvey-on-imperialism/.
[350] Smith.
[351] John Smith, "Exploitation and Super-Exploitation," *Monthly Review* (blog), April 14, 2018, https://mronline.org/2018/04/14/exploitation-and-super-exploitation/.

reminiscent to Nancy Fraser's analysis of social-reproductive contradictions under neoliberal/financialized capitalism, in which she argues that wages become pushed "below the necessary costs of reproduction" and "below the level needed to support a family."[352] More generally, Fraser argues that it "is increasingly through debt, in other words, that capital now cannibalizes labour, disciplines states, transfers wealth from periphery to core, and sucks value from households, families, communities, and nature."[353]

From this perspective, the current, intensified crisis in Lebanon that the people are responding to can be paraphrased as an *intensification of the permanent crisis of social reproduction*, threatening the very basic needs and daily means to reproduce labor power and people. Established households who otherwise could afford low-paid exploitative forms of domestic labor change their organization of care labor and housework into unwaged and privatized forms. The domestic workers abandoned—already lacking access to reproductive autonomy due to the precarious employment and residence terms—are becoming homeless (for the second time, given they already left their own households and means of reproduction to financially support them) with no income. The already high numbers of people and households living under the poverty line are growing side to side with increasing inflation and food shortages. Informal, low-paid workers with no social security networks are rapidly losing their minimum income. And since the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and months-long lockdown measures of large sectors worldwide, unemployment has increased on a global scale with dire consequences for many, especially

[352] Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 106, 112.
[353] Fraser, 112–13.

live-in domestic workers.[354] Put differently, the current crisis of domestic labor in Lebanon confirms its entanglement with the overall crisis. This is further exemplified by other recent events: as migrant domestic workers with temporary residency status are being abandoned to the streets, companies are concurrently opening with the attempt to recruit Lebanese people, and particularly women, in urgent need for more income to do cleaning/housework for households still looking for marketized forms of reproductive labor on a daily/monthly basis. One of the founders of one such company expressed in an interview that "the work isn't shameful [el-shoghol mesh ʻāeb]" and thus should be used to help the *national* labor force currently in crisis.[355] Around the same time, or more specifically on the International Domestic Worker's Day of June 16, 2020 (where no march was held in Lebanon due to the context of the pandemic), the Domestic Worker's Union in Lebanon reemphasized their call to abolish the Kafala system, to stop prosecuting domestic workers, allow them to change employer freely until they can leave Lebanon, and further presented a new demand: to abolish the industry of recruitment companies and replace it with an official public institution in order to prevent abuse and treat domestic workers as workers rather than slaves.[356] Both incidents—the occurrence of private companies attempting to profit on the crisis by recruiting Lebanese workers into privatized/commodified forms of reproductive

[354]The current situation for migrant domestic workers in Lebanon is in many ways reminiscent to domestic workers' conditions other places globally. See for example in the context of Greece and Brazil: Maria Isabel Monteiro Lourenço and Mary Garcia Castro, "Domestic Workers and COVID-19 in Brazil," *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung*, May 19, 2020, https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/42292/domestic-workers-and-covid-19-in-brazil; Tatiana Mavromati and Laura Maragkoudaki, "Isolated In Someone Else's Home," *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung*, May 14, 2020, https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/42264/isolated-in-someone-elses-home.

[355] Nisreen Maraab, "مليار $ سنوياً تحويلات العمال الأجانب... 'الشغل مش عيب': لبنانيات لتنظيف المنازل," *Alankabout*, June 27, 2020, http://www.alankabout.com/lebanon_news/154321.html.

[356] National News Agency, "اللجنة التأسيسية لنقابة العاملات في الخدمة المنزلية طالبت بالغاء نظام الكفالة," June 17, 2020, http://nna-leb.gov.lb/ar/show-news/485051/.

labor, and the Union's urgent call for state-managed, centralizing recruitment processes for migrant domestic workers—in different ways clarify how the organization of labor/social relations of social reproduction upholds a crucial role in the systemic totality of capitalist society.

In the current context of Lebanon, it seems ever more fitting to reinstate the notion of the global reserve army of labor as it, in classical Marxist terms, implies to represent a "surplus population," meaning that in moments of crisis, the disposable character of the workers' conditions enables employers to easily render them unemployed to reduce costs of (re)production. This is even true in the case of female migrant workers of social reproduction (such as migrant domestic workers) who various social reproduction scholars argue generally face relatively more stable, long-term employment in contrast to male migrant laborers of the reserve army:[357] as the social formation of Lebanon and current intensified crisis expose, the inherent contradiction between social reproduction and capital accumulation tends to destabilize even rather consistent organizations of social reproduction, households, and domestic labor. The situation for low-paid(/migrant) laborers in global capitalism, also fittingly termed "servants of globalization" by sociologist and feminist scholar Rhacel Parreñas,[358] in other words seems to expose how the current crisis is, in fact, an acute expression of a rather permanent crisis of social reproduction under capitalism in all its various forms. It further exposes how the costs of labor serve as a

[357]See: Farris, "Social Reproduction, Surplus Populations and the Role of Migrant Women"; Ferguson and McNally, "Precarious Migrants."
[358] Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work*, 26.

cornerstone of regulating capital accumulation at the expense of most people's reproductive, social, and political life.

Since the urgency of the crisis for domestic workers in Lebanon has been exposed during recent months, one can only hope that the crisis not only will enable intensified struggles for the improvement for the lives of "servants of globalization;" one must further hope that the intricate connections between the crisis for domestic workers and the social-reproductive contradictions under capitalism affecting daily lives in both its periphery and center, in different ways, explicitly will seek its way into the demands for systemic change that are increasingly heard on the streets across the globe.

CONCLUSION

"Why do the people think so little of death?
Because the rulers demand too much of life.
Therefore the people take death lightly.
Having little to live on, one knows better than to value life too much."[359]
—Lao Tzu, "Tao Te Ching"

"The distancing of production from reproduction
and consumption leads us to ignore the conditions
under which what we eat, wear, or work with
have been produced, their social and environmental cost,
and the fate of the population on whom
the waste we produce is unloaded."[360]
—Silvia Federici, 2019

July 3rd, 2020: at the busy Hamra Street in Beirut, a 61-year old man commits suicide at Friday noon, right after yelling "for an independent and free Lebanon." Lying on the ground, witnesses notice two notes placed next to him: a clean judicial record, and a quote from a song by the famous Lebanese artist and political commentator, Ziad Rahbani, saying: "I am not a blasphemer. But hunger is blasphemy [Ana mesh kāfir; bas el jū'a kāfir]." Protesters later gathered at the spot, claiming that his death ought to be seen as a direct consequence of the crisis-ridden situation in Lebanon and the long-lasting ignorance from the political elite, rather than as suicide.[361] Shortly after, news reported another suicide by a 37-year old man in Saida, South Lebanon, who had struggled financially, while just a

[359] Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2019).
[360] Federici, *Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*, 109.
[361] See: https://news.yahoo.com/lebanon-suicides-spark-outrage-govt-over-economic-crisis-144018061.html

few weeks earlier, on June 18, 2020, the local newspaper L'Orient Le Jour reported that (yet) an(other) Ethiopian domestic worker was found hanged in her employers' house in Temnine el Tahta, Bekaa.[362] As the necropolitics[363] of the Lebanese formation in crisis day by day becomes clearer, the daily struggles for (re)producing life are equally heavily challenged: on the same Friday of July 3rd, a videoclip from a security camera circulated on social media of a man entering a pharmacy in Beirut, pulling out a gun and demanding the employees to hand him diapers and other necessary products for his newborn baby that he and his family can no longer afford.[364] And all the while the threat of a challenging outbreak from the global pandemic still prevails at any moment, almost all of Lebanon is at the time of writing deprived of stable power supplies due to fuel shortages, making the work in already underequipped hospitals as well as households and other such crucial spheres arduous and further challenged.[365] While writing this thesis, the economic, financial, and social-reproductive crisis in Lebanon deepens day by day, posing instant challenges to any current research attempting to grasp the structures of the social realities in place; the scope of this thesis has been no exception.

Domestic workers employed in private households to do care and housework in (modern) Lebanon have long represented a rich example of the effects of the political-

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[362] L'Orient-Le Jour, "Une Employée de Maison Éthiopienne Retrouvée Pendue Dans La Maison de Son Employeur," *L'Orient-Le Jour*, June 18, 2020, https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1222575/une-employee-de-maison-ethiopienne-retrouvee-pendue-dans-la-maison-de-son-employeur.html.

[363]The term "necropolitics" has evolved particularly due to the work of critical theorist Achille Mbembe and has been used in both feminist and queer theories. Elaborating on Foucault's notion of biopolitics, Mbembe presents a framework with the aim of exposing the (for many) deathly consequences of the contradictions inherent in capitalist regimes of borders and global structures of dependency. See: Achille Mbembe and Steve Corcoran, *Necropolitics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

[364] See: https://twitter.com/middleeasteye/status/1279037175120740354

[365] See: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/lebanon-s-main-coronavirus-hospital-forced-to-close-operating-rooms-due-to-power-cuts-a9604356.html

economic system in place that—in combination with global structures of feminized, devalued reproductive labor—render the workers' daily lives, working conditions, and means of reproduction precarious and restricted. This thesis has sought to expose exactly that link. By applying the theoretical framework of Marxist-Feminism and the analytical concept of social reproduction, the labor force of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon throughout its modern era has been analyzed with regards to the organization of housework and domestic labor in households as constituted by larger market structures, and as positioned within social relations of (re)production on a local, regional and global scale—rather than as an isolated phenomenon on a 'national' level. Approaching the organization of domestic labor from this perspective has rendered possible an analysis of not only domestic labor, but the organization of "social reproduction" in Lebanon, which involves all those processes needed for the daily and regenerative (re)production of life and labor power. In Lebanon, such processes of social reproduction are visible through the privatization of social welfare and a simultaneous facilitation of clientelist dependency-systems of social services, legislations on labor & family relations (where the latter is governed by para/nonstate religious courts), citizenship laws (particularly their impact on women, queers and those deemed permanent non-citizens), household structures, and unequal access to reproductive autonomy and justice. It is shown that, as argued by influential feminist thinkers like Nancy Fraser and Silvia Federici, financialized capitalist societies (such as the Lebanese society) result in an organization of social reproduction as both feminized, racialized, and privatized or commodified, making reproductive processes a contested field for survival that highly depends on people's socioeconomic status and structural position with regards to class, gender, citizenship, race, and sexuality.

Furthermore, it functions as co-constitutive of a large labor force of temporarily employed (migrant) workers whose own means of reproduction are significantly reduced as a way to cut costs of labor and (re)production in order to simultaneously increase capital accumulation.

In the social and colonial formation of Lebanon as located in the Periphery,[366] the centering of financial and trade interests has been rather consistent throughout its modern history, which concurrently has pushed social reproduction to a peripheral position of the political economy. Such an organization has made social reproduction a challenged yet essential sphere for the majority popular classes, and a means to gain political support and subordinate those classes for the political establishment. This thesis has further exposed the gendered implications for such an organization of social reproduction, as women's reproductive labor and autonomy render as restricted and bound to capitalist-dependent organizations of "the (heterosexual) family" and of the relationship between the household and the market treated as separate "domestic"/non-market and "public"/market spheres. The labor force of un/low-paid live-in female domestic workers, which has been present throughout both relatively stable (pre-Civil War) and crisis-ridden (Civil War, post-war) periods of the modern history of Lebanon, represents a very real symptom of such local social-reproductive structures. It simultaneously exposes the direct link to structures in the global economy affecting the labor and processes of social reproduction in both the Western Center and the Periphery of global capitalism where particularly housework appears to continuously be treated as "non-social" labor, even in commodified forms.

[366] Frangie, "Theorizing from the Periphery: The Intellectual Project of Mahdi 'Amil."

Social reproduction in Lebanon, furthermore, exposes the *permanency* of the current social-reproductive crisis and contradiction that many scholars, like Fraser, mostly ascribe to the current neoliberal era worldwide; in Lebanon, the organization of social reproduction as "commodified for those who can afford it and privatized for those who cannot"[367] appear to have constituted the social-reproductive sphere throughout the last century at least. What further appears to prove evident is the tight connection between political-economic changes, developments, and crises (locally, regionally as well as globally) to the organization of social reproduction and domestic labor in households—a connection which confirms claims within Marxist-Feminism arguing that such processes ought to be perceived as integral to, and structured by, the capitalist mode of (re)production.

For future research, these insights could possibly be extended and elaborated through other microcosmic representations of social-reproductive conditions across the globe, and particularly in spaces of the Periphery where the lowering of costs of (re)production are, and for long have been, extensively experienced across various social classes and structural positions. Indeed, the very current context of the global COVID-19 pandemic intensifying health(/)care crises, alongside the ongoing anti-establishment protest movements across the globe and Lebanon will undoubtedly cast light on the extent of social-reproductive contradictions under capitalism. Contradictions that, hopefully, will play a crucial role in future research as well as struggles for not only millions of live-in domestic workers and "servants of globalization," but generally for the conditions for livelihood and social reproduction vital to any living woman, human and not.

[367] Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 104.

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