# INTRODUCTION

This book is a study of how states and their citizens are constructed under colonialism and then bequeathed to their postcolonial successors. It begins with the proposition that even as colonial peoples waged nationalist battles for independence they inevitably participated in the very political order that they rejected. Linked to that proposition is a second one, that colonizers could not and did not unilaterally impose a system of rule. Colonialism involved, as do most other political systems, constant negotiation of power relationships and identities. Such negotiation often came across the barrels of guns, but it more routinely occurred across desks and tables, and in newspapers and telegrams. Negotiators struck bargains along the way that shaped the powers and responsibilities of the state and the rights and obligations of colonial citizens.

The resultant network of power relationships constitutes the colonial civic order, a term I use to designate the broad arena in which states and citizens interact. The civic order embodies norms and institutions that govern relations among citizens and between citizens and the state. It is within the civic order that the terms of citizenship and state power are both expressed and continually renegotiated among agents of the formal state apparatus, its unofficial agents, and their clients. The term civic order is useful because it emphasizes the fluidity of interaction and negotiation, and deemphasizes the boundary between state and society. Indeed, in colonial contexts, clear boundaries rarely existed, as colonizers routinely depended upon indigenous intermediaries to exercise rule. Bargains struck between the state and its mediating agents set the terms of membership in the civic order, and consequently defined terms of citizenship variously for different groups within the population.

This book is concerned specifically with the construction of a colonial civic order in Syria and Lebanon, countries created by European powers after the Ottoman Empire was defeated in World War I and governed by the

French as a mandate, a system of tutelary and temporary rule authorized by the League of Nations. Syria and Lebanon are apt cases for the study of colonial civic orders because they simply did not exist before 1918 as national polities; by the time they achieved independence at the end of World War II, however, basic norms and institutions had been laid that would shape government and citizenship for decades afterward. It is appropriate to view Syrians and Lebanese living under the French mandate as colonial citizens, rather than as passive subjects, in law and insofar as they actively engaged in the definition of their civil status. Citizenship is usually defined as a relationship between the state and individuals governed by legal rights. By 1930 the countries had adopted republican constitutions that explicitly granted basic rights of citizenship to all inhabitants. These constitutions fostered engagement with the state through elected parliaments and rights to free speech and association. Some citizens were able to engage the state more directly than others, who found themselves distanced from contact with the state by mediating authorities. However, because distance and mediation varied so much, and came under constant negotiation, I have in this book eschewed the rigid distinction commonly made between citizen and subject. There was no clear line, in the eyes of contemporaries, that could be crossed from one status to another. I have instead emphasized the fluidity of status, ranging from "subaltern" citizens whose rights were limited by privileged elites to "full" citizens who enjoyed a maximum of rights under the constitutions, subsequent legislation, and state policy. Likewise, I have eschewed a more elaborate definition of citizenship than this one based on law and engagement because most scholarship has been grounded in liberal theory and practice distant from the experience of Syrians and Lebanese in the early twentieth century.[1] The following pages instead attempt to draw out conceptualizations of the proper relationship between citizen and state voiced by participants in the mandate themselves.

The history of the mandate period in Syria and Lebanon has been told before, by historians to whom I am greatly indebted. Stephen Longrigg wrote the first comprehensive history of French policy in the two countries. Meir Zamir has written histories of mandatory Lebanon from a statist and sectarian perspective, drawing on documents unavailable to Longrigg. Philip Khoury authored the masterwork on the Syrian nationalist movement that opposed French rule and inherited control of the state after 1943.[2] No comprehensive political histories have been written, curiously, by the French, although several have been written by Syrians and Lebanese in French and Arabic.[3] In addition, specialized studies have enhanced our understanding of social change in the

period. Particularly important for this book have been two labor histories, one on the Lebanese movement by Jacques Couland, and the other on its Syrian counterpart, by Abdullah Hanna.[4]

This study is distinct from most of the above in several ways. It rejects a common view of the mandate period as a lacuna, a tragic gap between the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the achievement of full independence from the French. In this nationalist perspective, the period is significant only for the acts of resistance shown or for continuities with the Ottoman past that are often lamented as stagnation. As stated above, I will argue that the period was in fact seminal in laying the foundations of postcolonial states and citizenship. To demonstrate this, I eschew the choice of perspective of either colonizer or colonized in an attempt to capture the dynamics of interaction from both sides. Second, I attempt to wed the often-distinct approaches of social, economic, and political history to gain a synthetic understanding of power, identity, and conflict in the colonial civic order. The following pages argue that the experience of war, economic dislocation, and rapid change in urban social life had as profound an effect on politics as the particular strategies of elite political actors did. The terms of citizenship were hammered out not just in French offices and parliamentary chambers, but also in the daily contact citizens had with the French state and its agents, in schools, streets, public clinics, and post offices.

In perhaps the most important departure from the prevailing historiography, I use gender as a primary analytical tool to integrate the many levels of political experience that shaped the colonial civic order. A focus on gender helps tie aspects of social and economic change directly to political developments. Gender tensions originated in the effects of war and economic transformation—particularly the disruption of households and of normal economic support systems—and soon appeared in the particular agendas of nationalist, women's, labor, and religious movements. Gender anxiety erupted during armed combat with the French in the early 1920s, informed protests against French social policy, especially in education, and became the focus of French confrontations with religious and nationalist elites.

A focus on gender also opens a window on the subterranean structures of power that shaped the civic order. Gender hierarchy was a pillar of colonial paternalism, wherein the French and indigenous elites bargained to maintain hierarchies of privilege in colonial society. Privilege was accorded to male intermediary agents of French rule who wielded tribal, religious, class, and household authority. These mediating elites were rewarded for their cooperation with the privilege of power over other citizens: peasants, workers, family

members and members of religious communities of both sexes, as well as women of every status. Because it so fundamentally defined power, gender became a primary site of conflict and compromise between the French and the Syrians and Lebanese as they variously challenged and defended these paternalistic privileges.

In sum, gender offers a unique and valuable lens through which to view politics of the mandate period. The use of gender as a general analytical tool may be puzzling to those readers unfamiliar with developments in gender history since Joan Scott published *Gender and the Politics of History* in 1988. Scott, and many other gender historians since then, have explored the efficacy of using the concept of gender, meaning the social construction of relations between the sexes, as an equivalent of class, race, ethnicity, and other categories of historical analysis. The results have produced significant rereadings of an array of historical narratives including, for example, those of the French Revolution, British administration in India, and slavery in Virginia.[5] Because gender has not yet attained the conceptual definition of other analytical categories like class, which has been developed since the nineteenth century, my gender analysis of mandatory politics shares with these other studies a spirit of experiment and exploration. My intent is not to supplant other analytic lenses used to understand Syria and Lebanon, but rather to expose political patterns obscured by uniquely class, religious, or nationalist perspectives.

Gender appears in a second sense in this study as the object, not just the tool, of analysis. In addition to the general question, "What kind of civic order emerged in Syria and Lebanon by independence?," I ask: "How and why was that civic order gendered?" Women's citizenship differed from that of men's, and differed in 1945 from what it had been at the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. This difference, I argue, was constructed during the process of negotiation and conflict over the civic order, and it had much to do with the circumstances of French rule, economic stress, and the discursive repertoires of the labor, nationalist, religious, and women's movements. Indeed, I argue that the aims and organization of the various male-led movements and the women's movement can only be understood in the broader context of their competition and alliances with one another. The ways in which the civic order was constructed, and the gravitation toward gender as a site of conflict and compromise among males, weakened women's political bargaining power and resulted in a regendering of citizenship by 1945.

I intend this study as an integrated history that encompasses the experiences of both men and women, and that accounts directly for the differing roles and power relations between them. This is not, then, a women's history telling a

separate story about Syrian and Lebanese women. There would be much merit to writing such a history. This is however, to my knowledge, the first and fullest account of Syrian and Lebanese women's history available in English. Consequently, the following pages will offer relatively more information on women than on men, in order to compensate for the existing imbalance in scholarship. This study will also focus on the histories of other neglected groups, particularly religious, labor, and youth movements, which aimed to redefine male identity much as the women's movement sought to reform female identity in the civic order. Because so much background is necessary, I have abbreviated the account here of the elite nationalist movements; their story has been told much more fully elsewhere. I have also had to attenuate my general discussions of women, workers, and religion in the period, in order to maintain a focus on those among them who mounted organized efforts to reform the colonial civic order and claim full status as citizens.

I have also focused mainly on cities and particularly on the capitals of Beirut and Damascus because that was where citizens mobilized. The rural context for urban politics is important, and it is presented at the outset of this book. Cities boomed with wealth drawn from the countryside and with the influx of rural migrants, some of whom joined the above-mentioned urban social movements. However, peasants did not mount organized movements of their own during the period of French rule, and so did not participate as distinct players in the construction of citizenship.[6] They were excluded, in large part, because landowners, tribal chiefs, and the French colluded to silence them. Peasant repression inevitably, if indirectly, shaped the urban process of colonial citizenship-building, for the rural population was solely represented by landed and tribal elites, who participated in urban-based political parties, parliaments, and government administrations. It was only after the French departed in 1946 that peasants emerged as a political force, especially in Syria under the leadership of Akram Hawrani. They would necessarily have to confront the civic order and practices of citizenship already established in the cities. The mandatory roots of rural movements is a story that could and should be more thoroughly studied so as to enhance our understanding of their role in producing the 1963 Ba'thist revolution in Syria and the Shi'ite and Druze challenges to Lebanon's urban elites since the 1970s. This is a hefty task best left for a book devoted to a later period of history.

Specifically, the following pages argue that there were three fundamental preconditions for the struggle over the civic order in mandatory Syria and Lebanon: first, the profound dislocation suffered by family households during and after World War I; second, the creation of new, theoretically national

states; and third, the imposition of French rule. In their combination, these three conditions encouraged linked reactions to the microlevel stress of shifting household economies and gender roles within the family and to the macrolevel reorganization of community and polity. I have called this linked reaction a crisis of paternity. As Part I explains, the crisis of paternity reflected both the destabilization of male authority as heads of households and of the larger community and the concomitant transformation in female roles. It was expressed in ideologies of class, religion, nation and gender, and in often-violent conflicts among citizens and with the French, culminating in 1925 with armed revolt in Syria. By the end of the 1920s, three conflicting models of reconstituted authority emerged and stood in tension with one another, based on paternalistic privilege, republican fraternity, and universal democracy. At the core of each model lay a differing vision of proper gender relations at home and in the civic order.

The 1930s saw a shift in the mode of conflict to the politics of organized social movements. The focus of protest also shifted, from simple opposition to French rule to attempts to transform the colonial civic order. The earliest movements were women's federations and male nationalist parties, both rooted in prewar associations. Religious interests also organized. In Lebanon, the Maronite Church enhanced its longstanding influence through association with the French; in Syria, and to a lesser degree in Lebanon, Islamic populist groups emerged to reclaim influence lost. By the mid-1930s, labor unions formed with the aid of the growing Communist Party and proto-fascist youth organizations appeared in both countries. The programs of all of these organizations held profound implications for gender relations in the civic order. Gender anxiety was often a motivation for joining them, and the redefinition of fluctuating gender roles was often their primary aim. The French encouraged renegotiation of the colonial civic order by their willingness to engage these increasingly powerful social movements, which staged strikes and demonstrations and sent petitions to the League of Nations in Geneva. Indeed, the French sought to satisfy discrete demands for social rights and political inclusion as a means of diverting calls for outright independence. These negotiations climaxed during World War II, resulting in a fundamental shift in the structure of the civic order.

I characterize the revised civic order as a colonial welfare state, wherein paternalistic social aid once bestowed by France through its collaborating intermediaries was gradually transformed into social rights claimed directly upon the state itself. Like that of gender, the concept of a welfare state captures linkages between anxieties in the home and in politics. It also helps us to conceive

of the political process from the mid-1930s as one in which groups excluded from the colonial civic order sought not only entry, but also equal status within it. What made citizens' demands welfarist was that they claimed rights to social benefits directly from the state. Syrians and Lebanese routinely invoked statist models of European social policy to express their grievances against the French. Social rights challenged the paternalism that undergirded the colonial civic order, especially the authority and privileges of the state's intermediaries: State guarantees of health, education, and family sustenance circumvented these mediators to establish a direct link between state and citizen. These new rights and commitments also carried direct and ambiguous implications for gendered distinctions in citizenship, as they transformed relative rights of males and females in the civic order. In short, Parts II, III, and IV explain how mass movements emerged to challenge the state's paternalism and how negotiations to reform the civic order often came to a focus in bitter disputes over the gendered legal and spatial boundaries of citizenship.

The tension between republican rights and paternal privilege polarized Syrian and Lebanese politics even as the countries moved toward independence during World War II. As Part V shows, once again gender became a primary site of conflict and compromise: Both regimes would attempt to resolve the rights-privilege tension by binding political rivals through gender pacts that marginalized women in the civic order and placed them firmly under male authority. Although nationalist rulers claimed to have resolved the crisis of paternity, post-independence politics would continue to turn upon ideological rivalries rooted in the mandate period. This accounts for women's enduring inequality as citizens, as the gender pacts in both countries have continued to block legal reforms to their personal status.

It is my hope that this book will contribute to the various literatures that have inspired it. Its dual use of gender, both as analytical lens and as object of study, contributes to a range of gender studies. Generally, as discussed above, I hope this book will help advance the use of gender as an analytical concept that can elucidate linkages between the home and the political arena often obscured by lenses of statebuilding, class, ethnicity, and so on. More specifically, I see this book as a part of the growing literature on gender and imperialism, where gender has been used both as a tool to reconceptualize the very nature and process of imperial rule, and as the subject of studies to reveal women's roles in colonial administration, in resistance movements, and in social reform.[7]

Most specifically, I intend this book as a contribution to recent trends in Middle Eastern gender history that have sought to displace previous views

rooted in timeless traditions of religion and patriarchy. I was first inspired to question short-sighted and essentialist explanations of Middle Eastern gender inequality by the works of Deniz Kandiyoti, Marnia Lazreg, and Suad Joseph listed in the bibliography. The recent rise of Islamist movements in the Middle East has prompted new queries into how religious-secular and East-West dichotomies were culturally constructed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, under the impact of European imperialism and government reform. Of particular concern has been how Middle Eastern women came to be the pivot around which these dichotomies were mobilized in political discourse.[8] At the same time, social historians have advanced our knowledge about how women's status was determined in royal palaces, Islamic courts, the family, the marketplace, artisanal industry, and on the farm. A few histories of women's movements—which first emerged in the early twentieth century not only in Syria and Lebanon, but also in Turkey, Iran, Egypt and Palestine—have also been recently written.[9]

While the historical study of Middle Eastern women remains in its infancy and subject to much debate, a few generally accepted trends are now apparent. It is clear that current practices and interpretations of Islamic law governing women's status emerged only in recent centuries. The law itself did not crystallize until as late as the thirteenth century. It reflected gendered attitudes of the period and of regions once governed by Byzantium and Persia that were not necessarily present in seventh-century Arabia during the Prophet Muhammad's lifetime. For example, it is not clear that veiling, considered by Islamists today as a requirement for Muslim women, was practiced widely by the first generations of Muslim women. Legal and customary norms excluding women from politics, limiting their spiritual leadership, and denying them the freedom of divorce granted to men certainly date from centuries after the Prophet's death. On the other hand, it appears that Muslim women have long enjoyed rights to personal property that European women only recently gained. Meanwhile, alternate forms of Islamic practice and belief have in different times and places emphasized greater gender equality than legalistic traditions have. Rural and lower-class women's lives appear to have differed markedly from those of the urban elites; the former experienced higher divorce and remarriage rates, more choice in marriage partner, but less control of personal property. Sufi (mystical) traditions in Islam have also afforded women a more prominent role in religious affairs than legalistic traditions have. While women were generally excluded from formal religious education and authority, there is evidence that they have informally exerted power to shape their own status. Women of medieval Cairo, for example,

actively resisted calls for strict seclusion in their homes, and apparently exercised, as late as the seventeenth century, greater freedom of mobility than women in Istanbul did.[10] Finally, it is clear that the region's political and economic transformations under the impact of European imperialism and colonization since the nineteenth century have tended, despite calls for reform, to privilege and reify stricter legalistic traditions for all women.

These broad trends in Middle Eastern women's history will necessarily be revised as more regional histories, like this one, are written. Through its study of Syria and Lebanon, this book attempts to clarify the linkage between colonial rule and the perpetuation and reification of Islamic laws that accentuate inequality between men's and women's personal status. It is striking that none of the postcolonial Arab countries, except Tunisia and the former (Marxist) South Yemen, have enacted significant reform to these laws since their independence. As will be suggested here, this common legacy is in fact the product of distinct political processes. The gender bargains struck in colonial Syria and Lebanon differed from those struck in neighboring countries, due to local social and economic conditions and to the specific political interactions between the women's movement, other social movements, and the state.

The second aim of this book is to enhance our general understanding of the social and political history of the interwar period in the Middle East. The period has received much less scholarly attention than either the nineteenth century or the years since World War II. On the one hand, much of what has often been assumed to be postwar phenomena are shown here to have roots in the interwar period. For example, scholars have tended to locate the origins of the Islamist-secularist cleavages in current Middle Eastern politics in the recent travails of nationalist governments, ignoring nationalists' longstanding rivalry with religious groups in the decades before 1945. On the other hand, the linkages between nineteenth-century Ottoman history and the post-World War I period of nation-states have been studied more thoroughly, but primarily in terms of diplomatic and elite political history. Social, cultural, and economic continuities remained relatively unexplored, aside from a few efforts like Haim Gerber's essay on the social origins of the modern Middle East, Hanna Batatu's monumental history of Iraq, and the many recent studies on Palestine. Most lamentable has been the dearth of study on the social impact of World War I on the Middle East, where civilian and military casualty rates often far exceeded those of Europe. The difficulty of bridging the Ottoman and postwar periods is daunting. This book was originally conceived to cover the period 1900–1945, embracing both the late Ottoman and mandate periods. However, as I began research while a graduate student, I was forced to limit

the scope of the project due to the magnitude of archival research required, given the paucity of secondary materials available on the mandate period alone. I have thus relied upon the richer secondary literature on the Ottoman and post-1945 periods to knit the history of French Syria and Lebanon to the periods that preceded and followed it. And when possible, I have attempted to suggest lines of inquiry relevant to further research on the interwar histories of other Middle Eastern countries.

In particular, this book addresses the historiography of Syria and Lebanon in the interwar period. By organizing this history around the concepts of gender and citizenship, I have rewritten previous historical narratives that have privileged sectarian and class identities. Class transformation was certainly a salient feature of Levantine history between 1850 and 1950. Out of Ottoman reforms and a changing world economy in the late nineteenth century emerged a new urban bourgeoisie and a distinct landowning elite, polarizing the distribution of wealth as never before. The new bourgeoisie threatened the livelihood of the much older petty bourgeoisie of small shopkeepers, but never its existence. In contrast, peasants, by far the largest social group, suffered critically from economic changes and the rise of a landowning class. Many abandoned their lands and migrated to cities or, especially in the case of Lebanese Christians, to foreign countries. Meanwhile, a salaried middle class appeared after the turn of the century, comprised especially of civil servants in expanding government bureaucracies. Nascent industrialization and the expansion of the service sector produced a self-conscious, urban working class by World War II.

While nearly all inhabitants of the region speak Arabic as their mother tongue, except for small Kurdish and Armenian minorities, their common linguistic identity is truncated by a remarkable variety of religious affiliations. Most of the mandate's 3–4 million citizens were Muslim, representing about half of Lebanese and 85 percent of Syrians in the 1930s. The remainder was almost entirely Christian; Jews comprised just one percent of the population, concentrated in Damascus, Aleppo and Beirut. About three-quarters of all Muslims were Sunnis, adhering to orthodox Islamic tradition and dominating all major cities in the region, save Beirut. The remaining Muslims were divided among three principal groups. Shi'i Muslims were found in both countries but concentrated in southern Lebanon; indeed, the number of Shi'is approached that of Sunnis in Lebanon and would surpass the latter after World War II. Shi'is share much with Sunnis in terms of religious practice and belief, differing mainly in their conception of the proper leadership of the community. Two heterodox Muslim sects, rare elsewhere in the Islamic world, counted significant numbers of adherents grouped in tribal societies in the

mountains of Syria and Lebanon. ʻAlawis (also known as Nusayris) adhere to a secretive doctrine related to Shiʻism; nearly a quarter-million of them lived mainly in northwestern Syria near Latakia. The Druze follow another sect that branched from Shiʻism in the eleventh century and live mainly in Mount Lebanon and Jabal Druze (Mount Druze) in southern Syria.

Christians were far more splintered as a community. The largest Christian sects were the Greek Orthodox, living in both Syria and Lebanon, and the Maronites, affiliates of Roman Catholicism who maintained their distinct liturgy and who were concentrated in Mount Lebanon. Together they represented more than half of all the region's Christians in the 1930s. Other Christian sects included Syrian and Armenian Orthodox, and Catholic churches that had split from the Greek, Syrian, and Armenian orthodox communities since the eighteenth century. Very small communities of Chaldean Christians from Iraq, Roman Catholics, and Protestants numbered only a few thousand each. The minority Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities had enjoyed a large degree of self-government under Ottoman rule, with their own religious laws and courts. The government officially represented the dominant Sunni Muslims in its legal apparatus. Sectarian relations had experienced periods of tension through the centuries, but never the degree of violence that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century because of unstable government and economic change. The 1860 massacres of Christians in Mount Lebanon and Damascus and later massacres of Armenians in Anatolia that drove them into Syria and Lebanon were virtually without precedent. With the advent of French rule in 1920, the disestablishment of Sunnis, and the new privileges of Catholics and Maronites, would produce new frictions among the various communities in the mandate period.

The shifting fortunes of social classes and religious sects have thus dominated historical narratives of the mandate era. Nearly all existing histories of twentieth-century Lebanon, for example, focus primarily on the rivalry between the country's various Christian and Muslim sects, with some attention to the class basis of those divisions. In the standard account, sectarian relations were aggravated by the French, temporarily healed by a "national pact" between Sunni Muslims and Maronite Catholics in 1943, but later sundered by the system's inherent clientelism, which spread the benefits of economic development unevenly, to the disadvantage of the country's populous but rural Muslim sects of Shiʻis and Druze. This would lead to civil war. Historians of Syria have tended to emphasize class somewhat more than sectarianism. As the history is often written, the French practiced divide-and-rule tactics, segregating Syria's rural Druze and ʻAlawi minorities from the urbanized Sunni Muslim population.

Sunni elites formed the nationalist movement to reunify the country and capture the state from the French, harnessing it to their own interests as a landowning-industrial class. Sunni elites' own divided interests (particularly between those of Aleppo and Damascus), their oppression of peasants, and their continued exclusion of 'Alawis and Druze from politics would fuel the 1963 Ba'thist revolution.

My aim is not to renounce or replace these narratives, but to cast new light on them. The following pages do, in fact, emphasize the interaction of gender, class, and sect within the framework of citizenship-formation. This perspective, I seek to show, redresses several weaknesses in previous studies. First, they have often been teleological, reading motives of principal political actors in terms of the civil wars and revolutions to come. This study looks for political motivation in conditions that prevailed at the time, or immediately before the mandate, as in the First World War. Second, the standard narratives tend to focus on political elites and to ignore the role of state institutions. By omitting or marginalizing other, more populist movements that variously rivaled or allied with nationalists, many previous histories have oversimplified elites' motives and failed to capture the complexity of the conflict between paternalism and republicanism that animated urban politics in this era. The focus on political elites has also tended to underplay the state's role in politics. With their emphasis on periods of crisis and on high-level negotiations over independence, constitutions, electoral procedure, and the like, previous studies have ignored the profound impact of routine state practices upon the social lives of the citizenry. This study offers a fuller analysis of the entire urban civic order and of the terms upon which citizenship was defined. Third, these narratives have failed to give a convincing explanation for the political mobilization of sectarian identities. They have tended to ascribe it to French treachery, to the personal ambition of religious leaders, or to the age-old clannishness of the society. While each of these factors may have contributed to sectarianism, the following pages show how gender anxiety expressed in the crisis of paternity can better explain the historical construction of sectarian identity, its popular appeal in this particular period, and the specific programs of sectarian activists. Finally, as the following pages also seek to show, women played an important part in the politics of the mandate. Their almost complete omission from standard narratives has necessarily distorted our understanding of the history of mandatory Syria and Lebanon, precisely because gender issues were so tightly intertwined with class and sectarian issues.

As a third aim of this book, I intend my study of colonial citizenship to address various emergent literatures on statebuilding, civil society, and the construction of identity in non-Western regions of the world. As a case of the

building of a welfare state in a colonial context, this study seeks to contribute to a revisionist literature on comparative welfare states. It problematizes the often teleological treatments of the "origins of the welfare state" that have focused solely on industrialized countries that built vast entitlement programs after World War II. The variant case of welfarism in a colonial context should offer at least a minimal corrective. In particular, this study joins previous ones that have rethought welfarism from a gender perspective. Most of these, too, have focused on industrialized countries. I was surprised to find that many trends revealed in those histories also appeared in French Syria and Lebanon.[11] More broadly speaking, I hope readers may find the general discussion of the construction of citizenship in a colonial context provocative. I intend this book to help bring the Middle East into debates about forms of citizenship outside of the context of the liberal nation-state, in imperial, colonial, muliticultural, and religious polities.[12] At the very least, I hope this book helps to dispel the popular notion that most Middle Easterners don't have democracies because they don't want them. Many Syrians and Lebanese mobilized to demand equality, rights, and political participation, and they did achieve democracy of a kind. That the outcome was so unstable may be attributed to the peculiar dilemmas of right and privilege in French mandatory rule, as the pages that follow will attempt to show.

Finally, I wish to say something about my perspective as an American writing a history of foreign countries, particularly those in the Middle East. I do not presume to ask the same questions Lebanese and Syrians might ask of their own history. Nor do I presume to write a version of history that is more correct than they would write. This is, however, a difficult posture to maintain in a situation where there is far more support for historical study of the Middle East outside of the region than inside of it. The cultural and economic legacies of imperialism often still hold in the academic world. In this context, I found the following experience somewhat encouraging. While conducting research in Damascus, a Syrian friend helped arrange interviews with local women for me. As she later explained, she told potential interviewees who were skeptical of an American researcher's intent, "She [me] will probably get everything wrong, but there will still be material of use to us." I was gratified by my friend's candor, and I hope that she and other Syrians and Lebanese may indeed find something of use here. To the degree that I have succeeded in producing a study of mutual interest and value, I am honored and gratified. To the degree that I have failed, I express my profound regret.