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Reconciling Gender with the Elite's Power Interests: The Negotiation of a New Gender Order in French Mandate Syria

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Summary

The aim of this thesis *Reconciling Gender with the Elite's Power Interests: The Negotiation of a New Gender Order in French Mandate Syria* is to shed light on the understudied French Mandate period, which lasted from 1920 to 1946. Embedded into the context of post-World War I transformations and the rise of new societal and political actors, this period in Syrian history gave rise to significant changes in the socio-economic order and in the distribution of power and authority. Both, having an impact on the structure of gender relations at home and in the public sphere.

As the still raging Syrian conflict, World War I improved women's socio-economic conditions, eventually increasing their autonomy- and public visibility. However, time must tell if the above-mentioned positive socio-economic effects will become anchored in a post-conflict gender order in present-day Syria. Clearly, it was not the case with the new gender order, which emerged in the aftermath of World War I and in the context of rising nationalism in Syria's Interwar period.

In taking this find as a point of departure, this thesis will approach the question if the formation of a new gender order was actively shaped by elites' power interests in this tumultuous phase in Syrian history. The results of this research might be of interest to better understand the social dynamics unfolding in the context of the looming of Syria's (post)-conflict order today.

This thesis is composed of three chapters plus introduction and conclusion, each of them taking up a different methodological approach. Chapter two provides a rather empirical approach by offering a historical contextualization of the French Mandate period (1920-1946) based on secondary literature. The chapter consists of three parts. Part one gives an overview over the nationalist struggle. Part two focuses on the diverse landscape of the Syrian elites. The third part presents the quest for women's rights, which is embedded into the fight for the nationalist cause.

The third chapter is subdivided into three parts and presents the theoretical framework of this thesis, set to emphasize the ambiguous interrelatedness of power and gender in nationalist

elite's hegemonic discourses in the French Mandate period. Chapter 3.1 illustrates the image of women as symbolically significant but politically less important figures in nationalist rhetoric, drawing from accounts in postcolonial India and Egypt. Chapter 3.2 describes the conception of gender in the Arab middle class, holding the hegemonic status as cultural authority in an emerging nation state-context in the Arab world of the early twentieth century. Chapter 3.3 introduces the concept of hegemonic masculinity, theorizing the context- and time-dependent hierarchical order of masculinities with its most hegemonic form on top.

Chapter four, which consists of three chapters plus two subchapters, substantiates the hypothesis of the construction of a new gender order under the pretext of dominant's elites power aspirations by drawing on the theoretical framework and empirical accounts given in the former chapters. Chapter 4.1 gives an empirical account of elites' adjustment towards gender dynamics in the context of post-war transformations, colonialism and nationalism. Chapter 4.1.1 sheds light on the significance of the gendered public/private dichotomy in nationalist discourses. Whereas, Chapter 4.2 and 4.2.1 provide an overview over the nationalist-ideological underpinnings, adhering to the construct of the new gender order and its actual manifestations in the years of state consolidation after independence. Chapter 4.3 approaches the initially raised argument that it's mainly the nationalist elite's strive for power in the emerging nation state project, which eventually gave rise to a new gender order.

Finally, in the conclusion, three main arguments are put forth to explain the elite-driven emergence of a new gender order in French Mandate Syria. First of all, external circumstances, such as socio-economic effects in the course of the First World War led to a turnover of gender norms and social authority in the public- and private sphere. Second of all, old elites, which forged a pact with the French and also new influential forces, both stick to paternalistic gender norms. Third of all, the subordination of women inscribed into a new gender order is a 'psychological consequence' of the lower middle-class nationalists' own feeling of subordination (effiminization) before they reached their status as a hegemonic public voice.

Abstract

This thesis examines the genesis of a new gender order in the French mandate period (1920-1946) by considering the repercussions of World War I, the advent of French rule and the rise of nationalism on its emergence. Thereby, the emerging nationalist elite's power aspirations will be scrutinized by applying post-structural, post-colonial- and gender theories to forge the link between the propagation of a regressive gender order and the elite's striving for political leverage. In so doing, the thesis will be presented that the allegedly progressive nationalist elite propagated paternalistic and republican principles to wriggle themselves out of a marginalized position into a secure and powerful position in the newly emerging nation state.

Introduction

This thesis will investigate the negotiation of a new gender order in French Mandate Syria (1920-1946). In this period, women found themselves in an improved socio-economic situation, since the prevalence of harsh economic conditions throughout World War I forced them to be more autonomous. Consequently, women were taking up more work outside of the household. Therefore, this thesis will be organized around the core question if power-driven elites contributed to the rise of a new gender order, pervaded by paternalistic elements, which impeded women from taking advantage of their newly won liberties.

The First World War, which preceded the mandate period brought uttered devastating losses (an estimated 500,000 deaths by famine counted in the Levante until 1918) and the socio-economic effects of World War I led to a "subversion of order and authority at home and in the community," which later culminated in "gender anxiety" and a "crisis of paternity" (Thompson 2000: 19, 117). These sentiments were internalized by emerging societal forces, and reappeared in form of the above-mentioned gender order, as it will be argued throughout the thesis amongst others.

The interest for this topic originates from the recent dynamics unfolding in Syria and the looming post-conflict transformations in terms of gender politics. Since the Syrian conflict began in 2011 as a series of peaceful and localized protests and later turned into a proxy war, millions of people have been displaced internally and across borders, which has led to a "protracted humanitarian crisis" (UN Women 2018: 1). Especially for women and girls, the devastating conflict, which has been raging for eight years, has had dire socio-economic

consequences, bringing the significance of the gender dimension for the debate on post-conflict reconstruction to the fore.

A recent analysis has shown that a transformation of the gender order in the course of improved socio-economic conditions for women took place in Syria lately (Hilton 2017). By assuming more of the jobs of their male fellows, who were wounded or killed during the devasting war in Syria, women gained better opportunities to access the labor market (ibid.). However, time will tell if this socio-economic change will be enough to contribute to women's improved situation in society or if this favorable development will be impeded by rising conservative forces, attempting to determine a new socio-political order in their favor.

As has been pointed out in the above-mentioned example from Syria today, women 'benefited' from the liberties won through the changed situation in the household in the course of war. This development in gender politics can be linked to an earlier period in Syria: the immediate aftermath of World War I when King Faysal established a period of Arab rule (1918-1920), in which public debates about guaranteeing women more political and legal rights emerged due to women's newly won liberties (ibid. 19, 41).

In the French Mandate period (1920-1946), however, the debate on women's role in society changed, having lasting consequences on the making of a new civic order in the mandate period and beyond. This discursive change was carried out in form of negotiation processes between social movements and state affiliates of the French administration or rather 'old elites' and 'new elites' arguing out issues like women's suffrage, (public) political participation, personal status laws etc.

To tackle the initially mentioned research question, why the discourse on the role of women in society gradually changed to their misfortune, paving the way for the negotiation of a new gender order, the significant role of elites in the public discourse in the 1920s and 1930s in Syria must be considered. For instance, one element of the "comprador bourgeoisie['s]" (Perthes 1991: 31) impact on gender was their exercise of "gender hierarchy," upheld as an unspoken agreement between them and the French to secure their privileges and empower them against the subordinated parts of "colonial society" such as women, peasants, workers etc. (Thompson 2000: 4). Thus, considering the clientelist practices employed by the French, it must be said that the French influence in Syria did not mean progress towards the improvement of gender equality.

Moreover, light will be shed upon the "gender anxiety" of male political and intellectual elites, who were organized in the nationalist movement as members of the National Bloc or as more radical rebels fighting in the street, who saw themselves confronted with their own "effeminization" due to their changed socioeconomic status in the course of the First World War and the following subordination under French rule (Thompson 2000: 196).

Thus, the reclaiming of the street by men, the rise of fascist-like youth organizations as a demonstration of male physical strength can be considered as a response to the "crisis of paternity" and perceived "gender anxiety" by lots of men in this period, gradually expulsing women out of the public space (ibid. 19). Yet, elite women found another avenue of public engagement or so-called counter publics parallel to political spaces occupied by men, namely private societies, through which they could provide health and education services to subordinated groups of society.

Finally, the underlying structural processes and concepts determining this highly transformative period to be studied, such as post-conflict transformation, colonialism, and nationalism must be considered when investigating the emergence of a new gender order. Although, these are large fields of research on their own, the afore-mentioned concepts and fields of research will only be dealt with within the limits of the given topic due to the limited scope of this thesis.

In order to forge a link between the elite's power reconfigurations and their impact on the ideological turn of gender politics, an introductory section in chapter two will provide the historical background by contextualizing the nationalist struggle. The second chapter will be complemented by a section examining the structure of the heterogenous landscape of the Syrian bourgeoisie and the various fractions' interaction with each other. Another section will outline changes in the structure of gender in the post-war households, and the increased public articulation of feminist demands in the public.

By focusing on the analytical link between the interplay of elite- and gender dynamics, chapter three provides the theoretical framework for the analysis of the notion of power shaping the hegemonic gender discourses- and policies in the French mandate period. In this sense, three subchapters will theorize the symbolically significant and contested image of women in nationalist discourses and nation making processes (Baron 2005; Chatterjee 1989), the formation of certain gender roles in an emerging Arab middle class determining the

intellectual discourse in the early twentieth century nationalist-oriented societies (Watenpaugh 2015; Ryzova 2014), and the hierarchical structuring of masculinities with a certain hegemonic masculinity as the most powerful one dependent on time and context (Connell 2005).

Finally, to substantiate the thesis of a gender-elite-power nexus, theories in the field of post-structuralism, investigating the dynamics of power and subject/knowledge formation, will be applied in the fourth chapter. For instance, one subchapter will deconstruct the nationalist power-driven ideology with regard to its idea of gender to find answers to the following sub-question: why and how did gender come to play a decisive role in the elite's striving for political leverage?

2. The Socio-Political Context in the French Mandate Period (1920-1946): Rising Nationalism, the 'Women's Question' and Elite Re-Configurations

2.1 The Nationalist Struggle

The 400 years long Ottoman dynastic rule over Greater Syria and Lebanon ended in 1918 with Arab troops and the entente capturing Damascus and Beirut (Thompson 2000: 39, 41). A subsequent short period of Syrian Arabism articulated against "Ottomanism," "Turkish policies," and decentralization, eventually led to the formation of an Arab state (1918-1920) headed by King Faysal (Khoury 1987: 19).

The period of Arab rule had already ended in 1920 when the French mandatory rule was introduced, and the territory of Greater Syria and Lebanon was split into two countries (Thompson 2000: 39). Although, it was foreseen as a temporary arrangement, "preparing the people for self-government in the spirit of Woodrow Wilson's principles of self-determination," the French soon demonstrated that they would rule with an iron fist "if cooperation was not forthcoming" (ibid.). In the same year, Faisal and his army were quickly defeated and expelled by the French, with brute force at Khan Maysalun (ibid., Khoury 1987: 97).

Soon after the French established their rule, the new high commissioner for Greater Syria and Lebanon, General Henri Gouraud, delivered an opening speech in which he applied "a standard familial colonial discourse," depicting "France as a caring mother, and Gouraud as a stern father" (Thompson 2000: 40.). However, "in the subtext of the speech […] Gouraud was

competing with an alternative father figure, King Faisal," who is to be embedded into the tradition of paternalistic rule in the Arab world (ibid.). To this end, Faisal had the function of an "Arab father" mobilizing "a new generation of nationalists around his prestigious Hashemite dynasty," which can be traced back to the prophet (ibid. 41). Gouraud, however, revealed his "stern paternalism" by cracking down on Faysal's supporters, mainly "populist rebublican[s]" and nationalists (ibid. 42).

The French political system rested on three pillars. Firstly, the highest ranked "high commissioners were all generals in the French military" (ibid.). Secondly, a network consisting of "paternalistic elites – tribal shaykhs, religious patriarchs and rural landowners" functioned as intermediaries between state and society (ibid.). Thirdly, a large civilian bureaucracy apparatus provided "social and economic services" to the population (ibid.). The colonial governance system rested on "paternalistic privilege" based on "republican rights and representation," producing a rather unstable hybrid civic order (ibid. 43). In consequence, a conservative gender order was rehashed by neglecting emerging feminist voices and new spatial liberties won by women, which will be elaborated more on in subchapter 2.1.3.

Meanwhile, discontent with the French political authority was on the rise, which became the main agitator of "nationalist politics in interwar Syria" (Khoury 1987: 19, ibid.). Occasionally, the revolt spilled into Lebanon, finding its final expression in "a sustained guerilla-style rebellion in northern Syria" from 1919 until 1921, which the French had to fight (Thompson 2000: 43). However, the largest revolt, lasting until World War II, was the Syrian Revolt, which started in the south of Syria (ibid.). In 1925, Sultan al-Atrash, leader of the Druze and main figure of this revolt, mobilized 10,000 fighters and captured al-Suwayda, the provincial capital of this region (ibid.).

Philip S. Khoury divides the evolution of the independence movement in French Mandate Syria into four phases. The above-mentioned conflicts between revolutionaries and the French are to be embedded in the first phase (1920-1927), emphasizing "head-on confrontation[s] between the French and the nationalist leadership" triggered by the looming threat of the separation of Syria from Lebanon, policies among ethno-religious lines, the centralization of power, and economic and political self-interest of the French (Khoury 1987: 20).

The main drivers of these revolutionary activities were economic and political in nature: A drought had destroyed crops, which intensified the already deteriorating economic postwar

situation (ibid. 44). Also, French monetary interests, and economic policies were exclusively designed to further French interests and had a devastating effect on the socioeconomic situation in Syria (Khoury 1987: 5). Moreover, there was resistance against the new French governor's Captain Carbillet's ruling practice, which was against Gouraud's colonial methods, and in congruence with the "interventionist and statist republicanism" exerted in France itself (ibid.). Another aspect, which became characteristic of the Druze revolt, was a strong nationalist sentiment, calling for independence and territorial unity within Syria (ibid. 46).

Nationalists with an urban background participated in the protests soon after to fight together with the Druze against "colonial republicanism" and "foreign rule" (ibid.). While Iraqi troops and south Syrian tribes were the backbone of the "Arab Revolt," the "Syrian Revolt," mainly consisted of the "popular nationalist movement that had emerged in the Faysal era" (ibid.).

The French response to the nationalist revolt was brutal and they managed to engage "rural landowners" in the fight against "urban and tribal nationalists" (ibid.). In addition, the number of French troops was increased from 12,889 in 1919 to 69,146 in 1921 as a reaction to rebellions in northern Syria (ibid. 49). Although, the rebels were almost defeated in 1926, fighting continued in various provinces until 1927 with high casualties on both sides (ibid. 46). To take control over society and "to discipline the population," France had established a "substantial military, police, and intelligence network […] by 1930" (ibid. 49).

However, the French victory over the Syrian Revolt marked the end of the era of armed resistance, paving the way for "a new era of politics" (ibid. 50). In this regard, the National Bloc was established, "a political alliance committed to peaceful negotiation with the French," and led by "Sunni Muslims from the urban landowning bourgeoisie," driven by the nationalist cause (ibid. 50-51). Fearing change, both parties "entered into a pact that reaffirmed the paternalistic pillars of colonial rule […]" (ibid.). Thereby, democratic experiments in more political participation were rendered impossible (ibid.). Although, the constitutions of Syria and Lebanon bear hallmarks of the Syrian revolt, and are dissimilar to the events in Lebanon, the Syrian revolt hasn't sidelined the opposition or provoked sectarianism (ibid. 50-51).

The above-mentioned "new era of politics" (ibid. 50) is in accordance with the second phase (1927-1936) Khoury demarcated to categorize the development of nationalist activities. In this period, the French decided to make some concessions, and gave Syrians the opportunity for self-governance, i.e. parliamentary elections, constitution formation processes (Khoury 1987:

20). Accordingly, the “nationalist leadership” decided on a more moderate stance (no violent resistance), and to arrange themselves with foreign rule as they did before in the Ottoman period, but not to give up their claims for “unity and independence” (ibid.). Meanwhile, the National Bloc became the most significant political organization in the period of French rule (ibid.).

In 1928, the French, to appease the recently defeated nationalists, set up elections “for a constitutional convention instead of establishing a Syrian monarchy” (ibid.). The above-mentioned National Bloc, which evolved between 1927-1930, was a crucial faction in this convention (ibid.). Its functionaries were mainly members of the “urban landowning bourgeoisie,” working closely with the French to manifest control of the government, and to gain independence eventually (ibid. 51 f.). However, these “conservative liberals” had little interest to pursue “social and economic reform,” since it was against their interests “as patrons of personal clientele networks” (ibid. 52).

Like Lebanon’s constitution, a draft proposing a “parliamentary republic” in Syria was presented to the convention by Ibrahim Hananu in 1928, a member of the National Bloc and an important figure in the “armed revolts in Northern Syria” (ibid.). However, the constitution was suspended by French High Commissioner Henry Ponsot in 1930, since conservatives back in France feared “liberal tendencies” and an “assertion of sovereignty,” which would undermine French authority in Syria (ibid. 52-53).

Obviously, the development towards higher political autonomy for Syrians was not successful until then, as Khoury sums up in a third phase (1933-1939), focusing on the negotiations regarding new power sharing formula between the French and the National Bloc: the more radical wing of the National Bloc was not satisfied with a treaty the more moderate factions within the bloc had negotiated, which led into a general strike among the nationalists (ibid. 21). Further, the French were ready for negotiations and invited a delegation to finally decide on the implementation of a transitional period in which the nationalists would share power with the French authorities (ibid.) However, France was never really that committed to the arrangement, which instigated resistance among the Nationalist Bloc, eventually leading to the resignation of the bloc (ibid.).

Although the nationalists lost the battle for “Syrian unity and sovereignty” for now, they had high stakes in shaping a “republican civic order” challenging “Islamic and monarchist

tendencies" (ibid. 53). This "republican civic order," however, had few democratic elements, since the election system, shaped by the Ottomans, favored the "paternalistic elites," which were buttressed by the French (ibid.). In exchange for "political loyalty," this old landowning elite received vast political and economic leverage through the access to formerly Ottoman land (ibid. 53 f.).

Also, the French built a clientelistic network with "religious patriarchs," who had the capacity to exert more influence on "common people's sentiments than did elite politicians, and especially nationalists (ibid. 54). Through their clientelistic network, they disregarded the development of "constitutional politics" to implement their policies in order to please their favored elites, which would eventually foster their rule (ibid.).

Still, nationalists also had a stake in it, since they "confronted French paternalism not by demanding adherence to republican principles, but by marshalling clientels of their own" (ibid.). Consequently, there evolved an "intra-elite conflict" between members of the National Bloc and French compradors (ibid. 54 f.).

The last phase in Khoury's periodization sheds light on the developments in Syria during the Second World War from 1939 on, eventually resulting in Syria's independence in 1945 (ibid.). With the help of the British, who entered the country in 1941 in the course of the "[a]llied invasion," the National Bloc formed a government consisting of nationalists, "supported by a newly elected nationalist Parliament returned to office in 1943," which outlasted the withdrawal of French- and British troops in 1946 (ibid. 22, 271). Eventually, Syria's independence was achieved in the manner favored by the nationalist leadership, with negotiations instead of an uprooting revolution (ibid.).

This chapter has pointed out how the establishment of French rule in Syria in 1920 triggered the emergence of bottom-up social movements, which found their main expression in the Syrian nationalist movement. It also gave rise to splinter movements, like the women's movement, which will be presented more detailed in chapter 2.1.3. The attainment of higher political autonomy for Syrians seemed likely, as the from the French administration politically recognized National Bloc almost succeeded in forging a power sharing deal with the French to enable the development of constitutional politics.

However, elite fractions of France's clientelistic network in Syria and even some moderate National Bloc members, who saw their economic and political interests jeopardized, impeded

this development towards higher political autonomy and sovereignty for the Syrians. To better understand why elites had the means and power to help shape political events in Syria, the following section will historically contextualize elites in their social, economic, sectarian- and political position inside Syria as measured by their alignment with foreign administrations/capital and/or the nationalist movement.

2.2 Placing the Syrian Elite in the Context of the End of World War I and Under the French Occupation

As elites play a significant role in this thesis, the focus will be on the study of elites in this chapter, which was a "fashionable" study object until the 1970s, focusing on elite's resilience as democratic institutions became more prominent (Khan 2018: 1). However, elite theory is a wide field. Due to the chosen topic, the focus here will lay here on certain elites in a given historical context. As mentioned in the definition of elites in the Oxford bibliographies, there are several types of elites, namely cultural-, political-, economic-, social-, and knowledge elites (ibid.).

The focus in this work is on "powerful elites," exerting influence across several sectors of society and therefore functioning as political, economic and cultural/intellectual elites at the same time (ibid.). Vilfredo Pareto, among Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels, the cofounder of the Italian School of Elitism, contributed to the development and prominence of elite theory in the West (Keohane & Nye 1977). According to him, all societies are structured around the "two analytic and interacting categories [of] the largely powerless masses and powerful elites, with the latter sub-divided into 'governing' and non-governing elites'" (Higley & Pakulski 2012: 113).

Regarding Syria, as Philip S. Khoury points out, the significant political movements after the end of Ottoman rule "were led by members of urban upper-class families and former officials of the Sultan" (1987: 3). But how to grasp and categorize the upper strata of Syrian society?

Volker Perthes defines the Syrian bourgeoisie in a 1991 article on the "Bourgeoisie and the Ba'th" as a "lively upper stratum of society," which can be divided into "four main groups or branches – the old bourgeoisie, the new industrial bourgeoisie, the state or bureaucratic bourgeoisie, and the new commercial bourgeoisie (including its top stratum, the 'new class')"

(Perthes 1991: 31). Although, Perthes focus in this study is on the rise and configuration of elites in the years of Ba'th rule, which triggered an elite change and gave rise to a new lower class/peasant "state bourgeoisie," attention will be paid to another period here. In focusing on the French Mandate period before the emergence of the Ba'th in the early 1960s, attention will be paid to the "old bourgeoisie," which has its roots in the "'landowning bureaucratic class of the late Ottoman period" (ibid.).

This landowning class stands for continuity in terms of its "exercise of local political power in Syria which was not disrupted by the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire" (Khoury 1987: 3) – the same men responsible in the local councils under the Ottomans, or their sons, held these positions under French rule. After the demise of the Ottoman Empire, these "influential families of local notables and Turkish officials" remained dominant, either "as a comprador bourgeoisie colluding with the French mandate and foreign capital, or as a 'national bourgeoisie' of merchants and early industrialists who in the 1930s and 1940s first imported modern machinery into Syria on a large scale" (Perthes 1991: 31). In the course of Syria's independence in 1946, this class took control over the government, and regardless of "internal struggles," oversaw leading functions until the late 1950s (ibid.). However, the rise of the Ba'th party in 1963 and the following land reforms and "nationalizations of 1963 and 1965 liquidated or seriously diminished their economic power" (ibid. 32).

In describing the composition of the nationalist activities in the course of the "Great Revolt," it must be said that this "anti-imperialist uprising" was cross-sectional (Khoury 1987: 205). Not only the "urban absentee landowning class" was represented, but also the "commercial bourgeoisie and traditional artisanal classes in the towns, the middle-class intelligentsia including Western educated professionals, and members of the Muslim religious establishment, the peasantry, and even some Bedouin tribes" (ibid.).

Still, regardless of the "popular" image of the upheaval, some communities stayed away from the revolt or even cooperated with the French (ibid.); for instance the "non-nationalist wing of the absentee landowning-bureaucratic class" and Christian minority groups stayed away from the Great Revolt (ibid. 206). In 1925, the upsurge of the revolt, three groups had high stakes in "keeping the revolt alive […]: the Muslim commercial bourgeoisie, the absentee landowning class, and the peasantry" (ibid. 207).

However, the “commercial bourgeoisie” was comprised of two rival fractions (ibid.). On the one hand, there were the “comprador bourgeoisie,” merchants with a money lending background, who became “local agents of European trading houses” in the course of the nineteenth century” (ibid.). Thereby, religious minorities such as Christians and Jews were the preferred merchants for the Europeans, directing the flow of manufactured goods from Europe into the Syrian market (ibid.).

On the other hand, merchants and peasants with a Muslim background developed a hostile stance towards the local Christian agents of “European interests” by the mid-nineteenth century (ibid.). This hostility was not only because merchants with a Christian background had better access to raw materials through European cash transfer, but also due to the “destruction of many local handicrafts” in the course of European expansion on the Syrian market (ibid.). The growing hostility from the Muslim side towards this economically powerful class eventually culminated into the “massacre of Christians in Damascus in 1860” (ibid.).

In the light of the heavy economic difficulties the “comprador bourgeoisie” faced in the course of World War I, this class saw its chance “to renew and refortify its mediating role between French commercial interests and the Syrian economy” through the French occupation (ibid. 208).

Consequently, not to jeopardize its economic interests, the comprador bourgeoisie kept its distance from the Great Revolt and supported “a quick and decisive French victory” instead (ibid.). In the course of the nineteenth century, the “Muslim commercial bourgeoisie and the absentee landowning class grew more financially interdependent” (ibid. 209).

Nevertheless, both “classes” still exhibited differences in terms of their “social prestige, of (foreign) education, culture, and politics” (ibid.). Following the acceleration of European expansion and the deepened pursuing of their interests, the “minority-dominated comprador class” strengthened their position inside Syria (ibid.). This development unfolded, however, at the cost of the Muslim merchants, who saw their basis of economic success corroded, driving them into the arms of the rising movement of the Arab nationalists (ibid.).

Eventually, the Muslim fraction of the commercial bourgeoisie contributed in form of a support role to the progress of the nationalist cause (ibid. 212). To this end, “their nationalism was practical and unsystematic; they focused on expelling the French from Syria and

sometimes mixed in popular Islamic religion, anti-Christian agitation, and even class warfare against urban landlords and notables" (Provence 2005: 151).

However, the "socially prestigious" and "[highly educated] absentee landowning class," which was involved in the national resistance from the very beginning, had a leadership position within the movement (Khoury 1987: 212). In the course of the introduction of Arab rule in 1918, other classes such as the "professional middle classes" and the "commercial bourgeoisie" were incorporated into the nationalist movement's expansion (ibid.).

Nonetheless, the "absentee landowning class" held the leadership role within the movement, which remained strong after the French invasion and lasted throughout the mandate period (ibid. 213). The landowners got involved in the Great Revolt, providing weapons and financial assistance, not only because of a strong bond to the nationalist movement, but also because the "French had attacked their material interests by excluding landowners with nationalist leanings from holding high government office" (ibid. 214).

The underlying rationale for the French for weakening the absentee landowning class was to fight the nationalist movement, and in a second step, to "exacerbate tensions between the nationalist and collaborationist wings of the urban absentee landowning class and between city-based and rural-based landlords" to secure their position of power (ibid. 213).

Still, it was men of a "modest background" (ex-military officers, religious functionaries, local leaders), representing a rising (bourgeois) social group, mostly military educated, who organized the actual "resistance" and street protests, emphasizes Michael Provence in his comprehensive account of the nationalist years in Syria (2015: 151)[1]. Through their down-to-earthness, they managed to reach out to popular and rural segments "far better than the self-appointed nationalist elite of intellectuals and western-educated politicians" (ibid.). Thereby, the mobilizing strategy of the nationalists rested on the formation of a "Syrian-Arab identity," which was grounded in the notion of the "national community," united in their fight "against a clearly but negatively defined enemy [:] […] [the] Other (such as a colonial military power)" (ibid. 152).

Eventually, the bourgeois activists, leading the nationalist insurgencies in the 1920s and 1930s against the French and "great landowning notables," were the "sons of Damascene grain

[1] For further information see Provence, Michael (2005): The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism (1st Edition). Austin: University of Texas Press.

merchants and Druze shaykhs who became the first proponents and adherents of a radical new nationalist ideology that became Ba'thism in the 1940s" (ibid.).

While this chapter elaborated on how elites had the means and power in helping to shape political events in Syria, subchapter 2.1.3 will shed light on the reappearance of gender in public debates in Syria's post-war context, which found its manifestation in the re-organization of social roles in the household and the rise of women's activism. To this end, the different stances of various elites/classes on the 'women question' will be considered.

2.3 The Quest for Women's Rights

This subchapter is structured around three main developments: first of all, to frame the broader picture of the socio-economic effects of the First World War, turning gender norms upside down. Second of all, to provide an overview of the negotiation of gender in the period of Arab rule under King Faysal. Third of all, to give an overview of the politicization of gender issues in the advent of French rule, which became articulated in women's societies, salons and public demonstrations.

The consequences of World War I hit the population in the "Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire" hard and "[t]he trauma of war and famine ran deep," for instance loved ones were lost in the war, people died of hunger (an estimate of 500.000 in the Levante by 1918) and from the cold; trust in authorities, which held families and communities together, vanished; wide cut cleavages between classes, religious groups and gender among others emerged (Thompson 2000: 19). All these developments led to a "subversion of order and authority at home and in the community" culminating into a "pervasive crisis of paternity" (ibid.).

Personal accounts of soldiers (i.e. diaries, poems), who died in the war as martyrs, revealed the "interrelationship of family, gender and patriotism," demonstrating that the fight for the country and its defense is a male role linked to the protection of the family and of women, whereas women's role is rather victimized and confined to the home and the 'defense' of their children (ibid. 24-25). However, the failure of male soldiers to do so, which was expressed in their letters and poems, "was sometimes projected back onto female victims, in horror stories

of what women supposedly did when left alone," i.e. trading themselves in exchange for food (ibid. 25).

These experiences turned the gender order upside down in the course of war, meaning that the (future) role of both genders in the nation was constructed differently for each, i.e. men would frame their fight for the national cause/independence as an act to protect "their women from French men and the French state" and the motherly image of women would determine the debate about "women's rights to full citizenship" (ibid. 26-27). Thereby, the notion was repeated in the public that "women alone went crazy" when their men were fighting in war and that therefore women need to be protected by men (ibid. 30).

Nonetheless, women involuntarily had to learn to survive with sewing activities (i.e. "female-head households became common") in the course of World War I, by trading goods, as servants, midwives, and as workers in tobacco factories etc. (ibid. 25, 32; Meininghaus 2016: 46). This development gave rise to the "gender anxiety" and the "crisis of paternity" mentioned above (ibid. 31).

The increase of the number of women working outside home (i.e. factories, service- or commercial sector) in the course of World War I did not only occur in Syria at that time but also in England. As British women's life was confined to the domestic sphere before the war, women took up employment "en masse" when their male relatives went to war (Adie 2019: 1)[2]. Even though it's a known fact that vast numbers of women with rural/urban poor backgrounds had worked as weavers or spinners since the late nineteenth century in Syria, there are no accurate figures for female labor force participation before the country's independence in 1946 (Meininghaus 2016: 45-46).

In 1927, 'Adila Bayyhum launched the "Jam'iyyat yaqazat al-mar'a al-shamiyya," which supported women with their handicraft work in the countryside, enabling them to gain a "modest income" (ibid. 46). However, even if women made a modest contribution to the family's household, "women's employment was clearly not encouraged, leaving them dependent on their relatives" (ibid. 47)

Also, the disruption of families and their support systems becomes apparent when considering "the number of children housed in orphanages" after the war and the rise in construction of

[2] For further information see Adie, Kate (2019): What did World War One really do for women? (iWonder), *BBC*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z9bf9j6#z8rv87h [last accessed: June 10, 2019]

orphanages throughout Syria and Lebanon (ibid. 32). However, even, 'intact families' with both parents still alive were facing hardship as well, since, after fathers returned from war eventually, "they were often penniless or handicapped, or both" (ibid. 33).

Moreover, "[w]hile men faced great difficulty in providing for their families," many women from the lower strata of society "also saw sources of supplementary income through which they had once contributed to their household income disappear" in the course of the breakdown of the silk industry and the rise of foreign imports (ibid. 34). Furthermore, "old strategies for survival" no longer worked for families, since sometimes both women and men were obliged to work or women who relocated to cities lost the supplementary income, they'd gained through home cropping or trading activities (ibid.). So, the division of labor changed in general, because men "could no longer be the family's main breadwinner" in the course of the above-mentioned changes (ibid.). The roots of this gender anxiety, especially among lower class men, which arose because of "instability in the labor market," and a crisis of paternal authority, will be explored more thoroughly with the according theoretical framework in chapter 4.2 (ibid.).

Also, elites, especially bourgeois landowners, who were not undergoing far reaching changes in their socioeconomic status, since they "enlarged their landholdings" and profited "from land sales by the poor" for instance, "faced their own sorts of stress due to changing gender roles in the household" (ibid. 36). For instance, the opinion towards "women's work and education" changed within the elite and middle class in the course of war, since women who left their "means of support" in World War I were forced to become more self-sufficient (ibid. 36). Besides the trend of younger middle-class women to seek employment as saleswomen or hotelkeepers for instance or pursue professional careers as doctors after finishing their education, "the younger generation of the elite [..] [started to] establish separate households from their families and [to] have fewer children" (ibid.).

Consequently, the nuclear family model became prominent, which led to a significant shift in gender roles in upper segments of society since women now married later, and attitudes towards female education and work had changed (ibid. 37). Therefore, the patriarchal model lost popularity among elites, and the trend went towards "companionate marriage" and more flexibility and autonomy in the household with the possibility of employing servants (ibid.).

Finally, the repercussions of the First World War "had a direct and indirect effect on upper- and middle-class households" in terms of gender: although positive attitudes towards "women's education and the benefits of their employment and later marriage" were not new after the war, the suffering and hardship faced during the war, made these ideas more reasonable (ibid.).

This changed role for women, their new public visibility and the need for social and economic transformation was spotted by King Faysal. Immediately after the end of World War I, despite the difficulty of an unbalanced budget and an under-staffed administration, Faysal's government took the initiative "to meet demand for social and economic services" (Thompson 2000: 76). For instance, widows' "war pensions" were prolonged, public health- and educational services were improved (ibid.). Thereby, special attention was paid to girls' education: ten schools were foreseen for girls from the thirty-six schools opened in total after the war (ibid.).

This new boost of state-society relations under King Faysal occurred because the elitist and paternalistic order exercised by the Ottomans had been turned upside down in the course of World War I (ibid.). Hence, King Faysal sensed that the time had come for a 'social upgrade' and transformed this new notion into a new state providing for a variety of social services (ibid.). Accordingly, "[c]itizens now expected the state to attend to their welfare" (ibid.).

This encouragement of progressive social reforms under Faysal's rule was further manifested in Faysal's support of feminist activists, such as Nazik 'Abid, who established the "Red Star society" (ibid. 95). In Faysal's interest, it did not only give rise to women's activism in Syria but also helped to promote Arab nationalism, as a main pillar of work of this society was the promotion of "Arabism in a girls' school […]" (ibid.).

Eventually, the act of "unveiling" became a symbol for "women's political emancipation" in the post-World War I context (ibid. 128). Thereby, the recurrent acts of lifting the veil by women activists at important political meetings (i.e. American King-Crane Commission) can be perceived as a "gesture […] intended to emphasize the enlightened political ambitions of Faysal's Arab government (ibid.).

The next chapter will show that the First World War and the end of Faysal's rule were not the only factors leading to a crisis of paternity, "but the momentum of French rule increased the uncertainties felt within families toward a general crisis of authority and gender identity in the

realm of politics," contributing to the marginalization of women's activities (ibid.; Meininghaus 2016: 38).

Moreover, the French authorities were less egalitarian than Faysal when it came to the provision of social welfare, since social policies were designed according to a "loyal social hierarchy" (Thompson 2000: 77). To be more concrete: "[e]lites were still preferred over peasants and workers; men over women […] [;] Lebanese over Syrians and Christians over Muslims" (ibid).

Thus, the politicization of civil society in the context of the French occupation accelerated, giving rise to a nationalist movement and feminist activism, which were highly intertwined. The following sections will highlight these developments.

The end of Arab rule in Syria with the defeat of Faysal's troops in Maysalun in 1920 and the subsequent French occupation of Syria and Lebanon, were followed by socio-political turmoil in the public- and private sphere (Meininghaus 2016: 36). While women from the upper strata of society debated publicly with their male relatives about politics and thus immediately felt the effect of their fathers, sons or husband's disappearance or execution, middle class- and lower-class women were still haunted by the devastating effects of World War I, i.e. food shortages (ibid.).

However, "women from all classes" were not "mere witnesses to these events," but were actively engaged alongside men in the fight for independence under the Ottomans and under the French occupation (ibid.). Arab nationalism became the main arena for political activities directed against foreign rule (ibid. 36). Accordingly, women regularly participated in demonstrations throughout the 1930s; for instance, in 1931, a huge number of women from Damascus protested "the rigged parliamentary elections" alongside their male compatriots, all united in the fight for the nationalist cause (Thompson 2000: 186).

Though, women's street activism did not appeal to the French and Syrian nationalists, especially when they staged their own protests as was the case in the late 1930s when the women's movement managed to reach out to the popular segments of society and organized four protests on their own (ibid. 188, 190).

As nationalist activities became more radical and street protests became more violent in the light of the failed ratification of the "independence treaty and personal status reform" in 1939,

the French authorities arrested lots of women, which prompted nationalist men to declare the public space as too dangerous for women (ibid. 191). To this end, a "gender pact […]" was concluded by the French and "independent nationalist governments," enabling "urban men complete dominance over women" in exchange for keeping "loyalty to the state" (ibid. 287).

As a consequence of the "routinization of violence and the attendant paternalistic attitude towards women in the public spaces," women were relegated to the private sphere and "proto-fascist, paramilitary groups who augmented the violent, and male, nature of street politics" stepped in to continue the nationalist fight by demonstrating "male physical strength" (ibid. 191, 194, 196).

Thereby, the men's reassertion of strength in the streets in form of a rise of "street nationalism and protofacism" in the 1930s can be interpreted as a reaction towards a "crisis of paternity," triggered by men's feeling of effeminization, which was caused by a change of roles in the household and their fear of allegedly losing their women to French men (ibid. 27, 196).

Eventually, women's "exceptional status in street actions" put them into a marginal position in politics since the violent streets evolved into the most significant locus of political expression (ibid. 196). Activities organized by women often faced "disapproval from more traditional segments of society," for instance by rather conservative landowning elites, who were compradors of the French and abided by the French favored maintenance of "old paternalistic values" to uphold their privileges and superordinate position (ibid. 37, 118, 196, 289).

In the context of Arab nationalism, women, albeit those from a rather elite background, also "began setting up private societies" with a focus on underrepresented "women's and children's issues" like the provision of health- and educational services (ibid. 36 f.). To this end, the field of education was a major sphere of influence for women from the elite in the beginning of the 20th century in considering the high need for private education services due to the "lack of state provision," which especially effected females due to the strictness of gender roles (ibid. 37).

Nazik al-Abid for instance, whose cousin later became the first Syrian president after independence, founded a society called "Nur al-Fayha'," devoted to the promotion of education among girls with a Muslim background (ibid. 40). In addition, a women's society established a private school in Damascus in 1931, called "Dawhat al-adab," which provided an

Arab “nationalist education (*tarbiyya qawmiyya*) to female students” in order to set them apart from French and Ottoman influences (ibid. 41).

Another women’s education project was founded by a women’s society in 1928, which made Adila Bayyhum al-Jaza’iri “one of the leading figures in Syrian women’s charitable work from the 1930s onwards” (ibid. 42). The next educational “[s]ociety for the Guidance of the Arab Girl,” like the ones mentioned before, was founded not earlier than 1955, when the mandate period had already ended (ibid. 43). Its members were students and teachers and most of them also members of a political party aiming at reducing the high rate of female illiteracy in the country (ibid. 43-44).

To sum up, women with an elite background established these above-mentioned societies in order to fund their own schools, filling a gap “in the provision of state schooling for girls” (ibid. 45). Consequently, “a new generation of nationalist women in opposition to the Mandate state” was trained/educated (ibid. 45). Although its members mostly belonged to the “new middle class with fewer financial means than the pioneers had,” they followed the political mission of enhancing the situation for the subaltern parts of society, which was the initial aim of the Ba’th party, which came to power later (ibid. 45).

Unlike the above-mentioned women’s projects in “education, vocational training and social work,” which were addressing the lower classes, women’s cultural activities encompassing writing and journalism, were foreseen for the “educated elite” (ibid. 51).

A magazine called al-‘Arus (The Bride), run by Mari ‘Ajami and established in 1910, was the first Syrian women’s magazine addressing political issues, and the first magazine, which was run by a women (ibid. 52). ‘Ajami not only focused on her publishing activities, but also launched a “weekly salon” at her house, which provided the right setting for both genders to discuss religion, politics and philosophy (ibid. 52).

All in all, women’s gender-mixed cultural societies, where writers, political activists and journalists met, were often not connected to welfare activities as such, but these societies and salons often served as forum to articulate “women’s political rights” and demands (ibid. 55).

However, regarding women’s political activism in so-called “women’s societies,” it must be noted that the “provision of women’s welfare [is tied] to a nationalist agenda,” since many

women directly participated in the fight for independence, supporting the nationalists or because some of them experienced great losses in the family (ibid. 55).

Hence, in the aftermath of the establishment of the French mandate when resistance against the foreign rule was rising, many women joined the nationalist movement in their protests (ibid. 56). Personal accounts from a female activist reveal that there existed a strong bond between "these women" and "leaders of the National Bloc," through the above-mentioned regular encounters in literary salons and/or through friendships and family ties (ibid. 57).

Yet, women were not only involved in the rather male-dominated nationalist movement, but they also campaigned and fought for their own rights (ibid.). In 1920, "Mari 'Ajami submitted a petition to the Syrian Congress […] requesting women's suffrage for the first time" (ibid.).

But the proposal was neglected and didn't come to vote in the years of the French mandate, which is also because the Syrian female activists "were not connected to an organized suffragette movement" and that activists such as 'Adila Bayyhum focused their interest on other more 'important' issues (ibid. 57). During the turbulent post-independence times, women finally received the right to vote under the presidency of Husni al-Za'im, who was supported by some of the female activists (ibid. 60). From 1953 on, in the course of the launch of a new constitution, women could stand for elections as well (ibid.).

However, sensitive issues such as "veiling" and the status of "women's legal rights" continued to impede their "progress in the political arena" (ibid.). The attempted reform of personal status laws led to a conservative backlash by the successor government (ibid. 58). In reaction to this, and in this highly charged context, Nazira Zayn al-Din from Lebanon published the book "al-Sufur wa'l-hijab" (Veiling and Unveiling), which sparked controversies, since she raised the thesis that Quranic verses had been misinterpreted with regard to veiling and should be put into historical context rather than understood literally (ibid. 59).Yet, there was no unity among women on this matter (ibid.). While some lifted the veil at public events, like Nazik al-'Abid, putting herself in danger of being attacked, other women such as Mari 'Ajami raised concerns (ibid.).

The above-mentioned issue of women's suffrage was probably the reason why political parties "started to launch their own welfare initiatives for girls and women in the 1950s" (ibid. 60). However, populist groups such as the "National Bloc or the People's Party," which emerged in

the 1930s as organizations with a potential to mobilize the masses, mostly only addressed men (ibid.).

Nonetheless, women started to form committees all over Syria with different thematic focus, and they send their delegates to significant conferences, such as the women's conference in Cairo in 1938 (ibid. 63). In this regard, women's societies were centralized in nationalist organizations and even a "transnational Arab Women's Union" was founded in 1944 (ibid. 64).

All in all, progress in the field of education, health and social service remained limited in the mandate period and beyond, which affected women and girls even more (ibid.). Consequently, women's societies mainly in the field of education were launched to fill the lack of state welfare (ibid. 67). Yet, the encouragement of women to undertake employment was not an easy task and "women's voices in quest of female suffrage remained unheard until 1949" (ibid.).

Also, the founders of those women's societies, such as Nazik al-'Abid, 'Adila Bayyhum, Mari al-'Ajami etc. had an elite background, and they exhibited similar family backgrounds since their fathers held leading positions in the state administration and quite often the women had close personal ties with each other (ibid. 67). However, 'Adila Bayyhum, who merged together several women's societies "in her Syrian Union of 1933," stood out and emerged as the icon of "Syria's political womanhood," forging strategic links to the French and succeeding governments eventually bringing about "women's right to vote" by using her personal contacts in the government (ibid. 68).

With the introduction of "soviet-style mass organization[s] for women," the Ba'th party, which came to power later attempted to break the ties between old elites and the "ruling elite" (ibid.). In so doing, they gave rise to different elites and a new generation of women's activists in Syria (ibid.).

Whereas the focus in chapter 2.1.3 lay on women's activism, which became manifested in the form of a 'street activism,' as well as in the establishment of private societies providing education and health programs, the following chapter traces women's significant role in nation-making processes from a rather ideological angle. Thereby, the critical stance towards public visibility of women in the course of their increased political activism in support of the nationalists, which was pointed out in this chapter, will be further augmented by the insight that women were rather favored as symbolic- than as political actors.

3. Theoretical Framework: The Dynamics of Gender and Power in the Context of Colonialism and Nationalism

3.1 The Making of Women's Symbolic Role in the Imagination of the Nation

In the following, I will elaborate on the image of the woman in nationalist discourses by considering the examples of Egypt and India, which were under British rule for a long period of time. The plethora of literature from the field of (post)colonial/gender studies covered these two countries extensively. Hence, the following elaborations of Partha Chatterjee[3] and Beth Baron[4] will serve as theoretical basis for the analysis of gender dynamics unfolding against the backdrop of socio-economic post-war conditions and an emerging nationalism in French Mandate Syria in chapter four.

Concretely, light will be shed upon the development of women's symbolic role as the post-colonial country's modernizers by taking into account the ideological conflicts in the colonial era and shortly after, which served as a conceptual framework for the evolution of this image (Chatterjee 1989: 625).

The notion of the supposedly backward position of women in non-western societies, which has persisted in the Western hemisphere for some time, often served as a basis for the legitimacy of imposing colonial rule (ibid. 623). Accordingly, colonialism by the British in India was justified among others on the basis of the provision of a "civilizing mission" as the "social customs of the Indian people" based on religious norms were considered "degenerate and barbaric" with a supposedly violent and oppressive effect on women (ibid. 622).

As an ideological response to this colonialist notion, nationalists constructed "a new woman" as a representative figure of "a distinctively modern national culture," who was supposed to stand above "Western women, traditional Indian women and low-class women" (ibid.). Hence, Indian nationalists and the former colonial authority alike derived all problems regarding the "women's question" back to the "Indian tradition" (ibid. 623).

[3] For further information see Chatterjee, Partha (1989): Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India. *American Ethnologist* 16(4): 622-633.
[4] For further information see Baron, Beth (2005): Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender and Politics. Cairo: American University of Cairo Press.

This incorporation of "orientalist stereotypes in their self-image" is a phenomenon which Sadik al-Azm[5] frames as "orientalism in reverse" (Jung 2011: 27). In a next step, al-Azm argues that the "[o]rientalist obsession with language, texts and philology" provides the adequate framework for the "Arab nationalist ideologies" (ibid. 28).

However, according to Chatterjee, to analyze the twisted character of the "nationalist ideology" in its fight against colonial rule, it must be split into two spheres, namely "the material and the spiritual" (ibid 624.). In this sense, considering the genesis of nationalism, this distinction can be translated into an "ideologically" more significant "dichotomy: that between the outer and the inner," whereby the outer or the external domain stands for the material, that influences and conditions our behavior and forces us to adjust whereas, the "spiritual" or "the inner" represents the "true self" (ibid.).

As the colonized were only challenged in the outer world related to material structure (i.e. science, economic progress) and the "inner, essential, identity of the East" was kept untouched, considering the above-mentioned dichotomy, the nationalists followed a selective approach towards modernization in their anti-colonial/nationalist struggle (ibid. 625).

Applying the inner/outer dichotomy to the gendered social reality of everyday life, the "inner" could be interpreted as home (*ghar*) and the "outer" interpreted as the world (*bāhir*) (ibid. 624). Unsurprisingly, the outer materialist sphere is attributed to the male gender, whereas the inner "essentialist" sphere translates into home, a domain which is often represented by women (ibid.). In the gendered distribution of social roles, which is exemplified in the "home/world dichotomy," the nationalist's stance on the "women's question" becomes apparent (ibid.).

Finally, in applying elements from the colonizers in one domain and keeping the inner core 'authentic,' some would frame the nationalist project as socially conservative, but Chatterjee interprets it as an attempt "to make modernity consistent with the nationalist project" and to express "the spiritual culture of the national culture" (ibid. 625-626). In consequence, the dichotomy of the material and spiritual, which regulates the distribution of social roles

[5] Sadik al-Azm criticizes Edward Said's main work "Orientalism" in two aspects: first of all, by referring to his mistake of over-emphasizing the significance of "cultural-academic orientalism" in the institutionalization of orientalism/colonialist policies; and second of all, in pointing out Said's neglection of the reciprocal relationship between orientalism/orientalists and "Orientals" (Jung 2011: 26-28).

between two genders must always be maintained and women were supposed to be prevented from becoming “essentially Westernized” (ibid. 626).

To this end, a “new [middle class] woman” was constructed within the nationalist discourse, provided with “bourgeois virtues” such as “orderliness, thrift, cleanliness, and a personal sense of responsibility, the practical skills of literacy etc.,” meaning that she was supposed to have a certain degree of education and sense of the outer world apart from home as long as it doesn’t threaten her inner ‘female obligations’ (ibid. 628-629). Thereby, in successfully reconciling the spiritual and the material without losing their primordial values of ‘femininity,’ these middle class women were allegedly not only superior to Western women, who were supposedly not able to balance these two domains adequately, but also to lower class women, prevented from having access to education due to oppressive social customs (ibid. 628).

Finally, nationalism shifted the women’s question, usually dealt with as a ‘state affair’, to the “spiritual domain of culture,” where it could not be influenced or impeded by the colonial authority (ibid. 631). Consequently, due to the hegemonic character of this new patriarchal nationalist discourse, it not only demarcated “its cultural essence as distinct from that of the West, but also from the mass of the people” (ibid. 632). Hence, the conflict between “colonialist and nationalist discourses” and all the dichotomies, i.e. masculine and feminine, “spiritual/material” etc. the nationalist project brought up, which tries to be different from colonialism, still remains “trapped within the framework of its false essentialisms” (ibid.).

Also, Beth Baron emphasizes power hierarchies, separation of spheres and exclusion between the two genders, as well as between classes as defining features of the significant years of nationalist activism in Egypt. She introduces her book by describing the outbreak of a protest organized by the nationalist movement against British rule in 1919 in Egypt (Baron 2005: 1). Inspired by this protest, Mahmud Mukhtar, an Egyptian Artist, created a sculpture with clear female features symbolizing a woman as the birth-giver to the new Egyptian nation (ibid.).

However, Egyptian women were barred from the public unveiling ceremony of the statue in 1928 (ibid.). Thus, women “were favored as symbols rather than as political actors” (ibid. 215). The paradox of glorifying women as “prominent figures in the allegorization of the nation” and restricting their participation in public/political events at the same time, constitutes a recurrent theme in Baron’s book (ibid. 1-2). Nonetheless, as nationalist politics were dominated by elites, “urban elite women” played an important role in the nationalist struggle,

supporting their male compatriots in the *wafd* party or directly participating in street protests (ibid. 1, 3, 11)

Since "[t]he histories of national struggles have generally been written by nationalist elites," the texts are streamlined to provide a "unified story of the nationalist struggle" and to promote "unity behind a particular leader or group, counter-narratives have been silenced, though, marginalized, or incorporated in shortened form into the nationalist narrative" (ibid.). Often, subordinated groups of society such as women or ethnic minorities produced these counter-narratives (ibid.).

Also, nationalism applied "family metaphors" to create unitedness and relations between people "who were otherwise strangers and often separated by ethnicity, race, class, and religion" (ibid. 4-5). Yet, the instrumentalization of "familial rhetoric for political purposes" was not brought up by nationalist actors in the first place, but by paternalistic figures such as the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) or King Faysal of Iraq and Greater Syria (1885-1933) (ibid. 5, Thompson 2000: 41).

Finally, the "[m]aternal imagery" of women as the "Mothers of the Nation," reproducing the nation in a biological and cultural manner, became a long-burning issue in nationalist discourses worldwide, rendering the ideal of the "bourgeois family" complete (ibid. 5). Thereby, one significant feature of the envisioned modern middle class family, aligned with the "capitalist system," was the element of "domesticity," which foresaw for women, who had previously contributed to the family's household, the role of "consumers and educated marital partners" (ibid. 6).

Besides the imagination of the nation as a family with the female icon as its mother, the notion of the family honor btw. national honor as unifying/integrating element was embodied by men, who as soldiers and street revolutionaries "reinforced cultural ideals of masculinity" (ibid. 7). Since, although many women were mobilized in the fight for independence and in the "struggle for power," the agenda for "[m]ale nationalists" later changed when they were in charge (ibid. 9). Eventually, when these men took up leading positions in the state apparatus, their stance towards women's empowerment changed, meaning that women's chances of playing a leading role in the Egyptian postcolonial state were quite low and that "benefits, jobs, and promised reforms" were placed on hold (ibid.).

While, in this chapter, the focus lay on women's issues- and the more general struggle in Syria in the period of French rule against the backdrop of rising nationalism, the following section will shed light on a certain actor's formation of gender roles.

3.2 Framing the Arab Middle Class' Hegemonic Gender Roles within the Dynamics of Colonialism and Nationalism

To better understand on what basis new concepts of gender rest on, which came up in public discourses in the light of rising nationalist activities in the beginning of the twenty-first century in colonial Syria, the Arab middle class' notion of gender will be assessed in the following.

Starting with an example from Egypt, Lucie Ryzova portrays in her book the formation of the "effendis (Ar. Pl. *effendiyya*)" as a "self-consciously modern generation," which emerged as the main figures in the nationalist movement in Egypt (Ryzova 2014: 4). In their role as either teachers, lawyers, doctors and architects or as public intellectuals, such as writers and journalists, they established a "modern national culture" in the rising "national public sphere" (ibid.).

However, the impact or power of the *effendiyya* on society did not lay so much in their size as a group but rather in their "social, cultural, and political importance," taking up a hegemonic position in the intellectual discourse (ibid.). The power of the hegemonic discourse yielded by the intellectual elites at the time and imposed on subordinate groups, can be illustrated with Antonio Gramsci's concept of "cultural hegemony," roughly defined as "the 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant social group […]" (Hoare & Nowell-Smith 1971: 12).

To trace back the rise of the *effendiyya* from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, Ryzova will outline the production of the *effendi* by considering his/her "modern education – both in Egypt and abroad – as [his/her] family and […] milieu" (Ryzova 2014: 5). Unlike completely liberating himself/herself from patriarchy or the father besides making "social and cultural spaces" their own, "the father remains a potent cultural code (as 'authenticity') that can never be done away with" (ibid. 6)

Further, the *effendi* can be understood as a "cultural concept," signifying a modern habitus rather than a class resting on an empirical basis (ibid.). In this sense, the cultural habitus of an

effendi was often expressed by Western-style clothes and Western education, which was turned into "social capital," since the *effendiyya* was often linked to the "sources of social and cultural authority, political power, and resources" (ibid.)

Yet, the "cultural construction of the effendi as the ascendant middle-class subject" often was not congruent with the "empirical reality" of *effendis* in the Interwar period, which was rather precarious, and the disenchantment with the 'bourgeois dream' contributed to the "radicalization of effendi youth in the Interwar period" (ibid. 10). Moreover, the obviously "culturally constructed" *effendi* is often confused with the empirical "modern middle class" (ibid. 10).

A more recent post-structuralist-oriented generation of scholars, however, spots the middle class' cultural footprint "everywhere" by considering their contribution to "intellectual production and popular culture" (ibid. 11). Eventually, to demarcate an "empirical social location," Ryzova applies the term "middle strata," whereas the notion "middle class" depicts a "distinctly modern cultural construct" (ibid. 16). To this end, "middle strata" is to be understood as a "fragmented and heterogenous category" encompassing a continuum of "local cultures between the ruling elites and the poor", while the concept "middle class" comprises a "hegemonic and hegemonizing" cultural discourse (ibid. 16-17). National elites, however, who were socio-economically to be located "above the middle strata" (i.e. absentee elites), had a comparatively high access to "power and resources," which was often boosted by the alliance with "foreign interests" (ibid. 13)

Finally, the *effendi* culture was shaped by social and cultural mobility, meaning that *effendis* moved and performed their habitus "between 'traditional' and 'modern' cultural identities," which found its manifestation in a certain educational status or through "consumption" or "social practice" (ibid. 18). Also, physical mobility, meaning movements between villages/provinces and the urban centers, was a significant feature of the *effendiyya* (ibid.)

Also, the *effendis* were significant political figures in Egypt's nationalist movement, which emerged in the late nineteenth century in the course of British rule in Egypt (ibid.). In this context, they developed a special relationship to the nation state by providing "administrative service and scientific knowledge" (ibid. 19). In reacting to the emergence of governance and authority structures, they pushed for the state's modernization and reform project (ibid.). But this project was ideological, since the *effendis* understood themselves as reformers,

possessing the “cultural and scientific” means to ‘free’ the “deficient and sick” Egyptian society” from “retardation and backwardness” (ibid. 20). Eventually, the *effendiyya’s* reform measures were supposed to have a wide-ranging effect, i.e. eradication of poverty, economic and governance reforms (ibid. 21)

This top-down imposed reform measures implied a re-ordering of society, bringing about a new positioning of groups such as peasants, workers and women, whereas the *effendis* in their position as engineers, doctors and journalists emerged as a “new social elite” (ibid.). The rise of “new cultural forms” such as newspapers and other publications gave these new intellectual elites the chance to propagate their “worldview” in public and to lead the discourse in the emerging “national public sphere” in Egypt (ibid.).

In “producing technical, moral, and social knowledge about their subordinate social others,” they portrayed themselves as the only advocate of reform and civilizational progress (ibid. 21-22). Thus, the *effendiyya*, in order to define themselves and “indigenous modernity,” needed “social others” (ibid. 22). In so doing, the *effendis* defined themselves “socially against those below and above, and culturally against the forces of tradition on the one hand [i.e. despotism] and those of Western modernity on the other” (ibid.).

Finally, the culture/ideology of the *effendiyya* and the project of forming a modern nation state in the light of colonialism “was articulated around two main agendas, or self-appointed missions that the *efendis* took on and that justified their claim to social authority and political power: internal reform, or modernization; and independence from the occupier” (ibid. 25).

As Partha Chatterjee and Lucie Ryzova, Keith D. Watenpaugh points more generally to the ambivalent stance of nationalist middle-class elites in former colonialist societies towards the West in his book “Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class” (2006). Watenpaugh frames it as a “double anxiety of the non-Western middle classes: not only did they compete to preserve their status in their own immediate society, they also measured themselves against images in the media, primarily that of the middle class in metropolitan Europe” (Watenpaugh 2006: 86). This ambiguity towards the West was expressed in the rejection of some Western moral standards, especially its consumerist leaning, but never was directed towards “institutions of civil society, education, wealth, and fashion that originated in contemporary Western Europe” (ibid.)

Further, what turned “middle-class men into potential heroic actors at the core of modern society” derived from the fact that these men “had lived at the very margins of power” until then and only had limited opportunities to shape the ‘course of history’ (ibid. 89). Hence, in issuing new intellectual activities or formulating “critique,” these “middle-class men” shaped the historical development (ibid.). However, the fact that only men from the middle class were mentioned in this context, points to the exclusion and subordination of “other forms of knowledge and other classes from the betterment of society” (ibid. 89).

Concretely, besides the emergence of a new “urban modern middle-class masculinity,” shaped by men’s political and social achievements in the public, the new propagated image of the ‘modern middle-class woman’ fell short of encouraging “equality between the sexes” (ibid. 91). Although women’s education was advocated in the course of evolving discussions centering around the women’s question in the late nineteenth century, women’s role was foreseen to be in the private sphere of the household rather than in the “public sphere – which would remain the privileged domain of the new middle-class men” (ibid.).

To this end, a version of “Republican motherhood” was created, which would enable women the entrance into the “project of modernity” via education (ibid.). But since their modern habitus “would always be contingent on their utility to the modern man” (i.e. as wives or mothers) to uphold the newly defined “middle-class masculinity,” women’s modernity wasn’t on a par with newly achieved gains for men (ibid.). Finally, women were ascribed ‘female virtues,’ such as “emotionality and spirituality,” which would impede women’s access to the rationally and secular shaped public sphere but qualifying them for “nurturing roles in that modern society” (ibid.).

Chapter 3.2 reconstructed the genesis of gender roles in the Arab middle class in the light of colonialism and nationalist discourses with a focus on Egypt and the *effendiyya.* Also, the middle class’ striving for power became apparent, which became manifested in their efforts at dominating/hegemonizing the intellectual discourse on modernization in an emerging “national public sphere” (Ryzova 2014: 4). In so doing, marginalized segments of society (lower class, women, peasants etc.) became subordinated, culminating in the entrenchment of class-, and gender hierarchies. In this sense, chapter 3.3 will introduce the theory of “hegemonic masculinity” by Raewyn Connell as a tool for the analysis of the dynamics of inter-, and intra-gender hierarchies.

3.3 The Power Dimension: Hegemonic Masculinity

The multiplicity of masculinity was mentioned for the first time in the course of an empirical study assessing social inequality at Australian high schools in the 1970s (Connell et. al 1982: 1). Shortly afterwards, a discussion about the construction of masculinity and the experience with the male body evolved (Connell 1983: 1), as well as a discourse on the role of men in the Australian policies of labor (Connell 1982: 306).

With the essay "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity," Raewyn Connell, together with Tim Carrigan and Jon Lee, introduced the concept into the scholarly discourse in 1985 (Messerschmidt 2019: 85). Since then, the notion of hegemonic masculinity has given rise to an emerging field called “masculinities studies” (ibid.).

Throughout this thesis, it will be mainly referred to the second edition of Connell's standard work in masculinity studies, entitled “Masculinities” (Connell 2005). Considering that this work analyzes the power dynamics of masculinities in the global South, concretely in postcolonial Syria, Connell’s article “Margin becoming Centre: For a world-centered rethinking of Masculinities” (Connell 2014), which historically contextualizes the formation of masculinities in a (post-) colonial setting, will further act as a source.

In the course of the emergence of the "bourgeois ideology of the separate spheres in the nineteenth century,” the assumption spread that women no longer represented only ‘imperfect’ male characters, but that men and women each had different gender-specific characteristics that were culturally attributed to them (Connell 2005: 68). To define the term “masculinity,” it should be considered as a cultural construct in relation to the term “femininity” (ibid.). To this end, women were “inferior examples of the same character” (ibid.).

Eventually, masculinity is constituted by its position in the gender order, the practices by which men and women take this position and the impact of these practices on physical experience, personality and culture (ibid. 71). To examine the relationships between different masculinities, it is important to recognize the various forms of masculinity, taking into account the dynamics of gender, ethnicity, and class; it is not so much a matter of identifying a form of "black masculinity", but of grasping the effect of gender within a certain milieu (ibid. 76).

Hegemonic masculinity constitutes itself not only in relation to women, but also to other non-hegemonic masculinities (Connell 1987: 183). Concretely, hegemonic masculinity constitutes

itself in the unequal system of gender relations “in relation to four specific nonhegemonic [sic] masculinities” (Messerschmidt 2019: 86):

> First, *complicit* masculinities do not actually embody hegemonic masculinity yet through practice realize some of the benefits of unequal gender relations and consequently when practiced help sustain hegemonic masculinity; second, *subordinate* masculinities are constructed as lesser than or aberrant and deviant to hegemonic masculinity, such as effeminate men; third, *marginalized* masculinities are trivialized and/or discriminated against because of unequal relations external to gender relations, such as class, race, ethnicity, and age; and finally, *protest* masculinities are constructed as compensatory hypermasculinities that are formed in reaction to social positions lacking economic and political power (ibid.).

In order not to exceed the scope of this work, not all forms of masculinities will be applied equally in the analysis later. Considering the above-mentioned complex fabric of masculinities, hegemonic masculinity is not to be understood as a rigid and unchangeable category, but as that form of masculinity that makes use of the structure of gender relations - depending on its nature - to assume a higher position, which, however, can be questioned at any time (Connell 2005: 76). Based on Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony,[6] Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as the form of masculinity that is culturally emphasized over other masculinities and suppresses women at some point in time (Connell 2005: 77).

The prerequisite for the emergence of this hegemony, however, is that the "institutional power" harmonizes with the "cultural ideal" (ibid.). Hegemony unfolds through the stated claim to authority, and in rare cases it is backed by direct violence, although authority is often based on- and maintained by force (ibid.).

The embodiment of hegemonic masculinity is abstract, meaning that it is not necessarily represented by the most powerful men, but the orientation is more on role models in the film, sports or fantasy world (ibid.). Although very few men live up to the normative demands of hegemonic masculinity, most men benefit from the predominance of this masculinity because they share in the patriarchal dividend, the general benefit that men derive from the oppression of women (ibid. 79). Accordingly, a related form of hegemonic masculinity can be

[6] Antonio Gramsci developed the concept of hegemony in the context of the analysis of class relationships under duress and consensus; every social hegemony-seeking group propagates its values and norms as the dominant ones even before they assume a recognized hegemonic position (see Gramsci Prison Book 8, §88, 1947).

described as complicity; it means that certain masculinities, which have patriarchal privileges, are not at the mercy of the dangers and risks at the forefront of patriarchy (ibid.).

Further, the example of a well-known Australian surfer, the iron man, exemplifies that the hegemonic character of masculinity can vary from local to national:

> The young man's regional status actually prevents him doing the things his local peer group defines as masculine – going wild, showing off, driving drunk, getting into fight, and defending his own prestige (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 838).

In an article by Raewyn Connell, published in 2014, which focuses on the formation of masculinities in post-colonial societies, political, economic- and socio-economic changes are the driving force behind the reorganization of gender relations (Connell 2014: 4 ff.).
In the sense that "nonhegemonic [sic] masculinities" are constructed in relation to hegemonic masculinity, the so-called protest masculinity, which serves as the hypermasculine answer on the lack of "economic and political power," is closely tied to the concept of the male breadwinner (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 840; Messerschmidt 2019: 87). In its most pronounced form, hypermasculinity unfolds as an "exaggerated ideal of manhood linked mythically and practically to the role of the warrior," (Burstyn 1999: 4), "the ideal man in the masculinist conception" (ibid. 10), and "the belief that ideal manhood lies in the exercise of force to dominate others" (i.e. women, effeminate men) (ibid. 192). To this end, hypermasculinity, a type of masculinity which is often enacted by subaltern men in post-colonialist societies, must be linked to the notion of dominance, physical strength, violence and obsessive heterosexuality (see Burstyn 1999).

Hegemonic masculinity is to be understood as a "historically mobile relation"; as soon as patriarchy can no longer be sustained in the existing form and is called into question by new groups and forms of hegemony or changed socio-economic conditions, the possibilities of domination of a particular masculinity are exhausted (Connell 2005: 77). A quote by R.W. Connell wraps this up well:

> Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (ibid.).

In the following analytical part, the theory of hegemonic masculinity will be applied in order to assess to what extent dominant elites in Syria, who were actively engaged in the shaping of a new civil/political order in the late French mandate period, adhered to a certain form of hegemonic masculinity, eventually subordinating women and their emerging aspirations for more autonomy and political participation.

4. Analysis: The Hegemony of Certain Elites and the Making of a New Gender Order

This chapter sets out to investigate the genesis of a new gendered order in French Mandate Syria by considering the socio-economic effects of World War I, the socio-political impact of French rule, as well as the powerful position of certain elites in a hegemonic intellectual discourse, determining the making of a socio-political framework for the future independent nation-state. To provide a multi-dimensional perspective, and to make sense of the complexity and ambiguity of the above-mentioned dynamics, chapter four follows a two-folded approach. Chapter 4.1 presents the empirical dimension by pointing out the elite's response towards new gendered challenges emanating from the repercussions of World War I, the advent of French rule and the rise of street activism in Syria. In subchapter 4.1.1, the public/private dichotomy will be theorized by emphasizing its significance for the (re)negotiation of gender against the backdrop of First World War repercussions, nationalism, and foreign rule. Whereas, chapter 4.2 deconstructs the nationalist's ideological framework with regard to gender. Chapter 4.2.1 presents an assessment of the manifestations of a new gender order under the first governments after independence. Finally, in chapter 4.3, the dominant elites' underlying power rationale will be investigated, which gave rise to a regressive gender order in post-ottoman Syria,

4.1 The Empirical Dimension: Framing the Elite's Response towards Gender Dynamics against the Backdrop of Post-War Transformations, Colonialism and Nationalism

As emphasized in the previous chapters, the First World War brought great misfortune for the Syrian society, such as the suffering from famines, the cold, -the loss of close relatives, and wide emerging riffs between genders-, different religious communities- and classes

(Thompson 2000. 19). Out of these consequences of war, the social order- and norms in the household and in the community were turned upside down (ibid.).

For instance, the tendency of more women to take up employment outside of the household, provoked great controversy since men's authority was under threat in general at this time (Meininghaus 2014: 37). Although the 'women's question' was already widely discussed before the war, the consequences of war rehashed the discourse on women's education and employment, since men could no longer be the only breadwinners (ibid.).

However, not only the war led to changes in the relations between genders at home and in the public, but also the onset of French rule in Syria accelerated the uncertainties felt regarding the transformation of social norms- and authority at home and in the political public sphere (ibid. 38). Since one pillar of the French political system was the fostering of a clientelist network composed of "paternalistic elites – tribal shaykhs, religious patriarchs and rural landowners," which had an intermediary function, linking state and society (Thompson 2000: 42).

Apparently, this system of colonial rule rested on paternalistic norms and favored an old landowning class, who stood against (progressive) social and economic reform, because the safeguarding of political and economic interests (i.e. access to former Ottoman land) was their main interest "as patrons of clientelist networks" (Khoury 1987: 52-54). Since this privileged class managed to maintain their grip on power after the demise of the Ottoman empire, they remained influential under French rule, either "as a comprador bourgeoisie colluding with the French mandate and foreign capital" or as merchants who did good business with the large-scale import of modern machines into Syria in the 1930s and 1940s (ibid. 3; Perthes 1991: 31).

Often, these merchants, who traded extensively with Europe from the late nineteenth century on, were members of Jewish- and Christian minority groups, a preferred choice as trade partners for Europeans (Khoury 1987: 207). To this end, the protection of "minorities and especially the Maronites" constituted another pillar of French rule in Greater Syria (Seale 1989: 16). Concretely, after the "massacre[s] of Christians in Damascus in 1860," the French joined "other European powers in sponsoring a semi-autonomous Mount Lebanon," which would geo-politically organize Greater Syria as follows: "the flatlands of Syria were largely Sunni and unfriendly, but skirting them were the mountain havens of the minorities, not only

the ‘Alawis but the Isma’ilis of the same area and the Druzes in their basalt hills in the south” (ibid.; Khoury 1987: 207).

Thus, the merchant class with a Muslim background, developed a hostility against this influential minority group, since they only gained benefits from having the ‘right’ religion and their orientation towards Europe, boosting their position inside the society (ibid.). Since the evolution of sectarianism in Syria and its historically strong linkage with policy-making and ruling tactics is a large field of research on its own, and especially the persistent conflict between Muslims and Christians in the studied period, they are touched upon only briefly in this chapter.

Eventually, the privileged status of this Christian-Jewish economic elite reached a peak under French rule, since they managed to forge an economically beneficial link between “French commercial interests and the Syrian economy” (ibid. 208). In the long run, this “minority-dominated comprador class” fostered their economically-, politically-, and socially powerful position inside Syria, maneuvering the country into a stalemate in terms of social reforms (i.e. towards more gender equality), since securing privileges stood above pursuing progress (ibid. 209).

Consequently, the less powerful groups (i.e. Muslim merchants) were driven into the arms of the nationalist movement, claiming an end to the “power of mediating elites,” striving for more influence and the improvement of state-society relations (ibid. 212; Thompson 2000: 193). Indeed, in times of the upsurge of the revolt, leading into direct (street) confrontations between the nationalists and the French authorities, the “Muslim commercial bourgeoisie” had high stakes in keeping the uprising alive, (Khoury 1987: 207). However, in general terms, the nationalist movement was organized cross-sectional (ibid.).

The powerful French governance system, based on “clienteles of landlords, tribal shaykhs, and religious patriarchs,” rested on “religious pillars of rule” and “paternalistic privilege” (ibid. 43, 54). As locally deep-rooted “patriarchs [,] [i.e. religious officials] wielded potentially more influence over common people’s sentiments than did elite politicians […],” the French installed a political network far apart from an [egalitarian] constitutional framework to foster their rule (ibid. 54). In so doing, they gave rise to the regressive social norms propagated by its clientele, and thereby reproduced a rather conservative order with a clear patriarchal agenda,

neglecting emerging voices of feminism and new marginal liberties won by women (ibid. 43; Khan 2018: 1).

This systematic neglection of feminist claims and the pending fight for gender equality will be elaborated more deeply in chapter 4.2, which will not only forge a link to significant empirical events but reveal the interrelationship between power and the defense of a certain kind of masculinity, uphold by dominant elites.

Although, discontent arose against the French political authority and its principles and ruling practices, triggering nationalist activism, the paternalistic and conservative order persisted throughout the years of the French Mandate period, even in the nationalist movement itself. This is due to the fact that, although the nationalists failed to receive more political autonomy and sovereignty in the course of the negotiations with the French rulers, they adopted a "republican civic order" themselves (Khoury 1987: 53). It can be argued that they may have wanted to secure their newly won political leverage through maintaining a 'hyper' masculine presence, featuring dominance and physical strength (Burstyn 1999: 4).

Further, problems related to the "women's question" were linked to tradition, thereby integrating "orientalist stereotypes in their self-image"–a phenomenon coined "orientalism in reverse" (Jung 2011: 27). Or to take the more 'positive' definition from Indian nationalists: the "inner" sphere, which opposes the "outer" materialist domain, is considered female, as it incorporates the spiritual assets of the Eastern identity, its "true self" and remained untouched from Western influences (ibid. 624-625).

However, the reversed orientalism regarding the 'women's question' is not to understand as ontological orientalism, but more as a hybrid construct, integrating the positive virtues of both 'cultures.' So, the indigenous culture (i.e. spirituality) was reconciled with the Western "material culture" (i.e. science, technology, new forms of economic organization) (Chatterjee 1989: 624-625). In this sense, Syrian nationalists, as nationalist activists from other colonized countries, pursued a selective approach towards modernization in their anti-colonial/nationalist struggle, which has been pointed out more detailed in chapter 3.1 (ibid.).

The way the republican order was eventually formed by the elites and embodied in the image of the middle-class woman with "bourgeois virtues" (ibid.), as well as its underlying rationale, will be deconstructed in chapter 4.2.

The discontent with the French authorities became manifested in various armed conflicts and confrontations between nationalist revolutionaries and the French, which reached its momentum in the period from 1920-1927, the foundation phase of the nationalist revolt (Khoury 1987: 20).

Though, the French, together with their landowning elites, who were mobilized against the "urban and tribal nationalists," won the fight against the "Syrian Revolt" eventually, enabling a new form of un-armed political confrontation (ibid. 46). Yet, the National Bloc, which was meant to represent the nationalist movement as a dialogue partner on the official political stage, and which was in charge of negotiating power-sharing formula with the French authority as a crucial member of a constitutional convention, still followed a conservative policy in social-, economic-, and political terms (ibid. 46, 50). The moderate fraction of the National Bloc founded between 1927 and 1930, who regularly corresponded with the French on political matters, mainly consisted of members of the landowning bourgeoisie (ibid. 51-52). Social and economic reforms failed to materialize as they stood against the power-maintaining interests of these conservative and paternalistic functionaries (ibid.).

Finally, afraid of changes, the French and their compradors “entered into a pact that reaffirmed the paternalistic pillars of colonial rule […],” receding progressive forms of democratic governance into the distance (ibid. 50-51).

4.1.1 The Gendered Public/Private Dichotomy

Due to the high significance of the dichotomy of public/private regarding the chosen topic, which accommodates the intertwined dynamics of gender, nation-making, and power, chapter 4.1.1 will pay special attention to the dynamics unfolding in both spheres. Thereby, the focus will lay on the gendered binary of public/private, which remained a widely discussed issue in the academic discourse until today. To this end, the exclusion of women from the public sphere, the main locus of political expression, will be thematized. This procedure, however, can be extended to other marginalized groups of society as well.

As has been outlined in detail in former chapters, World War I caused ruptures in class- and gender relations, as well as within religious communities, altering the social organization and distribution of tasks in the household (Thompson 2000: 19). Many women involuntarily took

up work in factories, in handicraft or in the service sector to afford to live, and "femalehead households became common" in the course of the First World War (ibid. 25, 32; Meininghaus 2016: 46).

However, as has been revealed through personal accounts by soldiers, the most widespread framework of gender roles at that time in Syria confined men to the fight for- and the defense of the country, which is a public matter and women were relegated to the realm of the private sphere of the home to exercise 'motherly' tasks (Thompson 2000: 24-25). Considering the above-mentioned notion, which was dominant in the public discourse back then, women's newly won liberties through the First World War, such as employment outside of the household, were met with "gender anxiety" and a "crisis of paternity" of men, who saw the former clear-cut order being turned upside down (ibid., Meininghaus 2016: 47).

With the rise of nationalist activities in the 1930s, though, women followed suit by stepping up their activities, staging their own public protests, and thereby reaching out to larger segments of society (Thompson 2000: 188, 190). But, in the course of the intensification of women's protests, French authorities cracked down on them and nationalists, who were displeased with women's increased public visibility, turned the street into an arena of the demonstration of masculinity (ibid. 191). In applying physical strength and violence, they turned the public sphere into a 'no-go-area' for women (ibid. 191, 194, 196).

This phenomenon of women's marginalization from the political public sphere has been widely discussed in the theoretical discourse on the notion of the public sphere. Jürgen Habermas, as one of the first scholars, who devoted his attention to the dynamics and mechanisms of the (bourgeois) public sphere, attributed the public (German: *Öffentlichkeit)* a normative, political function (Habermas 1991: 74). Hence, he defined the public sphere as:

an organ for the self-articulation of civic society with a state authority corresponding to its needs [,] [and as] a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens (ibid.).

Nancy Fraser, one of the leading feminist voices of the late twentieth/early twenty-first century, however, criticized the exclusivity of Habermas' communication- and action-oriented definition in her widely cited article "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," published in 1990.

A major point of criticism for Fraser is that Habermas speaks of this one public space, accessible to all without any reference to prevailing exclusion criteria - such as gender, race, and class, that prevent members of a society from articulating their concerns in the discourse and subordinate them to the concerns of the dominant groups (Fraser 1990: 63). Marginalized parts of society would, therefore, form so-called subaltern counter-publics, in which they negotiate their interests, needs, and identities in parallel discourses in opposition to the generally considered public, and then place them in the larger social discourse (ibid. 68).

This interaction of counter-publics can be applied to the genesis of the modern Syrian women's movement, which "began setting up private societies" to provide health- and educational services for marginalized groups of society (Meininghaus 2016: 36). The field of education constituted a major part of women's activism at the beginning of the twentieth century. Female activists, such as 'Adila Bayyhum and Mari 'Ajami aspired to education and political participation in the sense of universal suffrage (ibid. 59, 68).

Although both figures belonged to a socially and politically marginalized counter-public, considering their gender, they articulated their demands through alternative publics, such as weekly political salons or through their welfare activities in private societies. To achieve their goals, various counter-publics worked together, forging alliances with other subalterns (lower middle-class men) by supporting, for instance, an anti-French demonstration in 1931 to end foreign rule in Syria (Thompson 2000: 186). In so doing, they expressed their desire for active social and political collaboration with other counter-publics, even though their demand for women's suffrage could not be enforced until 1949.

Nonetheless, it must be clarified that the above-mentioned 'female counter-publics' arose in Syria at that time first and foremost as a reaction towards a hostile-, masculine-hegemonic-nationalist milieu in the 1930s, which was, to put it simply, afraid of losing their 'male' privileges in the light of the advancement of women and their cause.

The establishment process of a new gender order as an integral part of the nationalist elites' ideological framework, resting on a certain form of hegemonic masculinity, will be explained more deeply in the following chapter 4.2.

4.2 The Ideological Dimension: The Construction of a New Gender Order

> Over the last decades, national gender orders are becoming unbound: women have entered wage work and for the working majority, the role of the mother and housewife has lost its position of predominance. Slowly, enterprises are taking leave of the model of the male breadwinner. Between new work aspirations and economic necessity, the dual earner model is becoming widespread […] (Lenz 2007: 9).

In taking Ilse Lenz's assessment of the development of gender orders in the last decades (mainly in western societies) as a point of departure, light will shed upon on the unfolding of similar processes in the formation period of the independent Syrian nation-state, which eventually came into existence after the end of French rule in 1946. However, Lenz' evaluation will not be translated one-on-one, as the different geographical location and the persistence of regressive social norms must be considered. As a consequence, women's (public) sphere of action was curtailed by hypermasculine nationalists and old landowning elites, who were reaching out for a powerful position in the new Syrian state apparatus btw. attempting to preserve their political and economic privileges.

The formation of a new gender order in post-Ottoman Syria must be analyzed by considering first, passive and second, active influences on its genesis. First of all, by considering external developments, shaping the emergence of a new gender order such as the turnover of the social order- and norms in the household and in the community in the course of World War I. Furthermore, the persistence of paternalism in the advent of French rule, embedded into a clientelist network based on landowning elites, which were favored compradors by the French had an impact on the rise of a new order. Moreover, the evolution of republican norms, confining women to the private sphere, which not only have been propagated by the French and its privileged landowning elite but also by nationalist street activists and moderate members of the National Bloc, determined the ideological turnout of this 'gender revolution' (Thompson 2000: 19). Those members of the Nationalist Bloc, who, driven by "gender anxiety" and haunted by the consequences of a „crisis of paternity," entered a pact with the French that "reaffirmed the paternalistic pillars of colonial rule" (Thompson 2000: 42). This pact contributed to the emergence of a conservative inegalitarian gender order eventually (ibid.).

The "gender anxiety" and the "crisis of authority" in the light of the introduction of French rule, eventually culminating into the formation of this above-mentioned regressive gender order, was prompted by a decline in employment opportunities for men caused by major structural economic changes (i.e. foreign imports) during the French Mandate period (ibid. 38,

196). In addition, women became more active in public life, since the experience of the First World War increased the demands of women for more political participation and public visibility (ibid.). Eventually, women actively demonstrated their public visibility and facilitated their claims (i.e. universal education/suffrage) through their participation in street demonstrations in the 1930s, which were embedded into the fight for the nationalist cause; and they even organized their own protests (ibid. 186, 188, 190).

However, although a strong bond existed between female activists and functionaries of the National Bloc, united in the fight for sovereignty and more political autonomy for the Syrian people, petitions submitted by women were systematically neglected or not sufficiently supported by their male compatriots (ibid. 53). This was the case when women requested universal suffrage, made claims for legal rights or brought up the controversial issue of veiling for instance (ibid. 57, 64).

Second of all, the increased public visibility of women gave rise to the "street nationalism and proto-fascism of the 1930s as a response to the crisis of paternity" caused by women's employment outside of the household and the intensification of their protests in the political public sphere (ibid. 196). Hence, in the course of the intensification of violence in the streets, and the demonstration of "male physical strength," women became sidelined from the street, the epicenter of nationalist politics, and relegated to the private sphere of the home (ibid.). This was further augmented by the French authorities and their comprador elite's opposition towards the new political euphoria of women spreading out in the streets, which was demonstrated through the restoration of a paternalistic-republican order (ibid. 189). In so doing, French republicans reminded women that, according to their gender, their right place is in the private sphere (ibid.). Eventually, women were treated as minors from the French authorities, i.e. issuing national identity cards just for men, and they would always need an intermediary to fulfill their civic duties (ibid.).

Consequently, women diverted their activism to so-called counter-publics, arenas of parallel discourses, such as elitist private societies, offering education- and health care services to subaltern groups of society, which suffered under the "lack of state provision" (Meininghaus 2016: 37; Fraser 1990: 68). Under the name of nationalism, however, these organizations contributed to the formation and propagation of the above-mentioned nationalist order, impeding the improvement for gender equality. For instance, one private society established

a school in Damascus in 1931 to impart an Arab “nationalist education *(tarbiyya qawmiyya)* to female students" under the pretext of providing them with a strong counter-narrative besides the French- and Ottoman doctrines (ibid. 41).

Eventually, these allegedly subversive counter-publics provided just another space to spread the nationalist idea of a new social order. Besides schools functioning as counter-publics, supporting the nationalist cause by training "a new generation of nationalist women in opposition to the Mandate state," weekly political salons enabled nationalist activists from both genders to meet and exchange their ideas (ibid. 45, 52).

However, apart from the above-mentioned launched projects by women for subordinated groups of society in the field of education and health, activities in the field of culture mainly addressed the “educated elite” (ibid. 51). In a way that nationalist men excluded women from anti-colonial and unity-driven street activities by applying physical force, declaring the public space as a ‘men-only’ sphere, women’s activities were “trapped within the [same] framework of its false essentialisms” due to the above-mentioned example of class-based exclusion (Khoury 1987: 46; Thompson 2000: 196; Chatterjee 1989: 632).

Besides from (elite) women's engagement in so-called counter-publics (see Fraser 1990) like the above-mentioned private societies, what drove this new nationalist elite, striving for ‘modern’ ideas, such as the claim for more political autonomy and sovereignty for the Syrians (Khoury 1987: 53), to curtail women’s participation in the general political public?

As most of the men, who were organized in the Arab nationalist movement, had a lower-middle-class background, they were facing precarious socio-economic conditions after the First World War (Watenpaugh 2006: 86). Moreover, most of them were unable to exert influence on political events as the means of power were concentrated in the hands of a powerful elite (ibid.). Under French rule, this feeling of powerlessness and foreign domination continued among Syrian middle-class men, and eventually developed into an abstruse fear of losing ‘their’ (Syrian) women to “French men and the French state” (Thompson 2000: 27).

Apparently, this sentiment among bourgeois revolutionary men is not limited to the Syrian example: also, in revolutionary Mexico in the early twentieth century, “the oppressive prerevolutionary order had emasculated lower-class Mexican men by denying them equality and the ability to both support their families economically and protect their womenfolk from sexual abuse by upper-class men” (McGee-Deutsch 1991: 265).

Unsurprisingly, this feeling of effeminization, caused by lower-middle-class men's subordination through foreign rulers and their favored elite, was translated into the construction of a new manhood btw. patriarchal order, which emphasized “aggression and virility” as the defining features of the new “male personality” (ibid.). This phenomenon became manifested for instance in the rise of “proto-fascist [militarized] youth groups [in the 1930s][…] [,] [which turned] [t]he streets [into] a wartime battlefield, where women might only exceptionally be permitted to join Arab men in their common struggle” (Thompson 2000: 196). Starting in 1936, street politics turned into “paramilitary parades that sometimes ended in rowdy brawls and always posed the threat of violence with their military-style uniforms and weapons” (ibid. 194).

Hence, through a violent public demonstration of male strength in the streets, these new (mainly Muslim) nationalist men directed their fight against the French and their politically and economically influential ruling circle, and towards the new public visibility of women, the ‘weaker’ societal group.

Thus, as a ‘liberation act’ out of the socially and economically marginalized situation, these above-mentioned ‘rowdies’ embodied a new protest masculinity, which emerged as a new form of hegemonic masculinity, culturally emphasized over other masculinities, and oppressive towards women (Connell 2005: 77). Since “hegemonic masculinity presumes the subordination of nonhegemonic masculinities [and women],” this new order rested on “the belief that ideal manhood lies in the exercise of force to dominate others” (i.e. women, effeminate men) (Burstyn 1999: 192; Messerschmidt 2005: 846). To this end, this form of hypermasculinity is enacted as an “exaggerated ideal of manhood linked mythically and practically to the role of the warrior” (Burstyn 1999: 4).

Concretely, this form of hypermasculinity became apparent in the gendered street fights in nationalist Syria. As women stepped up their street activism in the early 1930s, nationalist men added more violence to their street activities, eventually declaring the public space as a ‘no-go-area’ for women (Thompson 2000: 191). Simultaneously, some fractions of the nationalists concluded a “gender pact” with the French authorities, enabling men an enormous dominance over women in the public (ibid. 287). As a consequence, many women became arrested when they attempted to stage their own public protests (ibid. 191).

Eventually, the dominant masculine performance in the public sphere reflects the nationalists' formation of a new gendered ideology, pervaded by power which, divides the roles of the two genders up into the private- and public sphere. In so doing, the public sphere, which is according to Habermas the "civic organ," where "public opinion" is formed or the "outer," materialist sphere, according to Chatterjee, emerged as a 'male-only'-sphere (Habermas 1991: 74; Chatterjee 1989: 624). It became manifest through the demonstration of male force and physical strength, rendering the performance of women's activities in the public as too dangerous and thus impossible (Thompson 2000: 196).

The 'homey' private sphere, however, interpreted as the "inner" of the nation or its "true self," accommodating its cultural/traditional identity, is foreseen for the new middle-class woman (Chatterjee 1989: 624). To this end, women were constructed as the representatives of the 'essential' traditional/indigenous culture, shielding the anti-colonialist nationalist project off from Western influence (ibid. 624-626). The ideal type of the new middle-class man was constructed as a soldier, in charge of defending the family (including women), embodying the nation, against external powers (Thompson 2000: 24-25). While, the ideal middle-class woman was meant to feature "bourgeois virtues," for instance "orderliness, thrift, cleanliness, and a personal sense of responsibility, the practical skills of literacy, etc." (ibid. 628-629). To this end, women were expected to reach a certain educational status to get a sense of the outer world but in the limits of her 'female obligations' (ibid.). Since it was expected from the new middle-class woman to balance the two domains of the inner/spiritual and outer/material successfully, they were supposed to stand above Western women and lower-class women, as both groups were unable/prevented from balancing both (ibid.).

All in all, men were assigned the roles as active political actors in the new gender order, which was formed by the nationalists, who exercised the status of a "cultural authority" and thereby administered a "hegemonic and hegemonizing" cultural discourse (Ryzova 2014: 6, 16-17). The construct of the 'male nationalist warrior,' enforcing its aims with the means of physical force was accompanied by a "nationalist cult of sacrifice," which was embodied by national role models such as the well-known military officer 'Adnan al-Malki (Martin 2015: 82). To this end, nationalist narratives representing al-Malki "effaced the historical, flesh-and-blood mortal, replacing the fallible being with a sacralized, deathless archetype of manliness, self-courage, joyful sacrifice, and the eternal guardianship of Arab sovereignty" (ibid.). This act of remembering the "martyrs' qualities" emerged as an identity-establishing process, providing

the ideological framework for a pan-Arabist-, ardent-republican-, post-revolutionary ideology (ibid.).

Consequently, the nationalist's "conception of citizenship was also avowedly militaristic," which became manifested in the typologisation of the "martial citizen" (ibid. 83). Thus, the militaristic character of the nation-state has a clear androcentric bias, since public roles (i.e. soldiers, politicians) were foreseen for men. Hence, women were assigned a rather symbolic role in the imagination of the nation and often denied access to the male-dominated public, compelling them to counter-publics or the private sphere (Fraser 1990: 68; Baron 2005: 215).

This specifically gendered construction of citizenship became explicit in the way it was dealt with the organization of sexuality in post-colonial Syria. For instance, "forms of female sexuality not inextricably linked to reproduction were often occluded or even pathologized" (Martin 2015: 121). In so doing, the "ideal citizen" was constructed as a male figure, which, however, came along with the "reconfiguration and problematization of male sexuality" (ibid.). Eventually, deviant sexual behavior (i.e. homosexuality) threatened the "the postcolonial, state-building project," since its success "depended on the service of its patriarchal, rational, and martial citizens" (ibid.). As the constitution of male sexuality was equated with "social stability, productivity, and reproduction," the men's sexual performance was meant to be enacted "within the bonds of marriage," producing a "conjugal citizen" (ibid.). Hence, the "social stability" and "progress" of the post-independent Syrian nation-state was tied to the citizen and her/his bodily performance (ibid). This way of controlling, disciplining and subordinating resonates with Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics or biopower, which in its disciplinary form developed in the 17th century as he outlines as follows:

The second, formed somewhat later, focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was affected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population (Foucault 1976: 139).

To sum up, the nationalist project, in its attempt to distinguish itself from colonialism and elitist politics, remains "trapped within the framework of its false essentialisms" (Chatterjee 1989: 632). The nationalists, as an emerging political force in the French mandate period, who "had lived at the very margins of power" until then, asserted strength and manifested power

through subordinating others, i.e. women. Thus, power hierarchies regarding gender and class, inscribed in a new gender order, constituted a significant element of the years of nationalist activism in Syria.

The cornerstones of this ideological nationalist project became manifested in a new civic order, which was upheld by nationalist elites, who dominated the cultural discourse in the late French mandate period. This hegemonic discourse was perpetuated by the first post-independence governments, composed of the afore-mentioned nationalist elites among others, who managed to retain a powerful position inside the new Syrian nation-state. How this new gender order became inscribed into a new civic order and determined the definition of the new terms of citizenship, will be briefly elaborated in the following chapter.

4.2.1 An Assessment of the Manifestations of the New Gender Order: The Years of State Consolidation after Independence

As French troops remained in the country until 1946, Syria's "transition to independence" took a long time, roughly from 1944 until 1946, the year when French and British troops departed (Thompson 2000: 271). However, "[n]ationalist elites" benefitted from the continued presence of French forces in Syria, since pressure for reform of the civic order, emanating from subaltern movements (i.e. labor unions, women's groups, Islamists, etc.), could be averted by referring to the possible threat of a reassertion of French rule (ibid.).

In stressing the importance of the maintenance of the status quo, nationalist elites' actual interest lay in preserving their newly won privileges (ibid.). In so doing, they blocked necessary progressive changes but bolstered the inequalities of the "colonial-civic order," and circumvented "state commitments to social welfare with self-interested policies of […] statism in Syria" (ibid. 272).

As the first "post-independence governments" were reluctant to address gender equalities (Martin 2015: 15), the newly defined terms of citizenship after independence "would remain problematic – unstably poised between paternal privilege and republican rights" (Thompson 2000: 272). To be more concrete, women were deprived of "civil and political rights," improvements in the health- and education sector were neglected, the issue of women's suffrage was put on hold, and socially conservative religious leaders were guaranteed control

over the personal status laws (ibid. 64, 288). Eventually, the instability in post-colonial Syria, caused by the "[p]aternal republicanism – the refusal to democratize and expand the colonial welfare state, and the persistence of heterogenous citizenship rights – would contribute to the causes of Syria's successive coups beginning in 1949 […]" (ibid. 286).

Paradoxically, it was under the authority of the Military Colonel Adib al-Shishakli, that the colonial civic order of the French mandate period was gradually replaced with a "more liberal constitution […] [removing] legal designations based on gender, class, and other distinctions," which was launched in 1950. Moreover, "a new Personal Status Code" was introduced in 1953, which for the first time in the region combined sharia law with "various European civic and criminal codes" (ibid. 16).

Although the 1950 constitution appealed to "parliamentary democracy" and "modernist Islam," evoking hopes for the looming establishment of a democratic system, the authoritarian state managed to entrench its "right to intervene into the 'private' sphere in the name of public order" (ibid.). Consequently, citizenship was defined as "'civic-republican' (emphasizing duties) rather than 'liberal' (emphasizing rights)" during the "democratic years," balancing "individual freedoms" and authoritarian practices (ibid. 17).

The main duties expected from citizens, which were deemed necessary for the definition of a new state, were "self-discipline" and the compliance with "patriotic duty through military service" (ibid.). To this end, the notion of the "citizen soldier" indicates the citizen's duty of self-sacrifice for the state (ibid.). Since military service was only open for men, the status of citizenship was designated for men only (ibid.). Consequently, in public discourses on the civic order, women were either ignored or praised for their motherly and modest but "subordinate role" in the state-formation process (ibid.).

Finally, when Syria founded the United Arab Republic (UAR) together with Egypt in 1958, the period of democratic experiments in Syria ended, and a period of instability featuring many military coups of which one coup in 1961 brought the UAR to an end, followed instead (Martin 2015: 147).

In considering the persistence of paternalistic trends, even in the "Democratic Years" (see Martin 2015) in Syria, this chapter highlighted how features of the gender order, propagated by nationalist elites, became inscribed into a new civic order, laying the basis for the definition of the new terms of citizenship. These new civic terms, still featuring inequities in terms of

gender, were perpetrated by the first governments after independence, who largely consisted of members of the nationalists. To understand how the new gender order became so dominant and persistent in the national discourse and how the elite managed to perpetuate it for so long, the next chapter will elaborate more deeply on the elite's power habitus by considering theorists, who focused on the nexus of power and the construction of gender.

4.3 Gender as a Political Tool for the Elite to Exercise Power?

By synthesizing the empirical material from previous chapters with the theoretical framework chosen to highlight the nexus of gender and power, this chapter will usher the argument of this thesis. In bringing together theories of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Raewyn Connell, it sets out to investigate the underlying power rationale of the nationalist elite, who declared the fight against old traditionalists and despotism among others (Ryzova 2014: 22). Though, as the dominant elite, in striving for political leverage in the new nation-state, it applied all means possible to secure power and maintain newly won privileges. In so doing, theories of well-known post-structuralists such as Judith Butler or Michel Foucault, who analyzed the subject formation and the genesis of knowledge by considering the external determinants such as power effects (hierarchies) and social and political structures, will be applied throughout the analysis.

As has become apparent in chapter 4.2, the gender order, which emerged in the course of the rise of nationalist activities in French Mandate Syria, exhibited clear ideological coloring, indicating its constructed and contextual nature. Raewyn Connell, who has studied this phenomenon, defines the gender order as a time- and context-dependent construct, situated in a constant state of flux (Messerschmidt 2019).

To go deeper into the analysis, Judith Butler's perception of gender needs to be employed, which does not understand gender as an ontologically dependent category (i.e. on social institutions) but as a dynamic and context-dependent construct, as outlined in a work she edited together with Elizabeth Weed:

It is not possible to know what gender 'is' apart from the way that is produced and mobilized; and further, it is not possible to know whether gender is a useful category of analysis unless we can first understand the purposes for which it is deployed, the broader politics it supports

and helps to produce, and the geopolitical repercussions of its circulation (Butler & Weed 2011: 3).

The same applies for the concept of hegemonic masculinity: as it is understood as a "historically mobile relation," patriarchy can no longer be sustained in the existing form and is called into question as soon as new groups and forms of hegemony emerged or socio-economic conditions change (Connell 2005: 77).

Nonetheless, "certain masculinities [persist] [,] [and] are more socially central, or more associated with authority and social power, than others" (Messerschmidt 2005: 846). Since the very notion of "hegemonic masculinity presumes the subordination of nonhegemonic masculinities [and women]" (ibid.). Thus, the way masculinities- and gender relations are ordered is already pervaded by underlying power motives, as has been pointed out in chapter 4.2 when light was shed upon the genesis of a hegemonic middle-class masculinity.

In bringing together the empirical examples of the formation of a new hegemonic masculinity, embodied by nationalist elites in French Mandate Syria, with the appropriate theoretical framework, two questions will be addressed in this chapter: firstly, in what way was gender applied as a tool by the elite to exercise power? Secondly, how has the hegemonic discourse, which gave rise to a new gender order has been enforced/performed?

To approach the first question, the circularity of power relations must be taken into consideration, which Michel Foucault demonstrates in his genealogical approach towards the analysis of truth and power. Foucault challenges in his famous concept of "power-knowledge" the assumption that truth rests on objectivity (McLaren 2002: 21). He argues instead, that certain individuals in "special social positions" produce "truth" (ibid.). Concretely, the circular relationship between truth and power, meaning that truth is maintained and produced by power, and the other way around, stresses Foucault as follows:

power produces knowledge […] power and knowledge directly imply one another […] there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Foucault 1991: 27).

Though, Foucault provides no clear definition of the term 'knowledge,' but perceives it as "a very general category of organization; organizing experience, space and time, truth games and relationality, as well as science and expertise" (Blencowe 2012: 3).

Apparently, knowledge is not clearly defined in Foucault's above-mentioned concept. However, the mechanism of circular relationships of power and truth can be appropriated in a more general sense for the question posed above regarding the problematique of historically mobile but persistent power hierarchies between elites (different masculinities) and men and women throughout the transformative post-war period in French Mandate Syria.

In using Foucault's blurred definition of knowledge, Joan W. Scott "frames knowledge as the understanding produced by cultures and societies of human relationships–in this case of those between men and women" (Scott 1988: 3). Thereby, knowledge is not perceived as "absolute or true," but as context- and time-dependent–a perception of knowledge that also Judith Butler shares (see above) (ibid.). Further, this notion not only becomes manifest in form of "ideas but [in] institutions and structures, everyday practices as well as specialized rituals, all of which constitute social relationships" (ibid.). To this end, in its regulatory function, knowledge "is not prior to social organization, it is inseparable from social organization" (ibid.). Hence, gender can be equated with the "social organization of sexual difference," meaning that "gender is the knowledge that establishes meanings for bodily differences" (ibid.).

Initially, it's the unequal power relationship between the old landowning elite and lower-middle-class men that gave rise to a similar unbalanced relationship between men and women later, shaping the making of a new gender order in the emerging Syrian nation-state. As the (Christian) old landowning elite had high stakes in political- and economic affairs under Ottoman rule and throughout the First World War, they contributed to the political exclusion and to the socio-economic precarity of (Muslim) middle-class men, which, paired with the reiterated subordination under foreign (French) rule, unleashed a sentiment of powerlessness among aspiring nationalist men (Ryzova 2014: 10; Watenpaugh 2006: 86).

In the next step, this unequal power relationship was continued, but with a focus on women as subordinated objects. Eventually, the feeling of powerlessness and effeminization, which evolved out of the fear of losing their women to French men, was turned around by men of the new nationalist elite and translated into a subordination of women–the 'weaker' social group (Thompson 2000: 27). As Raewyn Connell points out in an article on the structure of

masculinities in societies of the global south, the phenomenon of masculinities being “hegemonic and subordinated” at the same time or switching positions fast, is a characteristic of the specific socio-economic context in post-colonial societies (Connell 2014: 13).

Raewyn Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity implies the subordination of non-hegemonic masculinities and women so that the hegemonic form of masculinity can reach a superordinate status (Connell 1987: 83). Lower middle-class men, who constituted a large group in the nationalist movement in the French mandate period later, first belonged to a marginalized masculinity, when they were socially disadvantaged throughout the war and patronized by the French authority and their favored (landowning) elite (see above). Later, however, in order to claim a powerful stance and position in the emerging nationalist state project, middle-class men asserted strength in violently reclaiming the streets and pushing emerging women's voices out of the public, eventually using gender as a tool to exercise power. In so doing, a new form of hegemonic masculinity, represented by a bourgeois group of a male nationalist elite, was formed.

But, to approach the second question, it must be asked how this new gender order, promoting “aggression and virility” as the defining features of a new “male personality” and ascribing women a rather symbolic role in the new national order, has been enforced (McGee Deutsch 1991: 265; Baron 2005: 215?

In the course of the rise of new publication outlets in the early twentieth century, such as newspapers and magazines, this new intellectual elite received the chance to promote their perceptions of a new gender order in public and to dominate the discourse in the emerging “national public sphere” (Ryzova 2014: 21).

Hence, as the nationalist elite hold a monopoly position as a cultural authority, determining the national path towards ‘modernization,' they took up a hegemonic position in the intellectual discourse (ibid.). Thereby, the power of the hegemonic discourse back then, which was imposed on subordinate groups, can be exemplified with Antonio Gramsci's concept of "cultural hegemony," roughly defined as "the ‘spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant social group […]" (Hoare & Nowell-Smith 1971: 12).

So, the new gender order, determining “the hierarchy of masculinities is a pattern of hegemony, not a pattern of simple domination based on force” (Messerschmidt 2005: 846).

However, in taking into account the violent demonstration of “male physical strength” by (hegemonic) nationalist street activists in the worsening street fights in the 1930s against the French authorities, “marginalization or delegitimation of alternatives” does not only occur through “[c]ultural consent” but through actively pushing women outside of the politically significant public sphere (ibid.; Thompson 2000: 191, 194).

Therefore, Judith Butler's approach of the constitution of gender/a gender order as an active performative act by also indicating its own disciplinary mechanism rounds up the above-mentioned elaborations of the structure and enactment of a hegemonic gender order well:

Hence, as a strategy of survival, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences. Discrete genders are part of what 'humanizes' individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished. Because there is neither an 'essence' that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires; because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis (Butler 1988: 522).

Besides Butler’s depiction of gender as a performative act, this quote emphasizes again the constructed and contextual nature of the gender order, situated in a constant state of flux, as has been mentioned in the very beginning to introduce this chapter.

The significance of constructivist approaches for the analysis of gender dynamics in this thesis, applying gender as a category of historical analysis, will be pointed out in the following chapter on methodological reflections.

5. Methodological Reflections

This thesis has set out to shed light on the French mandate period in Syria. Against popular narratives of nationalists, this period played a significant role in the formation of a postcolonial socio-political order in the independence period and beyond (Thompson 2000). Secondary literature based on first-hand archive material from the region and colonial archives has been applied to trace empirical events related to transformations in terms of gender and the elite’s impact on it in the French mandate period lasting from 1920-1946. Although the notion of gender was chosen as an analytical category to embrace the progress of politics, a historical

account of the empirical events accompanying the genesis of the nationalist movement in a more general sense was provided first.

In this sense, the first part of the thesis, introducing the evolution of the nationalist movement and its partly violent dispute with the colonial authority, was mainly covered with secondary literature by Philip S. Khoury, Patrick Seale, and Michael Provence. Khoury and Provence offer the most comprehensive accounts in the English language on the Interwar period in Syria based on archive material from France and Syria (see Khoury 1987). Further, the historical account on negotiations about the women's question in public debates in the course of the rise of nationalist activism and street politics in Syria was provided by Elizabeth Thompson, who wrote "the first and fullest account of Syrian and Lebanese women's history available in English" (Thompson 2000: 5). The emergence and demise of certain elites and shifts in their distribution of power in the given period have been complemented by elaborations of Volker Perthes, who is considered an expert in the field of elite studies in the Arab world, preceded by a brief introduction into the academic discourse on elites.

Though, these are rather macro approaches, framing the genesis of the (male) nationalist movement, its resistance against the French authorities, and the rise of certain elites. Elizabeth Thompson, however, applies gender as "a unique and valuable lens through which to view the politics of the mandate period" (Thompson 2000: 4). Thompson follows the tradition of Joan Scott, who was the first to introduce "the use of gender as a general analytical tool" for historiography into the academic discourse in 1988 (ibid.).

Concretely, as "social and economic change" has immediate repercussions on the structure of gender (i.e. re-organization of households), it provides the basis for the interpretation of "political developments," such as the maintenance of "[g]ender hierarchy" as a pillar of colonial rule (ibid. 3). Therefore, gender is an adequate analytical tool to link developments unfolding on different meta-levels (economic-, social-, political).

In taking into account the findings made in this thesis, it must be agreed with Elizabeth Thompson in the point that external circumstances (i.e. war repercussions, economic changes) played a significant role in the emergence of "gender anxiety" and the "crisis of paternity" (ibid., 19). However, the focus was set on another aspect Thompson dealt with only marginally, which caused "gender tensions," and gave rise to the making of a new gender order: the notion of power, which is especially inherent to elite contexts.

Consequently, for the deconstruction of the power rationale, adherent to certain (male) elites, which was one of the main arguments made in this work, the empirical part was less significant than the constructivist theories applied. Nevertheless, the empirical part provided the general historical background to understand the (power) reconfiguration of elites btw. the rise of new ones in a spatial-temporal dimension.

Further, to substantiate the thesis that women took up more work outside of the household after the First World War and thereby improved their socio-economic status, statistical data illustrating the female labor force participation before and after the war would have been useful for the analysis. However, there are no accurate figures for female labor force participation before Syria's independence in 1946 (Meininghaus 2016: 45-46).

In the second theoretical part, the historical accounts of Provence, Seale, Khoury, and Thompson provided in the first empirical part, were complemented by theoretical contributions from the field of gender studies, masculinities studies and postcolonial studies to investigate the role of (male) elites as crucial actors in state formation processes (nationalists, party members, business leaders, etc.) and their interlinkage with the notion of gender and hegemony (Chatterjee 1989; see Connell 2000, 2014; Messerschmidt 2005, 2019).

In the third, analytical part, constructivist approaches and concepts presented in former chapters, perceiving the formation of gender and knowledge as socially constructed, were applied to deconstruct the powerful nationalist ideology, which gave rise to a new gender order in the French mandate period (Butler 1989, 2014; Foucault 1976, 1991).

However, to keep the balance between empiricism and theory throughout the thesis, a sub-chapter investigated how the significant external circumstances, such as socio-economic changes in the structure of the household after World War I and intra-elite conflicts, which gave rise to a new gender order, became manifested in the first state consolidation years after independence

In sum, almost all those constructivist theoreticians applied throughout the thesis, are united in their sensitivity towards power hierarchies, the public/private dichotomy, the hegemony of the (cultural) discourse, and their understanding of the construction of gender relations/order as being time- and context-dependent. Thus, in considering the very this highly transformative French mandate period in terms of socio-economic change, elite (power) configuration and

changes in the structure of gender, the above-mentioned theoretical framework was of the utmost value for answering the research question raised in the introduction.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has set out to answer the question if there is a causal link between the negotiation of a new gender order in French Mandate Syria (1920-1946) and the elite's underlying power interests. In considering women's improved socio-economic status in the course of World War I, and King Faysal's accommodation of some of women's political demands in the brief period of Arab rule from 1918 to 1920, the focus lay on the question why the discourse on women's role in the public gradually changed to their misfortune in the advent of French rule in 1920. To answer this question, three main arguments have been developed throughout this thesis, which will be presented in the following.

First of all, in investigating the root-causes of social change in the aftermath of the First World War and the end of Ottoman rule, the external circumstances shaping the making of a new gender order were considered. The (post)-war period can be considered as a highly transformative period in socio-, political-, and economic terms. The socio-economic repercussions of World War I caused a "subversion of order and authority at home and in the community," which later became manifested in "gender anxiety" and a "crisis of paternity" (Thompson 2000: 19, 117). Concretely, many women were forced to take up work outside the home as weavers or spinners for instance (Meininghaus 2016: 45-46).

Consequently, paternalistic counter-reactions on the "crisis of paternity" had an immense impact on the formation of a nationalist order, laying the legal and political foundations for a post-independence nation-state (see Thompson 2000). By considering the above-mentioned developments of women gaining more liberties and public visibility, and occupying a more independent socio-economic position, why were their claims not heard? And why did they even get pushed out of the public space?

This question has been addressed with the second argument, focusing on the paternalistic turn or the standstill of the struggle for the improvement of gender equality, which became apparent in a newly negotiated gender order. The causes for the emergence of this order have been assessed by shedding light on the persistence- and the rise of new elites in the advent of

French rule in Syria. Concretely, the maintenance of political influence by the old landowning elite in the French clientelist system has been pointed out. In forging ties with socially conservative elites to foster their rule, the French authority turned out to be an accomplice of the perpetuation of paternalism. Eventually, the rise of a new nationalist elite, claiming status as a hegemonic intellectual/cultural authority has been highlighted.

Third of all, in applying constructivist approaches, it was answered why and how gender came to play a decisive role in the new elite's strive for political leverage. It was elaborated on why this allegedly progressive intellectual elite neglected the feminist claims of their female nationalist compatriots and even contributed to women's gradual expulsion out of the public by a radical faction within the nationalist movement. This phenomenon was explained by referring to the socio-economically precarious condition of nationalist elites throughout the previous decades and the subsequent feeling of powerlessness. Concretely, a large part of the nationalist elite consisted of Muslim men with a lower-middle-class background, who experienced marginalization due to their socio-economically precarious position throughout the Ottoman-, war- and French Mandate period, since a Christian landowning elite hold a monopoly position in trading activities due to their good relations with European suppliers (Khoury 1987: 207). Consequently, subordinated Muslim middle-class men were tackling their feeling of "effeminization" by intensifying the application of force, demonstrating "male physical strength" in the nationalist street fights (Thompson 2000: 191, 194). Eventually, a new hegemonic masculinity emerged featuring hyper-masculine virtues (Connell 2005; Messerschmidt 2019).

This masculinist turn found its expression in the gendered public/private dichotomy. While a new (male) nationalist elite expanded their activities in the emerging nationalist public, women were gradually pushed out of the political public sphere. Hence, women were relegated to the private sphere of the home, fulfilling their ascribed role as "middle-class women" to be equipped with "bourgeois virtues" (Chatterjee 1989).

These "bourgeois virtues" were propagated by a nationalist elite, which held the status of a cultural authority determining the intellectual turn of the country as leaders of a hegemonic discourse (Ryzova 2014: 6, 16-17). In deconstructing the nationalist agenda, an underlying set of paternalistic values combined with anti-colonialist sentiments, represented by the intellectual elites, became apparent. Eventually, the nexus of gender, power, and colonialism,

which came to the fore in the notion of paternalism in the nationalist ideological framework, has been approached with theories from the field of postcolonialism and gender theory.

In presenting examples from colonized India, it has been shed light on the gendered distribution of social roles inscribed into a new order split up into the "outer" worldly sphere attributed to men, and the "inner" spiritual sphere designated for women (Chatterjee 1989: 624). The exclusion of women from the advancement of nationalist politics was further augmented by elaborations from Beth Baron, who examined the nationalist project from colonized Egypt in terms of gender. In declaring the public, a male-only sphere, where nationalist politics were made, women were excluded from the public and assigned to a symbolic function in the nationalist project: "[women] were favored as symbols rather than as political actors" (Baron 2005: 215).

However, the above-mentioned "bourgeois virtues," permeating the 'nationalists'' gender order, confining women to the private sphere of the home (ibid.), are not relics of the past but still persistent today in Eastern and Western societies. Concretely, a recent study from Germany has shown that "[f]ull-time working men and women in total work the same number of hours (about 7 hours and 45 minutes) but full-time women spent 36 minutes more dailly [sic] on unpaid activities, and therefore less time on paid work" (Anderson 2017: 1). According to this study, women are also more likely to take up part-time jobs to be able to start a family (ibid.), signaling a willingness to lower their sights in terms of their activities outside the home and socio-economic autonomy.

Apparently, the gendered dichotomy of public/private is a strong feature of nation-making making processes, considering the aforementioned examples of Syria, Egypt, and India. Thus, a gender order, ascribing both genders different tasks in society according to their gender, is persistent as a social construct in nation states until today, even in Western societies. This does not come by surprise, however, considering the role of the French authority in Syria, which made a pact with paternalistic forces to maintain stability and to foster their rule.

Finally, the making of a new gender order has been mainly investigated as a byproduct of the formation of a nationalist agenda determining the ideological underpinnings of the future Syrian nation-state. In mainly taking up a discursive approach to assessing the genesis of a new gender order, the aim of this thesis was to grasp the heated atmosphere- and the

discursive changes in this highly transformative period, having a large impact on the formation of a post-colonial order in Syria.

Due to the limited scope of this thesis, further research is needed on the concrete legal manifestations of this new gender order beyond the independence period. For instance, by considering personal status laws or constitution drafting processes. Moreover, a future research project might investigate to what extent the nationalist intellectual elites, which emerged in French Mandate Syria, still exerted influence on public discourses in Ba'thist Syria – even until today.

Also, the current conflict in Syria augurs highly transformative potential in terms of gender and the overall social structure, considering the devastation the war caused already and the variety of external actors with different political interests involved. If the potential of a socio-economic re-structuring process can develop its full potential in the course of the war and its aftermath for the benefit of women, or if powerful elites with a paternalistic agenda emerge, remains to be seen though.

7. List of References

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