Chapter 1: A Disposition toward Suspicion

Between 2006 and 2010, most of my fieldwork in Lebanon was spent inside Palestinian refugee camps. I spent my days in the camps, slept in the camps, ate in the camps, and socialized in or outside the camps, usually with the Palestinian community. Given the animosity that prevails between almost all sectors of Lebanese society and the Palestinian refugees, this was a source of suspicion for many Lebanese people around me, from state officials to civilian actors of all confessions and political ideals. At the same time and for similar reasons, I also became a source of suspicion for the very Palestinians among whom I was spending my time.

The fact that the Palestinians were refugees had important consequences for their sense of belonging and for the making of social relations, both at intra-group and extra-group levels. Among the most important implications of refugeeness was an almost ever-present sense of suspicion that I will call a *disposition toward suspicion*. This disposition can be characterized as a generalized mistrust that must be overcome in order for social bonding to occur. Therefore, the experience of suspicion was of great importance in matters of social organization and identity.

In what follows, I analyze the sources and modes of suspicion and trust among Palestinian refugees in Dbayeh and Al-Jalil, ranging from a broader social conceptualization of trust to more situational and culturally specific aspects; hence, this chapter also dwells in some detail on the Lebanese political situation at the time of my field research. This serves multiple purposes: first, it helps the reader to gain a general understanding of the breadth of Lebanese political allegiances, which are major sources of both suspicion and trust for Palestinians in Lebanon. Second, it allows me to dive deeper to the level of interpersonal relations, providing a perspective from below that is complementary to my focus upon the broad social context of the camps. This, in turn, also provides a background to my field research experience and its lim-

itations. Third, it allows me to investigate in greater depth the ways in which the politics of nationhood were entangled with religion in Lebanon, how the Palestinians were uniquely situated in this context, and how the process of entrustment was also part of the ritual tempo of both Al-Jalil and Dbayeh.

In the Palestinian case, the characteristic inwardness of the refugee experience was first imposed by the events leading to fleeing and the flight itself, and then reinforced by the Lebanese social and political exclusion of Palestinian refugees. This, in turn, led to a suspicion towards outsiders as a way to protect members of the refugee communities from the largely hostile environment surrounding them, while also reinforcing a sense of collectivity among the groups thus formed. Suspicion toward outsiders was not only a Palestinian cultural element. Some would say it is universal. However, in this case suspicion was closely related to these groups' specific condition as refugees. This chapter presents generalized suspicion as one of the stronger forces heightening the importance of trust and forming the shape of entrustment in both refugee camps compared in this book. Towards the end of this book, *Chapter 7* defines what I call politico-moral economies of trust and, in the process, articulates the relevance of suspicion, among other contributing elements, to what I will suggest is a largely ritualized economy.

a.   The Politics of Religion

Political alliances in Lebanon change at a frantic pace. As a result, it becomes difficult to distinguish political allies from opponents. Nevertheless, political belonging in Lebanon is very much constitutive of identity for both groups and individuals. In order to mitigate the unpredictability of the political sphere, individuals and groups tend to withdraw to the comfort zone of their own families, villages, and religious sects.

"Confessions" (singular *ṭā'ifa*; plural, *ṭawā'if*) is the English term, derived from the French *confessions*, designating the socio-political organizations based on religious affiliation upon which the Lebanese state system is based. It is a synonym for "sect," if sect is also understood as a socio-political institution rather than just a secretive religious group. Because of this political system, religion inevitably permeates the political sphere in the Lebanese context, even if it does not fully determine it. Such a system also accentuates the social aspects of religion, which in turn become increasingly associated with categories such as ethnicity and nationhood. In practice, politics in Lebanon is greatly shaped by confessional interests, which in turn tend to

be expressed partially in religious idiom. This not only further strengthens internal confessional relations, but also ethnicizes religion.

For instance, civil marriage is still prohibited in Lebanon, and confessional authorities officially handle family law. This arrangement makes inter-confessional marriage difficult, and, in turn, the confessions are often thought of and felt as not only different religious groups, but also different ethnicities. Intra-sectarian strife, such as between Amal and Hezbollah in the 1980s or between the Jumblat and the Arslan Druze alliances, is still possible, as are political alliances such as those between the Shi'i Hezbollah and supporters of the secular Christian leader Michel Aoun, or between the Christian Phalangists and Sunni-led Future Movement. However, while alliances might appear strong at a given point in time, they shift constantly, while confessions themselves remain stable political groups. Notwithstanding a general propensity for strife, the political system encourages different political allegiances to collaborate toward similar goals, as these are largely defined in sectarian terms.

As mentioned in the introduction, the political situation in Lebanon was particularly tense during my fieldwork, even by Lebanese standards. Animosity, tension, and actual conflict had been escalating, starting with the assassination of the Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and the ensuing Syrian military withdrawal in 2005. The situation was further exacerbated by the 2006 war, the destruction of Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in 2007, the long period in which Lebanon remained without a president, and the Lebanese parliamentary elections in the summer of 2009.

National and territorial boundaries of what constituted Palestine and Lebanon, Palestinians and Lebanese, were largely shaped in contrast to each other, in line with Frederik Barth's discussion of the role that boundaries and contrasts play in constituting identity (1967; 2002). Thus, in Lebanon, the Palestinians, much like the Syrians, were sometimes defined/self-defined as the primary *others* within Lebanese society, more so than other migrant communities such as the Filipinos, Sudanese, or Iraqis. Given that they constituted an important element for the definition of Lebanese identity itself, a look at the boundaries of the Lebanese nation-state helps to better understand how they were constantly being shaped, reshaped, manipulated, maintained, and transformed.

While I was living in Dbayeh, the political situation in Lebanon reached a boiling point (once more). The Lebanese parliamentary majority threatened to close Hezbollah's TV station, Al-Manar, prompting the Shi'i group to take

to the streets of Beirut with its fighters and heavy weapons, clashing with Future Movement supporters and militiamen. The situation soon worsened in Tripoli, where Alawite militiamen fought in support of Hezbollah, and Sunni militiamen (including radical Salafi militias), loyal to the Future Movement, fought in the name of the government. Once more, the army played no role except for being deployed to conflict areas, typically after the clashes had already ended. In fact, whenever new clashes erupted, the army would evacuate the area so as not to be involved in the conflict, again, out of fear of splitting the military into factions and starting a new civil war. As a result of the hostilities, the army was compelled to withdraw from Beirut's most important high-end commercial center in Hamra, Walid Jumblat had to leave his home in *Verdun* due to Hezbollah's dominance in the region, Saad Hariri also ran away from his residency in Hamra, and so on. Because of fears that civil war might be imminent, no Christian militia was involved in the conflicts, as they were seen as a struggle between Sunni and Shi'i groups only.

In fact, at times I thought we were already in the midst of a civil war, but I soon learned from personal experience that what would be considered civil war in Europe or the USA was very different from what would be considered civil war in Lebanon, where the recent history of internal violence was much more extreme. While in Beirut during part of this conflict-ridden period, I heard the sounds of machine guns rehearsing their theme day after day. I avoided going to certain neighborhoods where the conflict was more intense. Like many Lebanese and Palestinians, I was used to hearing the sound of machine guns every day even before this conflict. From Dbayeh, for instance, you could often hear the Phalange training with machine guns somewhere around the neighborhood, or at least the Phalange was the conductor of that dreaded symphony in many Dbayeh inhabitants' minds.

Hezbollah eventually completed its takeover of the most important Sunni neighborhoods of Beirut after only a few deaths, broken windows, new bullet holes joining old ones in the edifices' facades, and the revenge burning of the Future Movement TV station's main building. After holding these areas for a period of time, Hezbollah proceeded to inform the public that the operation was complete, and it withdrew its forces, giving space once more to civilians and the Lebanese Army. The goal seemed clear: to prove that the March 14 claims that Hezbollah was planning a *coup d'état* were wrong. That is, by first staging it and then withdrawing, Hezbollah hoped to prove that a *coup* had not been its main political goal, and at the same time display its military might. It

sought to sway Lebanese public opinion to their favor and frighten opponents into dropping their demands on the Shi'i group.

Before completing the 2006-2010 phase of my fieldwork, the Lebanese finally agreed on General Michel Suleiman as "the candidate" for presidency, indicating that the army was the only non-sectarian Lebanese institution capable of representing the interests of the nation in general. The army's neutral position *vis-à-vis* Hezbollah's actions against Israel in the 2006 War and during the conflicts between the two main Lebanese warring factions, and its renewed morale after its victory in Nahr al-Bared at the expense of the camp's Palestinian refugees, guaranteed the preservation of public order after Suleiman's election to office.[1] The army remained the only political reason for Lebanese people from different groups to still refer to themselves equally as Lebanese.

Palestinians themselves were very much divided in their alliances with Lebanese political factions. The general official position was to avoid direct involvement in internal affairs, so that they could maintain their political autonomy by way of an informal compromise. In practice, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, PFLP, and all the other components of the "rejectionist front" supported March 8 (the so-called pro-Syria group), while Fatah (minus its splinter groups formed after the failed Oslo Peace Process) and the rest of the Palestinian Authority supported March 14 (the so-called anti-Syria group). It is known that such Lebanese groups collaborated with other political offices in the refugee camps.[2] For the Palestinian camp residents who supported one or another of these Palestinian political blocks, the tendency was to go along with the parties' allegiances and support their respective Lebanese allies. This, however, often generated friction, as the following story illustrates.

As with all my fieldwork visits, the summer of 2009 did not pass by without surprises. It was the time of the much-awaited Parliamentary elections that would finally tip the balance of power toward one side or the other. For one month during this time, I lived in an apartment that functioned as a haven for Palestinian refugee camp youth studying in Beirut.[3] The apartment

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1   On April 14, I went once more to Lebanon for three months to complete my fieldwork. This time, parliamentary and local elections were at stake in June 2009.

2   As shown by the demonstration I present in Chapter 3.

3   While Palestinians were prohibited from holding most jobs in Lebanon, they were still free to study, and some students were funded by endowments from donors in Arab countries (including some Lebanese sources). However, most chose not to study since by Lebanese law they were not allowed to exercise their professions in Lebanon. During

was located amidst old bombed buildings still used for habitation in a lower class area of Tariq Al-Jadideh, two blocks away from the *Jām'a 'Arabiyya* (Arab University), the richest area of the neighborhood. This neighborhood was almost exclusively Sunni, and it was almost impossible to find anyone in it who did not support Hariri, since anyone with other loyalties would most certainly hide their convictions for fear of reprisals. It was there that I heard the result of the electoral result favorable for the March 14 movement. However, not everybody was happy in the neighborhood, and my Palestinian refugee roommates kept their political convictions largely hidden.

The apartment itself was humble – there was little furniture, and the space itself, especially the kitchen, was not very clean, like most male students' apartments. It had two rooms, a kitchen used almost exclusively for tea and *argile* smoking, one bathroom, one living room, and a veranda. Four people permanently lived in the apartment during the week, although usually all of them would return to their respective refugee camps on weekends. In addition, almost every night guests would usually sleep there as well. Each room had a couple of beds, but more space was made by simply placing thin mattresses on the floor of the bedrooms and living room.

Quranic verses or Islamic expressions were written in ink on the walls and doors of the apartment, along with Hamas' flags, stickers, and posters. The person in charge of this space was Tawfiq, a young man from Al-Jalil. The son of one of the most reputable figures among the sheikhs in Al-Jalil, it was Tawfiq who invited me to live with them. He enjoyed good relations with the local Sunni community because of his father and also because of his own job at *Dār al-Fatwa*, where he was studying to become a sheikh. *Dār al-Fatwa* literarily means "home of the religious edict" and was created in 1922 to preside over confessional matters pertaining to the Sunni community in Lebanon. The mufti of the republic heads the institution, which administers mosques and religious schools throughout the country. To work at *Dār al-Fatwa* was highly respected in Lebanon, an honor not awarded to many Palestinians in the country, even though many Palestinian refugees studied there (Rougier 2007). However, Tawfiq supported Hamas and the Lebanese opposition led by Hezbollah, like most who set foot in his apartment.

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my stay in the camps, I met, for instance, a sociologist who made a living running a backyard pastry shop, a philosopher who was on his way to becoming a sheikh, and a psychologist who ran a Palestinian cultural association.

The political situation in Lebanon – together with memories of the Lebanese Civil War and the ways in which Palestinian social, political and religious leaders positioned themselves in relation to the Lebanese parties – generated a conceptual space from which Lebanese discourses about Palestinians arose.[4] Due to the power imbalance between them, the ways in which the Lebanese conceptualized Palestinians were integral to the ways in which the latter viewed themselves in the country. As Palestinians, Sunni, and also pro Hamas, those young men in Tariq Jadideh had to make sense of their identities according to many elements in a complex process of articulation that often did not coincide with Lebanese expectations.

b.   Negotiating Anthropology

For a few months at the beginning of my fieldwork, I had to go back and forth to the Lebanese General Security office to gain research permission. The officer in charge of my papers was suspicious of me from the outset, given that I was researching Palestinian refugees and that I was living in the camps. To make matters worse, I had managed to enter Nahr al-Bared – which was then off-limits to almost everyone – with an acquaintance from the camp itself who was working there as a nurse. He told the Lebanese soldiers at the checkpoint that I was working with him, and I would soon discover that the Lebanese intelligence did not approve of it. The officer in charge of my case at the General Security had short hair, military uniform, and a grim face. I could not read her. Was she Muslim or Christian? Was she Pro-Syria or not? What seemed clear, though, is that she viewed Palestinians with great suspicion. The first words she uttered to me as I stepped into her office for the first time were: "You have been talking to people you shouldn't; you have been taking photos of things you shouldn't; you have been living where you shouldn't. Who are you and what do you want in my country?" My letter from Boston University stating that I was a PhD candidate there and that I would be conducting fieldwork in Palestinian refugee camps was not sufficient to gain her trust. Neither were the hours of interrogation and reasoning. The Syrian occupation had just ceased and the Hariri assassination had plunged the country into turmoil. The Lebanese intelligence apparatus was therefore trying to regain

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4   In a parallel example, Nasser Abufarha shows that the manner in which Israelis conceptualize and act towards Palestinians in the Occupied Territories partly constitutes the way Palestinians conceptualize themselves, even if in opposition (2009).

control over the country. I had to negotiate with her and her office for many months before receiving authorization for my research, a process involving weekly interrogations and demands. I was already living in Al-Jalil and once a week I had to travel to Beirut, where the headquarters of the General Security was located. The trip itself sometimes lasted two hours each way, and occasionally I had to stay overnight in a cheap dormitory in Beirut, proceed to General Security in the morning and only then return to Al-Jalil. Both for ethical and security concerns, I did not hide the reason for my trips from people in Al-Jalil. As a result, these trips also led to some suspicion: what was I really doing at the General Security offices practically every week?

My stay in the camps had been negotiated from the outset among local groups. During the 2006 War – and because of it – I met a Palestinian refugee from Shatila who lived with two acquaintances of mine (one American and the other French), in the same building as myself. His name was Marwan. We spent almost all of our time together during the war. Both of us volunteered in a local school that was receiving new Lebanese refugees, mostly from the South, and Palestinian refugees who had evacuated the camps. He and I also spent time in the streets on the lookout for news. From hilltops, beaches, or rooftops, we sadly and helplessly watched buildings being bombed. We ate communal meals back at the apartment building, and sometimes went to Shatila to check on his family and see if they needed anything, as they had chosen to stay in the camp stating that "they did not want to live as refugees anymore." This experience was my first contact with the refugee camps. Approximately one week before the end of the war, due to my academic commitments, I was required to leave Lebanon in the last wave of repatriations offered by the Italian government. When I came back and went straight to Al-Jalil, it was Marwan who waited for me, as he was then working in the camp. Experiencing the war together had forged a strong bond of friendship between us, which in turn made my fieldwork possible.

In Al-Jalil, I initially lived with Marwan in his one room apartment while I taught English as a volunteer for *Markaz li-Ḥuqūq al-Insān* (Center for Human Rights), where he also worked. I later decided that it would be better to rent my own place in the camp, so I could have more privacy and would not bother my friend too much, especially since in the beginning his mother liked to visit him from Shatila for two or three days at a time. After the first month, I moved to an apartment right outside the entrance of the camp, which allowed me to spend full days and nights socializing with people in Al-Jalil. I remained there for just over five months. For the last three months I lived in yet another

apartment, this time inside the camp, where I paid US$100.00 in rent per month to an elderly woman whose entire family had either died or moved abroad, leaving her with extra space to rent out. I was told that, prior to my moving in, the place had been a cultural center, and once there, I noticed that a big yellow flag featuring Yaser Arafat's face served as curtains. When I left the camp to live in Dbayeh for five more months, the woman offered me the flag as a present.

Friends in Al-Jalil urged me not to talk openly about the reason behind my trips to the General Security offices in Beirut and not to even mention that I had visited Nahr al-Bared. In their view, it could compromise my research and make my life in the camp difficult. Besides, they told me there were spies for the Lebanese army, for Israel, and for many other groups, Lebanese or otherwise, within the camp population. They claimed that one of the reasons they could trust me (although they did not mention the reasons why they would not trust me), was that the spies tended to be Palestinian. In the idiom of Lebanese or Palestinian politics, their concerns were multiple: they worried about what local Palestinian non-Lebanese government supporters would think; about what Lebanese government supporters would think; and what supporters of the Palestinian authority or those supporting the rejectionist front led by Hamas would think.

According to a number of camp residents, I was the first non-Palestinian to live in Al-Jalil, as opposed to camps such as Shatila or Beddawi, both of which had community centers that at times offered accommodation for journalists and researchers. Locals informed me that for my stay in Al-Jalil to materialize, considerable negotiation had to transpire beforehand, and weekly visits to the Lebanese General Security offices would certainly not expedite matters. The only reason I could go straight from the airport to live in the camps was due to the trust developed between Marwan and I during the war of 2006. This trust was sufficient for Marwan to risk his own reputation by making the case in Al-Jalil for me to live there. Shared experiences of hardship during the 2006 war allowed for an exceptional bonding experience, which was somewhat similar in character, although different in scale, to that of those who became refugees from the same country and shared the same roof. Nevertheless, these negotiations about my status in Al-Jalil did not cease upon my arrival, nor were they limited to my relationship with Marwan.

For instance, after already having stayed in the camp for a period of time, I was approached by a local Palestinian who shouted at me that I should not be living there. He seemed unaware that it had already been decided that I

could do so, or so I thought. Moreover, he was especially angry that someone would have rented an apartment to me within the boundaries of the camp. Where was I living? Who rented the apartment to me? Why was I there? I told him my story - the same story I told at the General Security offices – although I did not mention that I was going almost every week to the Lebanese intelligence headquarters. He walked alongside me inside the border of the camp as we passed the Fatah checkpoint, where armed men dressed in military uniform were talking with other Palestinians in civilian clothes. He demanded to know how I was able to find housing and walk around the camp freely. I mentioned that I was working for the *Markaz*, where I taught English, and helped them on general issues such as translating documents into English. He insisted I should leave the camp, and that no one should have allowed me there without his approval. It turned out that he was the local responsible for the UNRWA office in the camp. The reason for his disapproval, although he claimed it to be solely a matter of internal security for camp refugees, had less to do with security and more to do with his belief that I, and whoever vouched for my stay in Al-Jalil, had disrespected his authority. As such, it was a moral issue, or a matter of honor. Such questions of respect and deference were not uncommon as many local groups constantly disputed authority in the camp.

Puzzled and very worried, I mentioned the matter to the general manager of the *Markaz*. His demands were met with laughter and a certain lack of consideration from my Palestinian sponsors. The manager of the *Markaz* told me to "forget about it" since "everything that should have been taken care of was already taken care of." He also proudly told me that he would talk to the UNRWA representative personally. However, when I returned home that night, I found that contrary to the *Markaz* manager's position, Ḥājja[5] Amina, the elderly woman who had rented the apartment to me, was very worried about possible repercussions. The UNRWA representative had visited her stating his authority in the same way he had done with me. After about a week, however, Ḥājja Amina was back to smiling at me, proving to me that she was once again comfortable with my presence there. I realized that the manager of the *Markaz* had taken care of the situation – however it happened – since the UNRWA representative never bothered me again.

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5   This is an Arabic feminine term referring to those who had taken part on the pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj), or as a sign of respect to the elderly.

My move to Dbayeh was even more difficult than my move to Al-Jalil, as not only did I have no contacts there, but more to the point, the Palestinians I knew from the Muslim majority camps did not know anyone in Dbayeh, save for the two Al-Jalil brothers who helped me. I first tried to enter the camp using the official route, by talking to UNRWA and then Caritas about the possibility of living in Dbayeh and doing voluntary work in exchange.[6] The rest of that story should help highlight the pervasiveness of suspicion in Dbayeh and introduce the reader to the ways in which trust was locally managed.

Although I tried to convince Caritas that I could be an asset in the camp, no one from the office seemed interested in my proposal. Virtually all of our communication had been by email, and every time I suggested I could visit their Dbayeh office, they postponed the meeting. I was repeatedly asked what I would do in Dbayeh, and my PhD project and emails simplifying the argument and offering to work as a volunteer did not suffice. After a while, I decided to explore the camp on my own. At first, the locals were puzzled about me: I looked Western and I spoke broken colloquial Palestinian/Lebanese Arabic with a strange accent. I told them that I wanted to do research about their lives and, if possible, live among them so that I could understand the nature of their community more profoundly.

For a few weeks, I took several trips like that first one, spent hours trying to meet people and prove that my intentions were noble, and that my stay in Dbayeh could be helpful in some way to the community. Then, one man's fascination with what I presented as the practice of anthropology became stronger than his suspicion, so much so that he rented out to me an apartment used by his family for business storage. That man was Charbel, and he did it just so he could sit with me and philosophize about the nature of mankind, the nature of God, and our favorite topic, the nature of his community. He often asked me about his primary interest, namely, how to make his community better, a topic I insisted was difficult for me to discuss, as I was not a social engineer. Despite moving to Dbayeh, I still visited Al-Jalil regularly which made some in Dbayeh uncomfortable. A few young men were brave enough to inquire, supposedly inconspicuously, what were my thoughts about Dbayeh, the other camps, the Palestinians, the Lebanese, the Muslims, and even the Jews. After months of fieldwork, Charbel and I had already established a close friendship. Yet, he and his associates in the camp would often, until the day I left, ask me

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6   As I introduce in Chapter 4.

the same questions they asked me when I first set foot in the camp. They were not so much worried that I was a spy for Israel or the Americans, but about what I may be telling the Lebanese and the Palestinians in other camps about them.

These negotiations illustrate three important matters. The first has to do with how authority and social belonging were understood, distributed, and negotiated in Al-Jalil and Dbayeh. The second has to do with how authority was directly linked to one's honor, and challenges to authority were commonly perceived as direct attacks to one's honor – a topic I will develop in the next chapter. Finally, the third of these matters relates to my own presence in both camps, which had to be constantly negotiated in a way that was representative of modes of social bonding in the camps in general. As a principle, if my residence had become a problem for the community, then anyone who defended me would be perceived as guilty by association. Thus, my interlocutors in Al-Jalil, for example, showed genuine concern for my security and local public opinion in asking me to conceal the reason for my constant trips to Beirut. If I became suspicious, then at some level so would they. Any flag I raised in the camps would be understood as one raised in connection with the people with whom I surrounded myself, or better yet, who surrounded me, and any flag they raised would also become associated with me. This kind of association was mainly what allowed me to stay in the camps, since in spite of constant negotiation and suspicion, I was seen as part of my local network of friends who had their own political, ideological, and religious convictions. The Dbayeh story, in turn, illustrates how suspicion could be persistent and its direction indefinite.

Yet, it was not just the anthropologist or the outsider who gave cause for suspicion. In both camps, social cleavages and the fragility of people's lives made them wary of others. "The spies are Palestinian," I was told. Given this conceptual framework, almost no one was totally above suspicion, and trust was not absolute but contextually directed at the same subject or institution concomitantly, in a tug of war dynamics. Thus, trust became an element of strategic choice and investment, at the same time as it was expressed through the idiom of sensitivities, feelings, and morality. To trust someone or something was also to believe (yṣadeq) them. Trust was then given or withdrawn, in the same way that my Arabic would be contextually criticized or praised for being Lebanese or Palestinian as acknowledgement of distance or proximity. All camp inhabitants were constantly located and relocated on a continuum of trust, depending on their convictions, social networks, and actions. There-

fore, every social relationship, even if not primarily concerned with the issue of trust and social bonding, carried along with it an element of trust surreptitiously negotiated. For instance, even being seen in the company of someone was as much a statement about one's standing in the community as it was an investment in that person. Thus, one of the most important social elements of this investment was precisely the act of vouching for someone or something, as different groups of people both in Al-Jalil and Dbayeh did for me at various moments during my stays in the camps, as the above examples illustrate.

The differing socio-historical contexts of the two camps shaped the ways in which suspicion and trust were publicly performed. In Al-Jalil, there was a tendency to deal with such investments in the form of public displays that served as clear statements of one's own position in the community, performed as both ritualized rehearsal and public expression of one's identity. In Dbayeh, by contrast, such investments tended to be less public and more situational, although also weakly ritualized.

c.   Suspicion as Disposition

Since I too was caught up in the camp's social dynamics, suspicion surrounded me and consumed much of my own energy. I started to suspect everyone: that some were monitoring me for this or that Palestinian or Lebanese political party or even for the Lebanese government; that the Lebanese government tapped my mobile phone hoping to obtain information on the Palestinians; that the Palestinians had monitored and recorded the international phone calls I made to my family in Brazil and the USA from Al-Jalil's phone center; that much of the ritualized celebrations in Al-Jalil were geared towards putting up a show for my sake; that Dbayeh inhabitants were ignoring or misleading me on purpose to jeopardize my fieldwork because they wanted to be left alone; and so on and so forth. In fact, even when American and European journalists, scholars, and tourists occasionally tried to bond with me, I would be suspicious of them.

No matter how much I tried to maintain self-control, I could not dismiss those thoughts completely. After all, I had indeed gone through heavy screening by the Lebanese government, which at one point retained my passport for about four months and made me go to the General Security offices almost every week to get it back, while interrogating me at every turn. The Lebanese also did not allow me to leave the country in 2009, stating that I had overstayed my visa. Instead of making me pay a fine, however, they ordered me

back and forth to talk to army and General Security authorities all over again until, through the intervention of a friend of a friend, they allowed me to leave as long as I boarded the first flight, at that very moment, out of the country. In Baalbek, Hezbollah stopped me twice, and also detained me and confiscated my passport for a short while for a background check. However, I understood the necessity for both Hezbollah and the Lebanese government to check my background and keep an eye on me, since to them I was meddling in Lebanese affairs at a dire time. Syria had just withdrawn its occupation of Lebanon and had allegedly taken with it, as I was constantly told, the Lebanese intelligence files. Maybe this was just another urban myth, but it did reflect the general mood in the country. Therefore, while Lebanon was involved in many local, regional, and global conflicts, it did not seem to have much of a hold on what was actually happening in the country itself. This made sense to me, as I understood their efforts as an attempt to regain badly needed control of their internal affairs. The government was severely weakened by paramilitary control, and Hezbollah had its own independent intelligence and security apparatus, which it needed especially around the southern border with Israel, given the Lebanese army's weakness in the area.

Naturally, it also made sense for the Palestinians in Lebanon to keep track of affairs within their own territory, especially given their tacit agreement with the Lebanese government in which the Lebanese authorities would refrain from entering the refugee camps on condition that the Palestinians assume responsibility for solving their own matters and maintain security inside the camps. Internal conflict between Fatah and Hamas, and the eruption of fighting between Salafi neo-fundamentalist organizations and the PLO in some camps only made this necessity clearer.

In short, while I understood these dynamics, I continued to be suspicious of everything and everyone because everyone was also suspicious of me and almost everyone else. In Lebanon, fear of "allies" changing sides was constant, and thus trust was bestowed upon whoever was perceived as "closer," especially those from the same family (or clan), village, and confession. By the same logic, whatever was conceived as "betrayal" was among the most severe of offences. Thus, avoidance of betrayal in itself was a powerful force both consolidating as much as polarizing groups. I felt suspicious firstly because the general social climate in the camps was one of suspicion and mistrust. Second, since in my mind suspicion seemed justified and logical, I found little reason to dismiss it. Third, I felt that I could not possibly know who might

be monitoring my actions or for what reasons, and this made me even more suspicious, as suspicion thrives on a sense of a lack of control.

This fieldwork experience was difficult and challenging for me, to the point that it left me somewhat disoriented for a while upon my return. In retrospect, I am still not completely sure of what was "real" and what was "imagined." Either way, what matters most is that I learned firsthand what it is to feel observed, persecuted, and victimized, and how the local communities I studied dealt with observation, persecution, and victimization – both real and perceived. Although my experience was much less severe than that of the Palestinian refugees, my humble experience allowed me to make sense of the Palestinian refugee experiences in Lebanon through one of its most important components: the weight of suspicion and trust in the community, and its modes of expression.

My own experience of being a cause for suspicion among the Lebanese and the Palestinians in Lebanon serves to illustrate its pervasiveness in the refugee camps. However, the political situation in Lebanon, in which the refugee condition was a nodal point, had a great impact on each of the camp's social belonging processes, and suspicion was in fact generalized. This context created imperatives that the refugees inescapably had to address, not just by reflecting upon them, but also by routinely dealing with them. Continuously dealing with suspicion then generated an embodied disposition, a certain technique, learned at least as much through the body as through the mind. Through imitation and repetition, camp residents learned scripts contained in daily routines since childhood. That is, they learned proper behavior, values, and vernacular expressions to deal with the quotidian and the unexpected through ritualization at least as much as by conscious reflection. A structural disposition toward suspicion and embodied scripts to negotiate trust were thus vital components embedded in both Al-Jalil and Dbayeh's ritual tempo.

d. Suspicion & Refugees

Lebanon is but one example of how suspicion tends to be rampant in countries torn by civil war. In Lebanon, the matter was further exacerbated by entrenched sectarianism. As we have seen, war and sectarianism through Lebanese confessionalism reinforced each other, and both were responsible for the emergence of a disposition toward suspicion. However, the refugee condition also tended to intensify suspicion.

The refugee's identity stigmatization is a paradox according to which the refugee is precisely that which he cannot be. The stigma, being the cause of the refuge itself, overwhelms the refugee and becomes an imperative to be dealt with, one that informs much of the refugees' thoughts, reflections, and actions in the world. According to my own experience among Palestinian refugees in the Middle East, Latin America, and Europe, this overwhelming imperative can be dealt with in practice through two ideal typical tendencies. The stigmatized identity can be taken to heart and rendered positive, a process that often causes a hyper-expression of the stigmatized identity trait, as I witnessed mostly in Al-Jalil. Alternatively, it is put aside and largely effaced, often causing a hypo-expression of the stigmatized identity trait, as I witnessed mostly in Dbayeh. It is not always a question of choice between hyper- or hypo-expressions of Palestinianness.

In Al-Jalil, resettlement was not an option, and given the limited practical alternatives, resisting as a refugee through *ṣumūd*, and reinforcing the claim to return to the homeland constituted an almost necessary posture. In Dbayeh, by contrast, maintaining a *ṣāmid* posture and expressing Palestinianness was life threatening and thus virtually impossible as a public practice, even if enduring hardship was often understood and even sometimes expressed in more private settings in this way. Another strategy tended to be easier, namely, putting stock in a common religious (Christian) belonging to the detriment of a national identity, which was often seen locally as ethnic (Palestinian), in an effort to blend in or even become Lebanese. Likewise, there were also those in Al-Jalil who chose - and managed - to blend in with the local Lebanese population. Some even converted to Shi'i Islam and took up residency and a life outside the camp, and others were just socialized in Baalbek to the extent that Hezbollah's ideology and the institution itself became partially or totally their own. Yet, there were those in Dbayeh who found it hard to blend in and efface their Palestinianness, even when they expressed themselves otherwise so as to be able to live, just like it was the case in Al-Jalil. Moreover, given the Lebanese patrilineal citizenship principle, it was far easier for a woman to acquire Lebanese citizenship, as they could do so through marriage, whereas men did not have this option. Due to the local context, in both camps, whenever desired, the only possible way to do away with a Palestinianness to men was concealing it or leaving it aside, while women married to Lebanese citizens could "choose" to officially become Lebanese whenever individual circumstances allowed for it.

As I argue throughout this book, social context more than religious theology is what accounts for the difference in social belonging processes and identity expression in the Muslim and the Christian Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. However, I also point out that Palestinian refugees manage the contents and outlook of their religious belonging, as much as their ethnic, political, and economic belonging, thereby reconfiguring identity contextually in quotidian life. While this process is partially strategic, it is also partially embodied, resulting from feelings, fears, expectations, affects, sensitivities, dispositions and moral imperatives not always clearly defined or even articulated.

Furthermore, in the Palestinian case, nationhood is deeply infused with religious and ethnic elements. Being stateless also reinforces the national component of Palestinian refugee claims, and frequently even acts as a deterrent for Islamic neo-fundamentalist religious recruiting. Nationalism generally postulates a homogenous national culture, frequently equating that with religion and ethnicity. Israeli politics have largely associated Israel with the world's Jewry, instead of acknowledging its large non-Jewish, mostly Palestinian Arab component. Moreover, Jewish identity is at once ethnic and religious, which by a contrast imposed by the refuge, also highlights Palestinian religious and ethnic belonging.

Therefore, the Palestinian refugees' generalized suspicion was mainly geared towards:

a) Anyone who could be seen as responsible or even complacent with the creation of Israel and thus their own refugee condition. Muslims often also blamed "the Christians" for their misfortune, while Christian Palestinians often also blamed Palestinian Muslims for Islamizing their national cause.
b) The Lebanese and other Middle Eastern people in general, given the heavily disputed and highly fragmented political situation, plus the widespread local and regional practice of trying to control intelligence in the country.
c) Humanitarian organizations, since they were often perceived as an important part of an international consensus on maintaining their refugeeness. Palestinian refugees often reminded me that, after all, "the UN had created Israel" and that "the international community" had given it legality and legitimacy.

d) Scholars and journalists, given that while they might even show sympathy for the refugees, they do not always portray the situation as they should, and cases in which spies claimed to be scholars or journalists were not that uncommon. In a recent case around the time of my fieldwork, a "Brazilian" journalist filmed and obtained information in Shatila that was later broadcast in Israel. As it turned out, she was Jewish and a double citizen of both Brazil and Israel.

e) Palestinians themselves who might not only be members of rival political groups, but more importantly could be spies, as one refugee once told me, "The spies are Palestinians themselves."

To conclude, I define a disposition toward suspicion as collective, generalized suspicion, a condition that must be surpassed or put on hold in order for social bonding to occur. Therefore, the collective and individual experience of suspicion is of great importance to social organization and identity. That is, due principally to the refugee condition, generalized suspicion made subjects turn toward their own inner groups. Furthermore, the refugee condition coupled with the Lebanese socio-political context made Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon extremely conducive settings for a disposition toward suspicion. The historical context of the Palestinian refuge, once more greatly reinforced by the Lebanese socio-political context, made religion, entangled with nationhood, an important source of identification and social organization among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Finally, the refugees' inwardness, as an entailment to suspicion toward outsiders, tended to lead to political polarization in Al-Jalil and social fragmentation in Dbayeh. The importance of trust, the emphasis on dealing with trust as a matter of honor, and the pervasiveness of customs emphasizing bonds of honor, such as extreme hospitality, are at least partially, or take the role of, efforts to manage the fears and concerns of war and oppression. As such, a structural condition of suspicion in both camps was pivotal for ritualized disciplinary practices allowing local economies of trust to develop, as I will demonstrate in the final chapter, towards the conclusion of this book.