Chapter 2: No Choices to Stay there: Causes of the Displacement of Syrians and the Emergence of Conflicts within Syrian Communities

Introduction

I chanced upon Maḥmūd at the "Diwan" Council, an interfaith project to build Muslim-Christian relations, hosted by my friend who is a Protestant priest. Maḥmūd used to frequent this event due to his interest in religious dialogue. Since his wife is a German Christian, "it is important for me to understand more about German culture and the Christian religion," he claims. After several meetings, I asked him for an interview for my research, which he accepted without hesitation. We met at an old café on the banks of the (Pegnitz) river in the city center. After Maḥmūd provided a detailed narrative of his experiences in Germany, I asked him if he had been subjected to racist or discrimination treatment in Germany. There was a brief hesitation. He seemed unsure if some of his unpleasant experiences could be considered racism or if there was a better word to describe them. Then he reported a lengthy dialogue with an employee of the local immigration office "Ausländerbehörde". After he applied for permanent residency, Maḥmūd was invited to the so-called "security interview", during which they verify the person's status and file. After about one hour into the interview, Maḥmūd was about to leave the meeting and give up on the permanent residency due to the amount of insults that he felt had been addressed to him. What raised this doubt in him is a question that the employee asked in a provocative way, and he felt that this question - along with other questions - were a kind of "insult", as Maḥmūd stated.

> "Then she asked me: you and your brother came to Germany, why did your sister stay there? So, the bombs were only dropped on you and your brother and not your sister?"[127]

Maḥmūd was kidnapped twice - the employee did not know about it and he did not tell her that. He also did not tell her that his 16-years old brother was sent later by his family along with his cousins to Germany in fear

127 Nuremberg, 16 October 2019.

that he would join one of the armed groups following the death of some of his friends. Therefore, they were left behind in Syria. Later, his brother submitted a request for family unification on the part of his mother, while his sister and father remained in Syria. This context is what prompted the employee's question. To rephrase the question in a more tactful manner: If the situation was so disastrous in Syria, why did you displace and the rest of your family - especially the sister - stayed there? Maḥmūd's answer was the following:

> "Your System of Asylum does not allow females above 18 to seek refuge? Why did not she flee and asked for asylum?, she said. I told her the trip is too dangerous. It is not reasonable to walk 6,000 kilometres and the road is rife with human and organ traffickers. Would you take the same trip? She said: No. I told her it is not acceptable for me that my sister walks all of this distance. I endangered my life because I had no choice as I was called for the army reserve. My sister's situation is different."

Maḥmūd points to three factors: the German asylum system, the danger of the trip, and the lack of choices to stay "there" for him.

The causes of the Syrian exodus may seem self-evident at first glance, and the war raging in Syria is what drove these people to flee from their painful reality. The details of these causes and the real motives of Syrian individuals or families might only be manifested sometimes through the accounts of the people themselves. Therefore, this chapter will look at the reasons that pushed people to flee, with many of them ending their journey in European countries. The chapter is based on qualitative data collected from Syrians who live in Germany with the aim of highlighting their experiences.

Understanding these causes and scrutinizing the daily life of the Syrians that preceded or accompanied their decision to flee is bound to reveal many forms of social conflicts or division that have significantly interfered with these causes. Such forms of conflicts have had serious consequences in terms of the division of societies within the Syrian context. Moreover, many of these conflicts are also evident in the German context. These include identity-national, religious, sectarian or societal-political rifts. For instance, social rifts surrounding the nuclear family have largely affected inter-familial relations. In addition, studying these causes will help in understanding the effects of these factors or circumstances on the changes, challenges, and conflicts that have affected "the Syrian family". Consequently, in this chapter I will proceed in a manner that attempts to detach conflicts from their general framework in societies, i.e. between families with each other,

to then move to its own framework of relations within the nuclear family itself.

A significant portion of the population in host countries - including Germany - have an unclear vision of the reasons of the displacement of these large numbers of people from their country - Syria - to other neighboring or European countries. The year 2015 has witnessed a great wave of refugees that continued in the subsequent years. In the same year, the international coalition campaign announced in late 2014 against ISIS was still at its height. Many citizens of the host countries thought that the Syrians had fled in fear of these radical groups, which began to emerge a year after the outbreak of the Syrian people's uprising against the most notorious totalitarian regime in the world. Furthermore, a segment of the population in host countries became fearful from the increase in refugees' numbers, especially as the majority of refugees were young males. This begs the question as to where were the women and children. Should not they be given priority in asylum and rescuing from death? This chapter will attempt to also answer this question in several ways, according to the Syrians themselves. The importance of understanding this aspect lies in the fact that the vision that was formed among the residents of the host countries left either negative or positive impressions on the Syrian refugees in general. What I have observed is that many Syrians refuse to be considered as fugitives who left their country to the terrorists,[128] or that their war was civil, not between a dictator and a population, and they also don't want to be seen as hungry people looking for a livelihood. Being regarded in these stereotypes by the inhabitants of the host countries was teasing and putting pressure on them. On the other hand, the portrayal of Syrian refugees - or others - as economic exploiters, or the Muslim "other", led to a dampening of feelings of sympathy for them by the host countries,[129] and this also reflected negatively on them.

128 One of the conversations I observed on this point was between a Syrian and a German. The German man told the Syrian: "If I were you, I would not flee and leave my country to the terrorists." This perception bothered the Syrian man, because in his opinion, it was a false perception.

129 Charles Watters, 'Forced Migrants, Exclusion, Incorporation and a Moral Economy of Deservingness', in *Routledge International Handbook of Migration Studies*, ed. by Steven J. Gold and Stephanie J. Nawyn (London: Routledge, 2019). p. 85.

Anthropology has always contributed to providing "a voice and agency for refugees, exiles and other forced migrants,"[130] as Chatty wrote. However, it is worth noting that this chapter relates to studies upon forced migration. Charles Waters is called to study the Syrian conflict on two levels, at "a 'macro' geopolitical and economic level and at the 'micro' level of the opportunities and decisions made by Syrian families and individuals to flee their country and seek better lives elsewhere."[131] In this chapter, the Syrian conflict will be studied at the micro level, based on ethnographic data collected from those who have been through the experience of displacement, i.e. from the Syrian families themselves. Thus, this chapter will represent a qualitative addition to this aspect which deals with studies of forced migration based on qualitative data and not theoretical insights.

2.1 Insecurity and National-identity Division

Perhaps the most important reasons that drive a person to move from one place to another are fear and hunger. The nature of a human being pushes him to search for a safe place to live in when his life is threatened, as he is governed by his instinct to survive and avoid death. As Freud puts it: "We showed an unmistakable tendency to put death on one side, to eliminate it from life."[132] Thus, in order to understand the cause of the displacement and immigration of Syrians, it is necessary to understand the motives behind it. The need for safety is the first among those.

I got to know Suzān through the German language course in 2017. I contacted her during the fieldwork and asked her for an interview, and after that we met in a cafe in the Mercado. Because the dome in the middle of the building is large and well-lit in what resembles daylight, we did not feel the time the darkness of the night fell upon us, as the interview lasted approximately four hours. Suzān, a 54-years-old Palestinian-Syrian, lived in the Governorate Aleppo, and she was one of those who chose life over death, not only in fear for her own life but also for the life of her family

130 Dawn Chatty, 'Anthropology and Forced Migration', in *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, ed. by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., E-Book (OUP Oxford, 2014) <https://www.amazon.de/-/en/Elena-Fiddian-Qasmiyeh-ebook/dp/B00LPM3ZWC/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=>.

131 Watters, p. 84.

132 Sigmund Freud, 'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death', in *Papers on Metapsychology, Papers on Applied Psycho-Analysis* (Tr. E. C. Mayne, 1925), p. 289.

consisting of her husband, son, and daughter. The city of Aleppo witnessed an unprecedented siege and bombardment that destroyed large parts of the city. Suzān recounted the loss of many of her relatives either by death or imprisonment, and in her own words she portrayed some scenes of horror that she or her family members were subjected to, from one time when her husband's car was showered with bullets to another when a shell fell beside his car killing seven people. Suzān was working as an engineer for a telecommunications exchange center, and she was forced to keep the exchange working despite the bad conditions in the area. She was scared of being held responsible by the regime if the exchange stopped working, but at the same time she was afraid to go to work on roads rife with snipers. She lived this constant anxiety even vis-à-vis her job. In addition, Suzān stopped sending her son and daughter to school for fear of kidnapping. Nonetheless, death continued to threaten her family members even while they were in their homes. Her anxiety increased after the death of her neighbor's son, who was a friend of her son and daughter, due to a fragment that killed him instantly when their house was bombed. Following this incident, her daughter entered a state of psychological trauma, and death also took a second friend of her children, which made the situation "hell" for her:

> "The horror of death is always present in our eyes every moment […] at the end of the day we decided that we should leave."[133]

The fact that Suzān and her family are of Palestinian origin increased this suffering as they passed through the roadblocks in the areas of the regime or the opposition that inspected people and examined their records. This was the case since the majority of the Syrian people classified the Palestinians of Syria as "supporters of the regime", as Suzān says, given the involvement of many Palestinian factions present in Syria in the fighting alongside the Syrian regime. Consequently, the issue of Syrian-Palestinian identity conflict has emerged as one of the outcomes of this war. The alignment of some Palestinian factions with the regime or the entry of some groups, whether they are affiliated with the regime or the opposition or extremist groups, into Palestinian camps have brought catastrophic results on the inhabitants of camps. Several reports issued by the "Action Group for the Palestinians of Syria" have documented the conditions of Palestinians in Syria, including the destruction of their camps and the displacement,

133 Nuremberg, 3 December 2019.

killing, and detention of many Palestinians.[134] This has forced many Palestinians, just like the rest of the Syrians, to flee inside or outside Syria.[135] Suzān believes that what happened in the camps in Syria and emptying them from their residents is "another displacement project for the Palestinians", and therefore "the Palestinians no longer have safety or a future in Syria." This situation has prompted her and her family to take the decision to leave Syria.

During the fieldwork, ʾAġiad introduced me to Wāʾil for an interview. Wāʾil preferred, after several attempts to arrange an appointment for the interview, to have it take place at my apartment. Wāʾil, a 43 years old economics graduate, lived in Jaramana (a suburb of Damascus countryside), a neighborhood that is known for its sectarian diversity. He is a Druze who comes from the Governorate of Sweida. Despite the fact that he is a graduate of economics and that he was working in one of the Syrian banks, the lack of security and the loss of hope in a change for the situation has led him to flee Syria.

> "I decided to come to Germany because I lost hope to be able to change anything in Syria, whether in my personal life or in anything else. I mean reactionary groups that are currently in control of the country. I mean I am a person whose worth is simply a bullet on any barricade or a mortar shell. I have two kids. If I die, they will die of hunger, that is, if they are not killed with a mortar shell themselves. The area where I lived, which is Jaramana, received more shells than did Berlin during the Second World War […]. A shell fell down on us while at home, and my wife - she is my ex-wife now[136]- was pregnant in her seventh month. Luckily nobody was injured and the damages were material."[137]

134 Ibrahim Al-Ali et al., *Palestinians of Syria. The Story of Unending Suffering*, ed. by Tarek Hamoud, trans. by Safa Othmani (London: Memo, 2019) <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/reports/special/syria_report2018.pdf>, p. 9–123; Tarek Hamoud and others, *Palestinians of Syria. Life under Restrictions*, ed. by Al-Ali Ibrahim, trans. by Safa Othmani (London: Action Group for Palestinians of Syria, The Palestinian Return Centre, 2018) <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/reports/special/prslifeunderrestrictions2017.pdf>, p. 11–46, 56–79.

135 For more details, see several reports on the situation of the Palestinians of Syria at this link: 'Action Group for Palestinians of Syria: Special Reports and Articles' <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/special-reports/all/all/special-human-rights-and-documentary-reports-about-the-palestinians-of-syria-issues> [accessed 15 June 2020].

136 He mentioned his ex-wife because they got divorced after they came to Germany.

137 Nuremberg, 7 January 2020.

A friend of mine introduced me to ʿAdnān and his family, and they invited us to visit them in their apartment. ʿAdnān - who used to work as a driver for tourist groups - and his family were not doing any better. He claims that the fact that they descend from a relatively wealthy family has exposed many of his family members to kidnapping for the sake of ransom, including his father, who was kidnapped. ʿAdnān did not hear anything about his father since then. ʿAdnān fled Syria with his wife and three children to Egypt, but the Egyptian regime's restrictions on the Syrians in terms of residency, freedom of movement, and education for his children made him consider immigrating again from Egypt to Germany.[138]

The first report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Syria commissioned by the Human Rights Council was issued in 2010. It indicated that "attacks on civilians, killings and extrajudicial executions increased sharply during the reporting period ."[139] This declaration was the outcome of more than 300 interviews conducted in the framework of the investigation of unlawful killings committed in the early years of the Syrian uprising. However, things escalated significantly in subsequent years, especially after the Iranian and Russian intervention, the emergence of radical groups such as ISIS and al-Nusra, and the regime's use of scorched earth policy through which many cities were destroyed. As a result, insecurity prevailed in the majority of Syria. In its 2019 report, the Investigation Committee stated that "citizens in general still feel insecure and unprotected by the state. For example, citizens are vulnerable to kidnapping for ransom or for political purposes, and for blackmail or as a punitive measure."[140]

Maḥmūd, a 28-years-old male from Aleppo, descends from a financially well-off family. He was kidnapped twice as he had to travel between Aleppo and Damascus due to his studies. Following his graduation from the College of Pharmacy, he decided not to stay in Syria for many reasons including the lack of safety, as he could not stay in the regime-controlled areas since he would have been drafted for compulsory military service. At the same time, he could not live in the liberated areas due to fear of

138 Nuremberg, 27 October 2019.

139 Human Rights Council, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic*, A/HRC/21/50, 2012 <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session21/A-HRC-21-50_en.pdf>, p. 12.

140 UN, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2019 <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/42/51> [accessed 6 November 2020], p. 6.

abduction.[141] The forceful drafting of young men to compulsory military service is one of the main factors that prompted a segment of young people to migrate either to the liberated areas or outside Syria. This explains the increase in the number of young men who came to Germany compared to females or refugees from other age groups (see Table 1).

In addition to this, families would be more concerned to allow females to migrate than young males. Therefore, they could accept the idea of a young man's migration while refusing it in the case of females. In my view, this is due to many social considerations, of which the most notable are the family's reputation and, most importantly, their extreme fear of the risks of the immigration journey that could be tolerated - in their views - more by men than by women.[142]

Table 1. Total number of Syrian refugees in Germany by age group[143]

Total	Single	Married	Male	Female	Age			
	%	%	%	%	less than 20	20 to 45	45 to 65	more than 65
972 460	57.5	31.9	57	43	378 370	469 050	108 115	16 925

The legal age for compulsory military service in Syria is 18, and it continues until the age of 42.[144] Parents' fear for their children - as I indicated - led them in many cases to send them out of Syria so that the regime would not force them to join compulsory military service in this grinding war. This is one of the main reasons that prompted 'Adnān to flee Syria with his family;

141 Nuremberg, 16 October 2019.

142 Maria von Welser, *No Refuge for Women. The Tragic Fate of Syrian Refugees*, E-Book (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2017) <https://www.amazon.de/-/en/Maria-von-Welser/dp/1771643072>, p. 13.

143 'Ausländische Bevölkerung nach Altersgruppen und ausgewählten Staatsangehörigkeiten – Statistisches Bundesamt' <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Migration-Integration/Tabellen/auslaendische-bevoelkerung-altersgruppen.html?nn=208952> [accessed 15 June 2020]; Statistisches Bundesamt, '22 % Der Schutzsuchenden in Deutschland sind Syrerinnen und Syrer - Statistisches Bundesamt' <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2024/12/PD24_N062_12.html> [accessed 26 January 2025].

144 § 4 para. (B) of the Military Service Act.

as his three children – as mentioned – had approached the legal age for compulsory military service, they had to leave Syria.[145]

It should be noted that the Military Service Law exempts those who resided for four years in an Arab or foreign country, provided that they pay a compensation of $ 8,000.[146] Many of the Syrian youth of the age of military service fled outside Syria and refused to pay the compensation fee in order not to help the Syrian regime in any form. In December 2019, Article 97, paragraph (e) of the Law of Military Service was amended to read as follows:

> "The Compensation for the Military Service is to be collected from potential recruits who turn 42 years in accordance with the Public Funds Levy Law. Executive attachment applies without prior notification and a cautionary attachment applies to the recruit's wives and his children pending the determination of the source of these funds in case the recruit's funds are insufficient."[147]

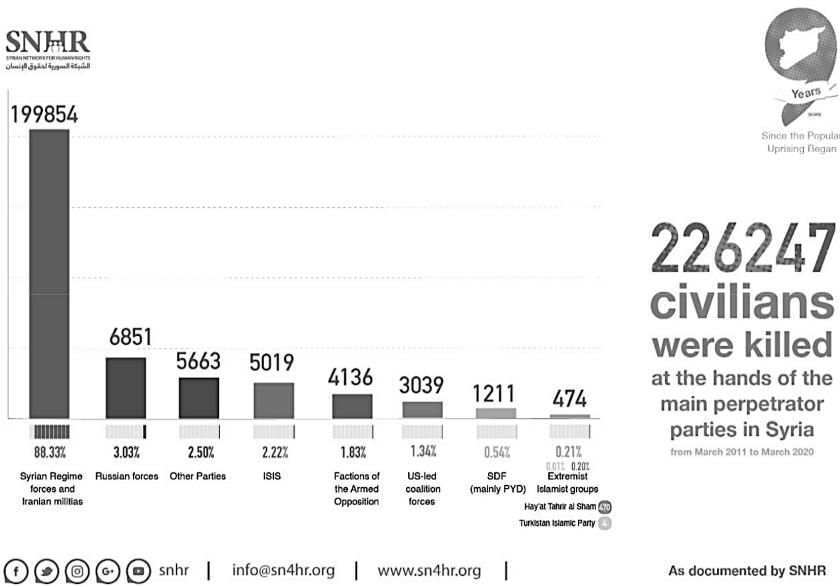
The law compels those who fail to serve in the army to pay the compensation, and in the event that the payment is not made, their money and that of their families is confiscated under what is called a "law". Prior to this amendment, the law would give the potential recruit a deadline or make him pay a fine if the deadline is not met. The new amendment gave the right for executive seizure, whereby the state is permitted to sell a person's property in order to collect the $ 8,000. On the one hand, it is a law that legalizes the theft and disposition of the properties of many people who escaped military service and who fled the country. On the other hand, it is an attempt to use these funds to compensate for the treasury's bankruptcy. Yet what terrifies those who fail to join military service is not only the financial prosecution but also imprisonment for a period ranging between one and six months in times of peace and from one to five years in wartime. The period of imprisonment is relative to the period during which one failed to join military service.[148]

The Syrian Network for Human Rights has documented that more than a quarter of a million Syrian civilians have died in this war, including more

145 Nuremberg, 27 October 2019.
146 § 13 of the Military Service Act.
147 'Mağlis Aš-Ša'b Ūqiru Ta'dīlan 'la 'ḥdā Mawād Qānwn Alḥidmah', *Sana*, 2019 <http://sana.sy/?p=1073784> [accessed 22 June 2020].
148 § 98, 99 of the Military Penal Act.

than 29,000 children and more than 28,000 women.[149] Meanwhile, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimated the death toll in the Syrian war at 384,000, with civilian deaths standing at 116,000[150] (see Figure 3). The discrepancy in numbers is due to the difficulty of documentation in a war situation. However, the actual numbers are expected to be much higher. These numbers do not include detainees and abducted persons.

Figure 3. Numbers of civilian deaths and the party that killed them



2.2 Fear of Detention – Sectarian and Socio-political Rift

The fear of being arrested should have been discussed with the first cause as it is related to insecurity. I singled it out as an independent cause for two reasons: first, the effects that detention has left on refugees, and second, the

149 The Syrian Network for Human Rights, *On the 9th Anniversary of the Popular Uprising*, 2020 <www.sn4hr.orgsnhrinfo@sn4hr.org> [accessed 15 June 2020], pp. 3–6.

150 The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, 'Nine Years of the Syrian Revolution: Tens of Thousands Dead and Injured and Millions Displaced… Syria under Russian-Iranian-Turkish-US Occupation… the People of Syria the Ultimate Loser' <https://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=157510> [accessed 16 June 2020].

number of cases that arose during my fieldwork among the interviewees or members of their families.

Arbitrary detention has increased dramatically as a result of the lack of security in Syria, and fieldwork has shown that some of the interviewees - or their close families - (five cases) were arrested in Syria for various reasons before they arrived in Germany. For instance, ʾAġiad (42 years old), whom I first encountered in the bakery and interviewed in my apartment, was arrested three times by the security forces despite the fact that he belongs to the Alawi sect that constitutes the supporting base for the regime. His detention was the result of his work as a journalist, his interest in political affairs, and his criticism of corruption and the practices of the ruling authority. ʾAġiad's imprisonment and torture greatly affected his life, mentally, psychologically, and behaviorally.[151] This also impacted his relationship with his wife and the many disputes between them. Sometimes, I was a party in trying to solve these, or I just hear their problems due to the good relationship that I have with ʾAġiad and his wife.[152] ʾAġiad does not have many relationships with Syrian families. I visited him many times, and he indicated more than once how some Sunni families were avoiding him and his family at times after they knew that he is Alawi. This is a result of the sectarian tension between Syrians due to the war that took a sectarian turn in its later stages.[153] It is a form of conflict among families that arose in Germany.

During my stay in Latakia governorate, which is one of the cities that have a large percentage of Alawis, I noticed that the Alawi community does not have a defined set of religious rituals and that there are no places of

151 This point will be discussed further in the section on difficulties Syrians facing in Germany.

152 Further reference to this issue will be made in the section on familial conflicts.

153 Bashar al-Assad and most of the army and security officers in Syria belong to the Alawi sect, and the regime has managed to give the war a sectarian inclination and drag the majority of the Alawis to become involved in it. The regime depicted the war as a battle of existence, and therefore most of them gathered in its ranks to fight with it. That helped al-Assad to inculcate this idea in the minds of the sect members and led to the description of the conflict in Syria from the outset as a "sectarian strife" that threatens stability and create chaos in the country, and this helped in the emergence of a sectarian incitement that was aggravated by some of the spokespersons of the Syrian revolution, and later the emergence of some radical groups that adopt this speech. For expansion, see ʿAzmī Bišāra, *Syria: The Painful Path to Freedom - An Attempt at Contemporary History* *سورية: درب الألام نحو الحرية - محاولة في التاريخ الراهن* (Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, 2013)., pp. 318–321.

worship in their residential areas except for some sites that are closer to shrines than to worship spaces. The rituals celebrated by Alawis are of a social rather than a religious nature, such as decorating their homes with lights in celebration of New Year's Eve. During my frequent visits and spending long times with the family of ʾAġiad (an Alawi family), I did not see him or his wife or daughter at any time practice any particular religious rituals. This confirms Barakat's conclusion that parties to the conflict used the sectarian dimension as a tool to maintain control and that this sectarianism does not have a religious dimension. For instance, ʾAġiad believes that Alawi faith consists of a group of philosophical ideas rather than religious ones. Torstein Worren confirms what I have mentioned earlier: "Most Alawis belong to the group of uninitiated Alawis that do not have any formal religious education […] They are therefore not expected to know much about the religion nor do they have religious obligations."[154]

The above exposition confirms that the sectarianism that led to conflicts among the components of Syrian societies often does not have a religious dimension. Instead, it is a form of bias or tribal/group loyalty, "'aṣabīya", that takes place within social structures in order to preserve power, influence, or wealth, or to counteract other forms of bias and loyalty.

This sectarian conflict manifested itself clearly and strongly in the aftermath of the 2011 Syrian uprising. The manifestation of sectarianism was a result of the oppressive, ironclad policies used by the regime.[155] The accusation of inciting sectarian unrest was used by the regime against anyone who opposed the regime.[156] Consequently, the employment of sectarianism in the conflict had negative repercussions in terms of destroying relations at the level of families or individuals. "The war has compelled Syrians to cling to their sectarian identities more tightly, whether out of socio-economic self-interest or simply to survive."[157]

154 Worren, pp. 60–61.

155 ʿAzmī Bišāra, *Syria: Darb Al-Ālām Naḥwa Al-Ḥurryah: Muḥāwalah Fī T-Tarīḥ R-Rāhin* (Qatar: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, 2013), pp. 318–19.

156 § 307 para. 1 of Penal Act: "Every action, every writing, and every speech intended or resulting in provoking sectarian or racial strife or inciting conflict between sects and the various elements of the nation is punishable by imprisonment from six months to two years and by a fine of one hundred to two hundred pounds, as well as by preventing the exercise of the rights mentioned in the second and the fourth paragraphs of Article (65)".

157 Fabrice Balanche, *Sectarianism in Syria's Civil War* (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2018), p. xi.

I got to know Muṣṭafā and his wife Ǧanā through a German language course. When I contacted them for the interview, they invited me to lunch in their apartment, and then the interview took place. The sectarian conflict has led to the arrest of Muṣṭafā, a 34 years old, who belongs to the Sunni community that constitutes the majority in Syrian societies. It also affected inter-family relations in the neighborhood where he lived in Syria. Muṣṭafā is somewhat religiously devout. He seems calm and inclined to distance himself from problems, as I noticed through my knowledge of him in the German language course. Following the eruption of the uprising, this religious commitment became a source of suspicion to the regime, especially in the case of Muṣṭafā, who was working in a sensitive government institution, namely "the Institute for Scientific Research". Muṣṭafā was in opposition to the regime, and he paid the price for his verbal opposition and his criticism of the regime's actions through arrest and torture. It is important to present Muṣṭafā's description of the situation during that period and what happened to him´, as it sheds an in-depth light on the "social degradation" that resulted from this war. During my interview with Muṣṭafā, I let him recount his experiences in Syria and Germany freely without my interference. So he stated:

> "June, 2013 was a transitional stage in my life as I was arrested for the first time. At work people were divided; the group that supported the regime isolated themselves. For us, we would not dare to express our opposing stance to the regime. One of my colleagues was an Alawi from Tartus (a city on the Mediterranean coast of Syria). He reported us to security services – myself and a group of other employees. They [the Security Services] came and took me as well as the head of the department where I worked. Then the suffering started. I was detained in a room that is 4 by 4 contained area with fifty, sixty, or seventy detainees. You are detained in a place, and even if no one hits you or tortures you, the conditions of this place would be enough to kill you. It was not possible for all detainees to sit in this room […] some would sit and others would stand […] the skin conditions […] the torture. On average, ten dead bodies would come out of the Security Branch daily as a result of torture or of medical conditions. We suffered as we were transferred between the different security branches. […] There were different types of torture. Seeing people die is a torture of its own kind. Eventually, I was released by the end of the year in December. Wherever you go you would see people in camouflage [he is referring to military outfits]. Those were

> members of Committees of National Defense. Following my release, my family and I were left in a difficult mental state […]. After one month and five days, the committees responsible for our neighborhood came to our house and detained me again. The second time was due to mistaken identity […]. From then on, every time I am arrested I would tell myself that, if I stayed alive and was released, I would not stay in this country. I would flee. Some time passed and I was fired from my job. My brother had a socks factory. I was working with him for a few hours when the electricity was not cut. One day the Popular Committees came and took my brother and hit him. When he came back, he told me what happened to him. I could not bear it anymore. I was not able to live normally anymore. I could not bear to see anyone in the military outfit."[158]

Muṣṭafā's account illustrates the emergence of sectarian divisions after the beginning of the war, which was somewhat hidden before. It shows the suffering of detainees in the regime's prisons and their exposure to the most severe forms of torture, which have remained stuck in their memories for many years. It also highlights the disregard for the dignity of people, as his brother was beaten and tortured for criticizing the Popular Committees, and the arbitrary detention for charges that have not been proven, such as assisting the displaced from the opposition areas, poisoning the doctors at the institute where he worked, and other arbitrary charges. All of this indicates the escalation of chaos and the absence of rule of law. Despite Muṣṭafā's resistance to the idea of emigration, the pressures around him did not allow him to stay, and he was forced to flee. Muṣṭafā used to live in a neighborhood inhabited by people from different sects. The majority of the residents were Alawis. Muṣṭafā said that the general atmosphere and intimate relations between families disappeared, and "the whole situation changed after the revolution […] deep hatred was revealed […]. They turned against us once the uprising erupted. Let's say we were naïve and kind-hearted." Ǧanā (Muṣṭafā's wife) adds that "for us all Syrians were the same – Muslim, Christian, Alawi, or Druze. We did not discriminate. It is the Syrian regime that promoted sectarian strife."

There might be many cases similar to that of Muṣṭafā. However, people involved in these situations did not recount them when they were interviewed by Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) during their asylum hearing in Germany. Muṣṭafā indicated that there was a

158 Nuremberg, 26 October 2019.

kind of anxiety and intense fear among Syrians that what they say during their asylum-seeking sessions in Germany would be reported to the Syrian regime, which in turn would punish or retaliate against their relatives who remained in Syria. Also, applicants for Asylum in Germany did not recount their full stories in order not to cause any delay in their application for asylum. It should also be noted that, despite all the torture they were subjected to, these detainees did not receive any kind of psychological support.

In addition to the emergence of sectarian conflict, another type of conflict has emerged, which is the socio-political division (social cleavage[159]) into supporters and opponents, due to political-sectarian polarization. This division has exposed Salmā (33 years old) to arrest. I got to know Salmā through a friend, and the interview took place in her apartment, as she wanted. Salmā was living in the Qudsaya area, an outskirt of Damascus which was affiliated with the Free Army formed after the defection of army officers from the Syrian army. Salmā had a clothing store, and, because of the nature of her work and the presence of her family and friends in Damascus, she was traveling between Damascus and Qudsaya. In addition to burning her store and its destruction, security forces arrested her on charges of providing food and some other services for the Free Army. Subsequently, she was interrogated by a member of the Free Army for allegedly dealing with the Assad militia.

> "Seriously! I was a cockroach in this situation; I am of no value to either party. I am neither a security officer nor a revolutionary. I am a girl who minded her own business. All I wanted is to go to work, play cards with my friends, eat and sleep […] this was all I cared about. At this point [she means the suffering between the regime's factions and the revolution,

159 The concept of "cleavage" is loose, indicating all kinds of divisions or conflicts, whether political, social, cultural, or religious, that lead to the division of citizens within society. "The concept of cleavage can be seen to incorporate three dimensions: an empirical element, which identifies the empirical referent of the concept and which we can define in socio-structural terms; a normative element, that is, the set of values and beliefs that provides a sense of identity and role to the empirical element and reflects the self-awareness of the social group(s) involved; and an organizational/behavioral element, that is, the set of individual interactions, institutions, and organizations, such as political parties, that develop, as part of the cleavage." Stefano Bartolini, *The Political Mobilization of the European Left, 1860–1980. The Class Cleavage* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 15–17. For more details, see also Hanspeter Kriesi, Ruud Koopmans, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and Marco G. Giugni, *New Social Movements in Western Europe. A Comparative Analysis* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2002).

> along with losing her store], I left […] there is no more anything of value to me. My father died. Nothing for me but disasters. I was walking in the streets where this person was killed, where my friend was kidnapped […] you walk the streets, and all you have are bad memories. Nothing that brings joy […] why would I stay?!"[160]

Despite the strength of Salmā's personality, made evident through her recounting her experiences in life, her independence from her family, and her management of her work with the help of her husband, her description of herself as a cockroach is a significant indicator to the state of helplessness lived by the majority of the Syrian people. It is a weakness that would lead to death, detention, torture, and forced displacement.

A quantitative field study,[161] which explored the "social degradation"[162] and the impact of the war in Syria on the social relations such as trust, cooperation, and shared values, reaches similar conclusions as the ones mentioned by Muṣṭafā and Salmā. "Despite the sense of social solidarity and mutual support that had been evident at the beginning of the social movement, the subjugating powers' exploitation and politics of identities, and their use of armed forces to sub-jugate society, have led to severe societal divisions and an absence of rules and moral values."[163] This led to the strengthening of primary relations which are pre-civil ties that prevailed in earlier societies. These primary relations were based on blood, ethnic, and religious ties and resulted in the weakening of social relations among groups and individuals.[164]

On my first visit to "contact Cafe", I met Amina and asked her to conduct an interview with her. She preferred that the interview took place in a cafe in the city center. One month following the marriage of Amīna (30 years old), who lived in the governorate of Damascus, the protests started. A short time after that, she was pregnant with her first child. Few months into the uprising, her husband was arrested: "They arrested him for twenty days

160 Nuremberg, 20 March 2020.

161 The study was conducted on 2,100 people by the Syrian Centre for Policy Research funded by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

162 The study examined the social degradation from three aspects: social networks, social trust, and shared values and attitudes. See Ramia Ismail, Jad Jebaie, Zaki Mehchy, and Rabie Nasser, *The Conflict Impact on Social Capital. Social Degradation in Syria*, trans. by Yaaser Azzayyaat (Dubai: Syrian Center for Policy Research, 2017) <https://www.scpr-syria.org/social-degradation-in-syria/>, p. 6.

163 Ibid., p. 29.

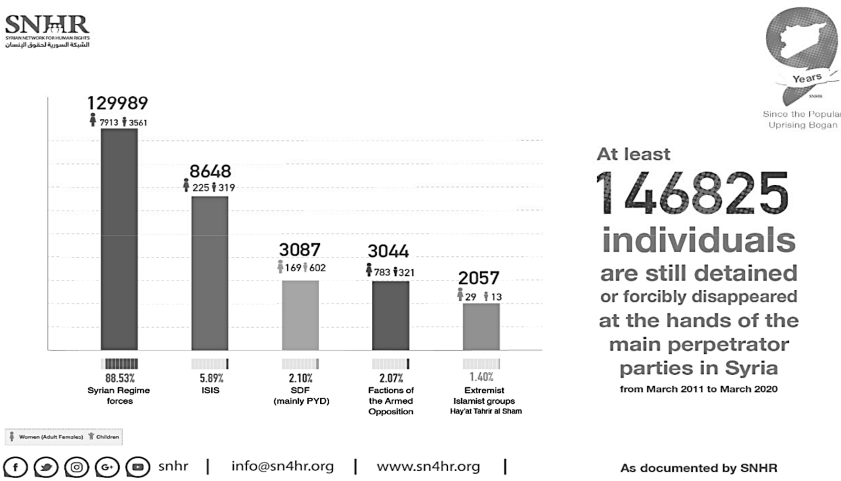
164 Ibid., p. 29.

and we paid 3 million (equivalent at that time, about $ 45,000), and only after that they released him. One week following his release, we have left."[165] Amīna's husband was a merchant who had relations with other merchants in Jordan or Turkey. This was a sufficient reason to accuse him that his frequent communication with people outside Syria was due to his links to foreign parties in order to finance terrorism. This indicates the turmoil in the regime's security system and the increase in incidents of blackmail in Syria. Due to the corruption of the judicial and security system, the family had to pay this large sum of money. "Otherwise, he would have never been released," said Amīna. Amīna's husband was imprisoned for twenty days and was subjected to severe torture, which was enough to kill him. After his imprisonment, he underwent treatment for a long time in Germany and underwent several surgeries in a German hospital to treat the injuries suffered by his body.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights estimates that more than 1.2 million Syrian citizens have been subjected to the experience of arrest and torture and that approximately 147,000 are still under arbitrary detention or forced disappearance (see Figure 4).[166] Many of the families who live in Germany may have close relations with these detainees, and the effect of this matter will undoubtedly have repercussions on their lives as long as those remain in prison.

165 Nuremberg, 24 February 2020.
166 The Syrian Network for Human Rights, pp. 6–8.

Figure 4. Numbers of documented detainees and the authority that arrested them



A recent field study in the city of Damascus,[167] which attempted to observe reasons for the migration of the youth and was conducted on fifty young men and women, showed that security chaos, exposure to threats, extortion, or kidnapping, and the absence of the law are the greatest motivations that drive young people to migrate. All participants in the study approved this reason as a motivation for migrating.[168] This is taking into consideration that Damascus was not subject to the bombing, killing, attacks, displacement, and absence of law that other Syrian cities were subjected to. Furthermore, Damascus is the capital city, and the security situation there should be better than in other cities. This is not the case, and the state of security chaos still pervades all of Syria, albeit in varying forms.

167 The sample of the study is small, conducted on 50 people, 40 males and 10 females between the ages of 16 and 35, who plan to migrate. See Ziyād Al-Mubārak, *Hiğrat aš-šbāb as-swrī – Dirāsa maidanīa fī madīna Dimašq* (Doha, Istanbul, 2019) <https://www.harmoon.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Syrian-Immigration-Youth.pdf> [accessed 17 June 2020], p. 4.

168 Ibid., pp. 11–12.

2.3 Protecting Children and Searching for a Future for Them

A person may bear the responsibility for himself. However, even when life and death seem equal to him, particularly in sieges and moments of weakness, he will never abandon his family or let them fall if he can save them. That is especially true in Syrian societies that highly value marriage and childbearing, sanctify the family, and love children, as I could observe. Kristin Helberg[169] wrote about that idea. She observed during her stay in Syria:

> "It may seem trite to say that Syrians love children above all. Many of them came to Germany only because of them; mothers and fathers could endure war in Syria or poverty in neighboring countries for a long time, but what has become unbearable for them is that there is no horizon or hope. It is the possibility that their children will grow up without education and will not have a chance for a full life. Therefore, the biggest motivation for the Syrian parents to flee to us is to build a new life for their children."[170]

The heavy responsibility of parents towards their children places them in front of two options. The first is that one of the family members migrates - often the husband -, then he reunites his family after his arrival. The other option is that they send their young children - often male, not female[171] – in order to find a future outside of Syria.[172] These are the main options for parents as they lost any hope of changing conditions. These facts explain the large number of requests for family reunification from spouses on the one hand and the arrival of many young people under the age of eighteen years on the other hand, as I mentioned previously.

I met ʿImād through German language courses. I have a good friendship with ʿImād and his family. After I asked him for an interview with him and his wife, he invited me to his apartment where the interview was conducted. ʿImād (35 years old) belongs to the first category, who made the

169 She is considered an expert on Syrian issues as she worked as a journalist for many years in Syria.

170 Kristin Helberg, *Verzerrte Sichtweisen. Syrer bei uns* (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), p. 87.

171 Andreas Beelmann et al., 'Integration erfolgreich gestalten. Einstellungen und Orientierungen syrischer Flüchtlinge in Thüringen' (Friederich-Schiller-Universität & KomRex, 2019), p. 5.

172 Dawn Chatty, *Syria. The Making and Unmaking of a Refuge State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 244.

decision to apply for asylum in Germany and then reunited his family. The relationship of trust I built with him allowed me to be close to his family. ʿImād is characterized by simplicity, honesty, and clarity in his relations with people. He states that he was happy with his work and with his family before the war, but after 2011 things started to be different for him, and many changes occurred in his life. His income, for example, was no longer sufficient to meet the needs of his family. In addition, his fear and obsession with the future of his children became greater; this fear was the biggest motive for his decision to seek asylum in Germany, especially after he heard from some people that Germany is one of the best countries where children can achieve their future.[173]

Maḥmūd's brother belongs to the second category, i.e. to one of the families that pushed her male (16 years old) to take refuge in Germany. However, that was not the case for his sister.

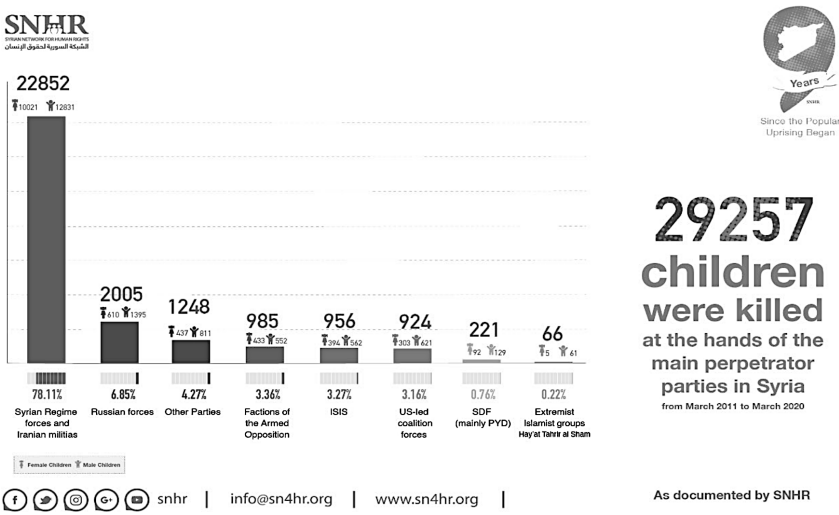
> "He was very moved by his comrades, and after seeing that they started joining the army, he wanted to do the same. He started saying that he wanted to become an officer in the army. Therefore, the best solution was to get him out of Syria because if he did not go out he would get lost. The goal was to get out as quickly as possible, so he would not be influenced by the war and not get involved in that war, hence we decided to send him to Germany."[174]

After his brother came to Germany, he applied for a reunion of his mother only. While his father and sister stayed in Syria, his mother took care of him for three years until she made sure that he is a grown-up and he started studying at the university. Then she decided to return to Syria after completing her mission, as Maḥmūd clarified.

Maḥmūd's words about his brother elucidate the impact of the conflict in Syria on young adults as the regime - and other factions - were recruiting these youth to fight in this grinding war, which drove many of them to their death. Statistics from the Syrian Network for Human Rights show that more than 29,000 children were killed in Syria (see Figure 5), beyond thousands of prisoners.[175]

173 Nuremberg, 12 October 2019.
174 Nuremberg, 16 October 2019.
175 The Syrian Network for Human Rights, p. 5, 8.

Figure 5. Numbers of children killed and the parties that killed them



In addition to the family's fear for their children's death and arrest, education was a major concern as there was the fear that the war would continue and that school-age children would remain without education. The report of the Syrian Centre for Policy Research indicated that in 2014, the year before the major wave of asylum for Syrians, the number of children (between the ages of five and seventeen) who were out of school reached 2.3 million, and in 2019 the number was close to that as well.[176] "During the conflict, schools have been targeted, and other factors including insecurity and fear, loss of human capital, mobility restrictions, forced displacement, and economic hardship have contributed to poor access to education for Syrians."[177]

I got to know Ğalāl and his wife through their son Ma'mūn, with whom I had a friendship before fieldwork. The family was interviewed in a refugee compound where the family lived. Ğalāl came from Daraa governorate, which is known for extended families with a big number of children. Ğalāl has seven children. During the war, Ğalāl sent two of his children -

176 Rabie Nasser et al., *Syria, Justice to Transcend Conflict, Impact of Syrian Conflict Report*, ed. by Jonathan Latham and Kit Catterson (Syrian Center for Policy Research, 2020) <https://www.scpr-syria.org/justice-to-transcend-conflict/>, p. 81.

177 Ibid., p. 80.

who were in their teenage - to Jordan for fear of being killed or arrested. However, the intensity of the conflict in his area prompted him to leave with his whole family to Jordan. Nevertheless, the difficulty of life in Jordan financially, in addition to the strict legal measures taken against Syrians, prompted him to take the decision to seek asylum in Germany. Ǧalāl said:

> "Frankly, had it not been for my children, I would not have thought of coming to Germany or leaving my country or even my village [...]. I would not have thought of leaving it even if I died there. What brought me out were my children, my family, and my responsibility for them [...]. It forced me to leave. It is not easy - for anyone - to leave the family or leave mother or father, it is not easy to leave the surroundings in which I was living in and then suddenly come here. It is not easy."[178]

What prompted Ǧalāl to emigrate was his sense of responsibility towards his family. However, Ǧalāl refers to the suffering of refugees in exile countries. Most difficult are the lack of communication with family or relatives, the division of families between several countries, and the inability to see or visit them. These factors still worry many of them. The German asylum law prohibits those who have obtained the right to asylum from visiting their country of origin in general,[179] in addition to the fact that many of the refugees are afraid of being kidnapped, arrested, or killed if they return.

It is worth noting that the restrictions on the Syrian family were not only in Syria, as the restrictions extended to neighboring countries. Ǧalāl indicated how Jordanian security intelligence stopped his wife for long hours because she was living with her family in the "Aqaba" area, which Syrians are prohibited from entering. The family's car entered that area by mistake, and they settled there for months before Jordanian security knew this. When the police found out about the matter, they arrested his wife and then summoned him to the security center for investigation. Ǧalāl stated that they only released him after he signed a pledge not to work in Jordan. We can imagine how difficult is the life of a large family without the support of its breadwinner! This leads us to the next point concerning the deterioration of financial resources for Syrian families.

178 Nuremberg, 9 December 2019.
179 § 72 para. 1-1a of the Asylum Act (AsylG).

2.4 The Deteriorating Economic Situation and Religion Cleavage

The security threat to the Syrian families, or the fear for the life and future of the children, did not cause distress to all the Syrian governorates or all the Syrian families, but what greatly affected the majority of families was the economic destruction that occurred at the level of the entire country. People were affected in their livelihoods and started to lose their sources of income. Many of them either had their properties destroyed, lost their jobs, or had their businesses stopped and had no resources left for them. Even for those who were not exposed to the foregoing economic collapse of the Syrian state,[180] the big difference between the per capita income (after the collapse of the exchange rate of the Syrian pound) and the prices of daily goods, which were dozens of times higher than they were before,[181] was enough to cause great harm to the people. Data shows that for most of those interviewed (breadwinners of the family) the economic situation played a role, as a reason for their departure could be:

- Their work was stopped and, consequently, they had no material resources (four cases).
- The infrastructure of the commercial premises that they owned was destroyed (four cases).
- Their income was no longer sufficient to meet their basic needs and the needs of their families (three cases).

Traveling abroad was sometimes not a decision made in the interest of the nuclear family alone. Rather, it was a decision made in the interest of the extended family.

I got to know Nadā and her husband through a German language course. The couple was interviewed in their apartment. After she found her partner during her university stage, Nadā (26 years old) found out that it was very difficult to continue building a family in light of the economic conditions that emerged in Syria during the war. Therefore, she and her husband decided to travel, but what encouraged her to make this decision was her family:

180 The Syrian state's losses due to this war are estimated at approximately USD 530 billion. See Rabie Nasser et al., p. 58. For more details on the entire economic situation in Syria, see ibid., pp. 34–67.

181 Ibid., pp. 63–65.

> "What really encouraged us is that most of my mother's family decided to leave. Their idea was that at least one person from the entire family should migrate. This individual shall be able to support his family that remains in Syria. If this person is under the age of 18, he will be able to apply for a reunion for his family. That idea was circulating among middle-income or poor families, especially those who own something that could be sold so that they can escape. But the mistake we made was that we did not know the risks of the trip […] that there were people who die drowning during the trip. My aunt's daughter, for example, travelled, but her daughter drowned and died in the sea; this is very difficult psychologically and physically for the family."[182]

Nadā pointed out to a crucial issue, which is that the resilience of many families who stayed in Syria depends on those who fled, especially those in Europe, through the assistance sent from people abroad to help their families inside Syria.[183] It is worth noting that most of this money sent to help families at home was sent illegally from Germany to Syria. That was done through what is known as a "mediator", who often charges a 5% commission on the amount.[184] I met a broker in Nurnberg to learn more about the mechanism for sending these funds. What the broker does concisely is to receive the amount that is to be sent and to obtain an invoice via a program on the mobile phone. The mediator sends the invoice via WhatsApp to the person who wants to send the money, and then the person to whom the money was sent receives the equivalent of this amount from one of the secret offices that are often unlicensed in Syria.[185]

During the fieldwork, I have observed several times talks in the families about the need of the people in Syria and how difficult their economic situation is. They talked about how the refugees in Germany had to save money in order to send it to their relatives to help them secure their essential needs. The Syrians resort to this - unlawful - method of transfer for several reasons, including the control of the German government over the transferred funds. Therefore, the sender, especially if he lives on social assis-

182 Nuremberg, 8 December 2019.
183 We will see the impact of this in creating conflicts within families.
184 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the commission increased to 8% as money transfer became more difficult according to one mediator.
185 Nuremberg, 3 March 2020.

tance, will be afraid that his "salary"[186] (social benefits) could be stopped or that the person in charge at the "Job Center" could hold him accountable if he/she knew about that. The most important reason is that the amount sent will lose much of its value if the official banks of the Syrian government or other banks licensed by the government received it, given the difference in the exchange rate of the Euro or the Dollar between the price of the black market and the price set by the regime.[187]

I mentioned earlier that Amīna's husband was arrested and paid a large amount of money as a bribe to get him out, and that not only he was arrested but also his sewing workshop, the source of his income, was destroyed. Amīna explained:

> "The war came, and his (the husband's) work stopped, he had semi sewing workshop in Harasta […] it was completely destroyed, and he no longer had anything. He lost everything, even the house that he owned in the Mleiha [a town in southern Syria, administratively part of the Rif Dimashq Governorate] was destroyed. Then we found that everything we have had gone."[188]

Religion cleavage

During fieldwork in Nuremberg, I have been several times to an evangelical church that brings together Christians and uses the Arabic language as the one language understood by all ethnicities and nationalities, including Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians, Syriac, Chaldeans, and Iranians. I also met a family from Idlib governorate. My expertise from living in that province is that it is a generally conservative area, as a conservative Sunni majority inhabits it, with some small numbers of followers of other religions and minorities. I asked the family about their situation as Christians in that governorate after the war in Syria. The husband mentioned that he owned a store selling alcohol in the city and that the radical groups had burned it;

186 Syrians use the word "salary" instead of social benefits due to many considerations, the most important of which may be avoiding the feeling of being dependent and living on state aid.

187 Ḥusām Ǧablawi, 'Ḥulūl Ǧadīda Yatabiʿuhā Asūriyūn Liʾiṣāli L-Ḥwālāt Ilā ʾusarihim', *Syria TV*, 2020 <https://www.syria.tv/qUi> [accessed 22 June 2020]; Marion MacGregor and Muḥyī ad-Dīn Ḥusayn, 'Aṯwilāt al-mālīa llmuhāǧirīn', *Infomigrants*, 2019 <https://bit.ly/4hQvhk0> [accessed 22 June 2020].

188 Nuremberg, 24 February 2020.

consequently he lost his livelihood and had to immigrate to Lebanon and then to Germany.

Most of the Christians who live in these areas have been forced to flee because either the regime bombed their towns and villages or because the radical "Tahrir al-Sham" group placed many restrictions in their areas. The group's actions include demolishing some churches or breaking crosses raised on them and preventing church bells. These actions compelled them to move out of Syria. Only a few Christian elderly people were left in those areas.[189]

This also sparked religious conflicts, which extended inside and outside Syria, between the two parties. While attending a sermon given by a Syrian Christian, who hails from Al-Hasakah governorate, he asked the aggregation: "Do you know the city of Jericho? Is it a city of evil or good?" The husband whom I sat next to him replied laughing, "Yes, we know that it is an evil town from which most of the Brothers came out." He was referring to the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Syria, some of the men of this city were affiliated with and which was destroyed by Hafez al-Assad in the 1980s. The preacher took this as a joke and said, "I meant Jericho Palestine, not Jericho Syria", and he completed his sermon in which he wanted to demonstrate the amplitude of the mercy of the Lord and the generosity of his forgiveness. Despite the evils of the people of Jericho, the Lord did not torture or kill them, and despite the strength of its walls, it was conquered by faith. "By faith, the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days" (Hebrews 11:30).

After his sermon and after the prayer ended, I sat with the preacher and introduced myself as a Muslim. We had a lengthy discussion about the subject he was preaching and discussed the anger that some of the attendees felt - apparently Iraqis - when he mentioned the subject of Soleimani's killing.[190] In the sermon he said that we should look at him with compassion because the heart must be filled with mercy and forgiveness for all people no matter how bad they are. Mentioning Soleimani in this context angered some young men who left the church. The preacher mentioned that the Bible commandments were applied in this aspect to solve peace in the whole world. I said to him: "The spirit of all religions calls for peace,

189 'Aqīl Ḥusayn, 'Taḥrir Šām Tantahik Ḥuqwq Masīḥi Edlib: Miṭāl Ḥī Yaḥdum n-Iẓām', 2020 <https://bit.ly/4hMLyXb> [accessed 9 July 2020].

190 Qassim Soleimani was an Iranian major general in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and a commander of its Quds Force. He was assassinated in a targeted U.S. drone strike on 3 January 2020 in Baghdad.

and this is a duty that all religions must do." He answered thus: "Can I say without you getting upset?" I told him, "Sure, feel free and say whatever you like." He said, "It is different in Islam." Then he pointed to some verses that incite killing. Our dialogue continued for about an hour with other participants. His words carried a negative view towards Islam and Muslims to a degree that he angered one of the Muslims who were sitting with us. Our meeting concluded that, if we want to build a network of good relations between people, we should embrace a humanitarian discourse emanating from the spirit of religions that goes beyond accusations or using history as evidence to judge any religious, sectarian, or ethnic group.

My intention in introducing myself as a Muslim and involving him in that long conversation was an attempt to understand these views within Syrian society in Germany. Such views are somewhat tainted by cautious relations if any, and many families are somewhat closed. Strong relationships are often built only with persons of similar religious and cultural backgrounds. Relationships between people before the war may be more intimate, but the war played its role in exposing the cracks of the network of relations in a rough manner and greatly weakened such relations among people.

Sāmir comes from a peaceful area where the majority of the Ismaili community lives. Sāmir and his wife were interviewed in their apartment. I got to know Sāmir through ʾAġiad. When I did ask him what religion means to him, he replied, "It means 'zero'." Sāmir mentioned that one of his wife's friends - a Christian who used to visit the church - in one of her visits described Islam and all Muslims as terrorists and used offensive language in talking about them, so he got angry and told her that he does not like to hear these words in his house. It is true that he is an Ismaili, but Islam remains a reference to which they belong, and Muslims are one of the major components of Syrian society; therefore, it is not acceptable to describe them in such a manner.[191]

On the other hand, I noticed that the Sunni families look cautiously and obsessively at the rest of the components of the Syrian people from other sects or religions. This is most true when it comes to the Sunnis' view of Alawis, given the history of bad relations in the past[192] and because most of the Alawis were supporters of the regime recently. "Syrian Sunnites assume,

191 Nuremberg, 19 January 2020.

192 For instance, the bloody conflict between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood in the early 1980s; for more details, see Hanna Batatu, *Syria's Peasantry, the De-*

and in schools are apparently taught, that they are the only real Muslims; the other sects are all heretical. They express particular disdain for Shi'a [the dominant sect in Iran; a very small minority in Syria] and Alawis, who many assume are merely a Shi'a sect".[193] Nonetheless, this view applies also to other religions and sects but to a lesser degree.

The truth is that turning the sectarian divide into conflicts accompanied by campaigns of violence and persecution, or harassment and humiliation, led some members of these sects not only to retreat from the group to which they belonged but also to resort to religious sacredness to support their opinion on the demonization of others and justify their violence towards them.

Going back to the deteriorating economic situation and its impact on people, I mentioned earlier 'Imād, whose income was no longer sufficient to meet the needs of his family, which was one of the factors that prompted him to leave the country. I have also referred to the case of Salmā, whose shop was burned, which led to her displacement to Lebanon and then to Germany. Several international reports indicate that people suffer severe - and unprecedented - levels of poverty and deprivation and that the poverty rate reached 86%.[194] According to the UN report in 2019, more than half of the Syrian population, or nearly 11.7 million, are in need of assistance.[195] The economic crisis and better living conditions are still among the most important reasons that motivate young people to migrate, according to the field study conducted in Damascus.[196] This leads to the next reason for migration related to the search for a better future after people lost hope that conditions for life will change for the better and no longer see any future for them in Syria.

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scendants of Its Lesser Rural Notables, and Their Politics (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 260–78.

193 Borneman, *Syrian Episodes*, p. 19.

194 Nasser et al., p. 93–94; Khalid Abu-Ismail, Osama Nojoum, Omar Imady, Aljaz Kuncic, and Justine Walker, *Syria at War. Five Years On* (Beirut: ESCWA (Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), 2016), p. 28–29; Syrian Centre for Policy Research, *Food Security and Conflict in Syria* (Beirut: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, 2019) <https://www.scpr-syria.org/launch-of-food-security-conflict-in-syria-report/>, p. 50.

195 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic* (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2019) <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/2019_syr_hno_full_1.pdf> [accessed 23 June 2020], pp. 5–9.

196 Al-Mubārak, p. 13.

2.5 Looking for a Better Future

I mentioned earlier that the families' fear for their children and their future pushed them to decide to migrate with them in order to secure a better future for them. Some families that did not migrate sent their young - males often - in search of a future. Maḥmūd - who comes from the governorate of Aleppo - saw that the future was dark and foggy for him after he finished studying pharmacy. This is because his family's financial situation deteriorated after his father's real estate company was burned, and they could no longer access the homes or farms they owned. This was added to the threat of kidnapping. Thus, Maḥmūd said, "My future has become unknown," so his last option was to escape. Before fleeing, Maḥmūd was supposed to marry after his graduation, as he was engaged to his cousin, but as he puts it: "As a young man in his twenties, it is not a good idea to think about marriage. Impossible! I am left in the unknown, I do not know what I should do."[197] Thus, the circumstances that surrounded him forced him to leave his fiancée. "Meanwhile, my relationship with her ended, I ended the relationship honestly, because of problems and the pressure which came from her mother, and I hated the whole business of engagement, and I hated this type of traditional marriage", as Maḥmūd stated.

Maḥmūd's words demonstrate the interference of the family in the issue of engagement and marriage, which is one of the factors that play two contradicting roles in Syrian societies, namely the stability or the lack of it for the family in which they interfere. It is a topic that I will explore further when discussing the causes of family conflicts.[198] Her mother's opinion was that he should complete the religious marriage contract and then do whatever he wanted. Maḥmūd was opposed to this idea in light of the circumstances he is going through, as he indicated. His hatred for traditional marriage shows the emergence of a trend among the youth segment that tries to rebel against the customs and traditions related to marriage. These include parents choosing their son's or daughter's future spouse, reserving their consent in the choice of the person, determining the date and form of the marriage, or marrying off their son to a relative. Anthropologist Bornman highlights the prevalence of these customs - especially the marriage of relatives - in the province of Aleppo. In one of his discussions with university students, they pointed to such customs without

197 Nuremberg, 16 October 2019.
198 See chapter 4, 4.2.2.4 and 4.3.2.2.

any objection on their part, which explains - in his view - why the province of Aleppo is more conservative than other cities such as Damascus. The students did not object to these customs either because they accept them socially or because they were unable to rebel against them.[199]

The dream of pursuing their education, especially for those who were studying at the university level or were about to go to university, was the biggest motivation for many young people to come to Germany. Usāma and his wife, Nadā, who met at university, could not complete their university studies due to insecurity and to high expenses. This was an incentive for them to search for another country where they could pursue their studies. Usāma stated:

> "I finished studying at a community college and I was studying at a university at the same time. The uprising erupted after I graduated from the community college. I was not able to finish my university studies. This is the reason why I came to Germany. My brother was arrested. So many reasons. Therefore, I had to leave."[200]

I met Ma'mūn in my apartment. He is one of Ǧalāl's children whom he sent to Jordan out of fear about them before they came to Germany. Ma'mūn recounts his suffering in Jordan. In addition to being away from his family at a young age, he started working when he was 14 years old. He used to work 12 hours a day, as this was the norm in Jordan, and sometimes he worked for 16 or 17 hours. Despite all of this work and despite his father's work after the family joined them later, the income was not enough to cover the family's basic needs. The suffering caused by his exploitation to work long hours for little money has had a negative impact on Ma'mūn's psychological well-being. Ma'mūn should have been in school, but life forced him to work in very difficult circumstances. Four years and a half were enough to break his hopes and to let him reach the stage of frustration and despair. Ma'mūn stated:

> "You don't see the future there (Jordan), so you start thinking you do not have any value in life. What value! […] But I always dreamed that I would go back to studying. That is why coming to Europe was a dream for me […]. I used to tell my father that we should go to Europe. For me, it was

199 Borneman, *Syrian Episodes*, p. xiv.
200 Nuremberg, 8 December 2019.

a dream to come to Europe to study and work and do something and feel like a human being."[201]

Although his father accepted the idea of migrating, he was put off by the openness of the European community, and his fear for his seven children made him retract the idea of emigrating to Germany for a period of time. However, in the end he was convinced that there was no future for his children if Jordan was taken. He took the decision to immigrate by himself and to reunite with his family later. Ma'mūn repeatedly indicated during his talk that, just as the German society has preconceived ideas about Syrians, Syrians themselves have preconceived ideas about Western societies in general. This is why his father was afraid to come and bring his family to Germany despite the difficult circumstances in which they were living.

It is notable that the decision to emigrate for families was made by the men in the family - the husband, the father - and Ma'mūn's talk about convincing his father indicates this. Most of the families I have interviewed have arrived in Germany by being reunited by the father/husband as he was the one who took the decision to migrate. Women who arrived in Germany were accompanied by either their husbands, brothers, or one of their male relatives. On the other hand, what I have mentioned does not preclude the presence of cases where the woman was the decision-maker and has arrived in Germany before the husband, as was the case of Suzān.

It was not just the aforementioned reasons that drove Syrians to come to Germany, but it can be considered that these were the most important and most influencing factors for the majority of Syrians in their drive to flee their country. There are other reasons that cannot be widely generalized and that motivated some people to come to Germany, such as with the escape of Fādiya (almost 40 years), who was living in Damascus Governorate with her brother and her three children. During the war, there were a lot of conflicts between her and her husband. They agreed to divorce. Before the divorce was completed, the husband threatened to take the children, and he used this to pressure her. So, she secretly took the children and migrated with her brother to Germany without his knowledge.[202] Another example is Ṭāriq (34 years). He used to live in the governorate of Damascus, and his work was good. He made the decision to travel under pressure from his wife's family, and he believes that travel for some was not necessary

201 Nuremberg, 26 October 2019.
202 Nuremberg, 24 February 2020.

at the time but rather was similar to a "fashion" trend, according to him. But the irony is that his wife's family did not know what awaited them in Germany. So when they saw that the conditions did not suit them, they returned to Syria with his wife and asked him to divorce her due to marital disputes. Ṭāriq remained stuck in Germany and could not return because he was on the regime's list to serve in the army as a reserve, and he did not want that.[203] In fact, the "fashion" trend that Ṭāriq referred to is more like the effect of the social environment of families on each other and their interaction towards making such decisions under the pressure dictated by reality and the war. Fear might be a common factor in the interaction with the social environment.

Another reason is illustrated by the deportation of Ranā (20 years) and her family from Kuwait due to the humanitarian aid that her father was sending from Kuwait to the people of his region in Daraa since her family was classified under the "black list" of the Assad regime. Neighboring countries such as Lebanon or Jordan were not a desirable choice because of the father's fear for his children's future (he has seven children). Thus, her father made the decision to come to Germany.[204]

It is not a secret that in many cases a number of reasons could be accounted for a family's decision to emigrate, as in the case of Usāma. However, these reasons vary in the degree to which they affect the decision to emigrate. For instance, among the reasons that also played a role in pushing people to emigrate and take refuge in other countries are food shortages in the sieged areas of Syria or the lack of public services such as education, health, water, electricity, and gas services. The institutions that provide these services were partially or totally damaged. Consequently, the services stopped and people's lives became very difficult.[205]

The report of the World Food Program attempted to understand the reasons for the displacement of Syrians. Based on qualitative data collected from Syrian families, the report points out that the participants in the "Focus Group" "highlighted ongoing fear, life in collective shelters, limited access to basic services, and the struggle to find food. In many cases, the

203 Nuremberg, 13 October 2019.
204 Nuremberg, 29 November 2019.
205 For more details, see Khalid Abu-Ismail et al., pp. 28–33; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, p. 30; Nasser et al., pp. 80–97.

immediate trigger point to leave was related to injury or death,"[206] which was also an outcome of insecurity.[207]

2.6 The Contexts of the Causes of Displacement and the Emergence of Conflicts within Syrian Communities

The political, economic, and public service conditions in Syria were not at their best before the war, as they were straining under a totalitarian oppressive regime that controlled all forms of life in Syria. However, despite these conditions the Syrian people were not obliged to migrate except for well-qualified people who migrated in search of a place where they could realize their aspirations for a better future.

The revolutions that sparked in other Arab countries spread to Syria. The uprising, embraced by the majority of Syrian people, began to spell gradually from one city to another. The regime's fierce response to facing demonstrators with life ammunition was brutal. The outcome was a movement of defection inside the army that later formed the nucleus (backbone) of the Syrian Free Army. Some part of the population carried weapons in order to avenge atrocities committed against them or for self-defense.[208]

The emergence of radical ideologized groups at a later stage has complicated the situation further. Things took a dramatic turn as the regime used the army, security, and police forces as well as local militia (Šabīḥa[209]) to fight all those who challenged the regime, declaring a scorched-earth policy on revolting Syrian cities.[210] Later, the conflict took the shape of a regional and international proxy war, which, as described by the United Nations

206 World Food Programme, *At the Root of Exodus. Food Security, Conflict and International Migration* (World Food Programme, 2017), p. 36.

207 The World Food Programme conducted a mobile survey on the reasons for leaving Syria. The results were as follows: 46% due to safety and security, 12% injury or death of a family member, 10% the demolishing of their residence, 23% lack of work and income, 7% food shortages, 1% other reasons. Ibid.

208 For more details see, Bišāra, pp. 187–200.

209 This term is commonly used in Syria to refer to outlaw gangs and individuals, supported by the government since the start of the revolution, who deploy violence and threat the opposition.

210 For more details about their role in the war, see Yāsīn al-Ḥāǧǧ Ṣāliḥ, *Aṯ-ṯawra al-mustaḥīla* (Arab Institute for Research & Publishing, 2017), pp. 63–84.

(UN),[211] led to one of the largest humanitarian crises in contemporary history with Syrian civilians becoming the greatest losers in this conflict.

I argue that the regime's primary structure is based on a totalitarian form of governance that controls all state institutions built on a sectarian basis.[212] However, the problem of sectarianism has its own historical contexts, which I will delineate briefly for the sake of a better understanding of events that stand behind the escalation of the conflict in its early years and its continuation until the moment. Deconstructing the Syrian regime and understanding its working mechanisms will aid in disentangling the causes of the dramatic exacerbation of the crisis in Syria and thus in understanding the societal rifts that followed the Syrian uprising in 2011.

The Syrian communities, which were part of the Ottoman Empire, were largely divided and closed. Perhaps it is vital to refer to the description of Albert al-Hourani of the state of these groups under the Ottoman Empire:

> "This description will have made it clear that the Ottoman Empire was not a military state; it was composed of a large number of groups, local, tribal, linguistic, and religious. On the whole, these groups formed closed communities. Each was a 'world', sufficient to its members and exacting their ultimate loyalty. The worlds touched but did not mingle with each other; each looked at the rest with suspicion and even hatred."[213]

In fact, this accurate description of these groups by al-Hourani did not change much later in the relations of these groups in Syrian communities. What changed is that the worlds of these groups began to come into contact and mix with each other, but the mixing remained marred by caution and doubt, perhaps hatred at times. Torstein Worren wrote - in his distinctive ethnographic master's thesis "The Alawis in Syria" - that people often "will employ vagueness rather than admit to having negative views of other sects."[214]

Sectarian strife began to take shape more and more with the exploitation of sectarian, religious, and ethnic minorities in Syria by the French mandate in the years 1920–1946, based on the principle of "divide to reign".

211 UN News, 'Syria, Aḫbār Al'umam Almutaḥida' <https://news.un.org/ar/focus/syria> [accessed 13 July 2020].

212 This argument was adopted by a number of Syrian researchers and authors, such as Burhān Ġalyūn, Ṣādiq Jalāl Al-'Aẓm, Mīšīl Kīlū, and Yāsīn al-Ḥāǧǧ Ṣāliḥ.

213 Albert Habib Hourani, *Minorities in the Arab World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 22.

214 Worren, p. 72.

Following the division of Arab countries into small states between France and Britain through the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916), Syria fell under the French mandate. Four confessional states were formed: the State of Damascus with a Sunni majority, the State of Aleppo with a Sunni majority as well, the State of the Alawis in Latakia and Tartus, and the State of Jabal Druze in Sweida.[215]

In a very serious development, France started recruiting minorities - especially Alawis - to form the nucleus of an army called the "East Special Forces" in order to suppress any movement against the French mandate in the region. This is one of the factors that brought Syria to the current situation today. These forces formed the nucleus of a sectarian army following Syria's independence that later staged many military coups that paved the way for the Assad regime.[216] After his 1970 coup,[217] Assad - an Alawi - embarked on demobilizing army officers from other sects and appointing Alawi officers in their place. He then established security departments

215 Kamāl Dīb, *Tārīḫ Syria Lm'āṣir* (Beirut: Dār nhār lilnašr, 2011), pp. 37–42.

216 Dīb, p. 54–55; Alghoul, p. 197.

217 Numerous studies were published in an attempt to dismantle and understand the nature of the Syrian regime and its basic structure as well as the Alawi sect that forms its backbone. In addition to the study of Worren and Van Dam referred to earlier in this chapter, there is the study of sociologist Michel Seurat in his book "Syria the Barbaric State" and a recent doctoral thesis in political science by Leon Goldsmith entitled "The Cycle of Fear. Syrian Alawis in War and Peace". Both studies rely on Ibn Khaldun's theory of ʿaṣabīya which purports "that leadership is only achieved by superiority and superiority is only achieved through ʿaṣabīya". 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Ibn Ḫaldūn, 'Muqadimah Ibn Ḫaldūn' (Damascus: Dār yaʿrub, 2004), Part 1, p. 261. 'Aṣabīya can be based on ancestry or what comes in its place such as loyalty or alliance; ibid., p. 256. For instance, Seurat sees that "power in Syria is only Alawi without any partner"; Seurat, *Syria Ad-Dawla Al-Mutawaḥiša*, p. 84. Through ties of blood or similarity of fate and the exploitation of a religious or political cause, the Alawis came to power. It is through this trilogy that Ibn Khaldun's theory manifests itself in Seurat' work; ibid., p. 83. Ibn Khaldun's theory of ʿaṣabīya led Smith in his study to conclude that Ibn Khaldun's hypothesis relates to "contemporary Syria where Hafez al-Assad ceased political power and established the rule of his family by relying on the strength of the collective feeling of his Alawi sect"; Goldsmith, pp. 63–64. Therefore, the secret behind the Syrian regime's resilience until now lies in the strength of sectarian ʿaṣabīya – whereby the minority controls the majority – as opposed to tribal or partisan ʿaṣabīya, which collapsed in other countries; ibid., pp. 65–66. The regime used the complex of fear prevalent among his Alawi sect and linked its fate to their fate. This has led in turn to the continuation of the conflict, which had very negative consequences for all components of the Syrian people.

in order to control later all centers of power in the Syrian state.[218] Consequently, he created a "political climate charged with confessionalism and a grievous rift in Syrian opinion along sectarian lines."[219] Subsequently, the sectarian divide was exploited from internal and external sides, and the conflict was transformed from a revolution between a people and an oppressive dictatorial regime to a Sunni-Alawis or Sunni majority struggle against other minorities. Also, with the intervention of other powers, the situation turned into a proxy war.[220]

However, it is paramount to question the essence of this sectarianism. Does it have a religious dimension? Sociologist Halim Barakat answers this question in his study of contemporary Arab societies:

> "Sectarian strife is essentially a struggle between groups occupying different positions in terms of wealth, influence and status in social structures arranged hierarchically according to class divisions. In this sense, sectarian prejudice is not an expression of religious faith but rather a tool[221] to preserve the group's privileges or to obtain their rights or as a reaction to counter-intolerance."[222]

The reason for that, as Barakat points out in another book, is due to the specificity of social relations in Arab societies, in which group loyalty predominates at the expense of society or the individual. This is the case because social relations in these societies are still for the most part primary relations[223] belonging to the group - be it religious, ethnic, or national identities - and not to civil society. Yāsīn al-Ḥāǧǧ Ṣāliḥ believes that "sects

218 For more details, see Hiroyuki Aoyama, 'Syria: Strong State Versus Social Cleavages', in *Syria. From National Independence to Proxy War*, ed. by Linda Matar and Ali Kadri (Cham: Springer, 2019), pp. 71–90; Nikolaos Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria* (London, New York: Tauris, 2011), pp. 34–47, 68–69.

219 Batatu, p. 227.

220 Elitok Seçil Paçacı and Christiane Fröhlich, 'Displacement, Refugees, and Forced Migration in the MENA Region. The Case of Syria', in *Routledge International Handbook of Migration Studies*, ed. by Steven J. Gold and Stephanie J. Nawyn (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 111–13.

221 This does not mean that some groups in the Syrian conflict have adopted the religious dimension as an objective and aim for the fighting and not as a tool, such as ISIS, the Al-Nusra group, Hezbollah, and the Shiite militias.

222 Ḥalīm Barakāt, *Al-muǧtamaʿ al-ʿarabī al-muʿāṣir* المجتمع العربي المعاصر *(The Arab World. Society, Culture, and State)* (Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1998), p. 38.

223 Ḥalīm Barakāt, *Al-muǧtamaʿ al-ʿarabī fi al-qarni al-ʿišrīn* (Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 2000), p. 38.

themselves are artificial social constructions made under certain political conditions" and that "sectarianism is one of the policy plans and tools of governance in the present, and is not a continuation of something old that has failed to die."[224]

It is very important to mention that these primary relations are reflected among the same family members. Barakat concludes that "the distribution of labor in the family is part of the broader system of distributing labor in society – that is, the relations of exploitation and control are the same in the society and its institutions and organizations. It is characterized by relationships among classes, between man and woman, governor and the governed, and the strong and weak state. These relations are not isolated entities, but rather they are intertwined that reinforce each other, and form a hierarchical, inhumane system that stirs in human beings ugliness rather than beauty, oppression, injustice, ferocity, and lack of love."[225] Therefore, this hierarchical, authoritarian, and patriarchal system represented in the structures of families and societies will be focused on in this study.

Conclusion

The Syrians did not witness a large wave of forced displacement movement in their history as the one witnessed in the aftermath of this war. The sectarian nature of the regime played a crucial role in the continuation of the war, on the one hand, and in creating a major rift among Syrian communities, on the other. This has created many factors that led people to flee inside and outside Syria. The reasons for this displacement are numerous, the most important of which are: 1) insecurity: being exposed to the risks of bombing, killing, kidnapping, or compulsory army service; 2) fear of being arrested; 3) the protection of children and seeking a better future for them; 4) the deterioration of the economic situation in Syria; 5) the search for a better future.

This chapter demonstrated that the risk does not only lie in the forced displacement of Syrians but also in the social situation preceding or subse-

224 Yāsīn al-Ḥāǧǧ Ṣāliḥ, 'Aṣ-ṣultan al-ḥadīṯ: al-manābi' as-siyāsiya wa-liǧtimā'īya llṭā'ifīya fi Sūriya. I', *Aljumhuriya* <https://www.aljumhuriya.net/ar/33057> [accessed 10 November 2020]. For more, see Alghoul, p. 197.

225 Ḥalīm Barakāt, 'An-niẓām al-iǧtimā'ī wa-'alāqatuh bimuškilat al-mar'ah al-'arabiah' <https://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=23415&r=0> [accessed 31 August 2020].

quent to the trip of displacement. This showed a major rift in the network of social relations among Syrian families. The collected data revealed identity conflicts along national lines such as Syrian-Palestinian, along sectarian lines such as Sunni-Alawis or Sunni-Christian, and along societal and political lines as regime supporter vs. opponent. All of these conflicts pushed people to return to the primary ties, i.e. their religious, sectarian, ethnic, or tribal groups. This had negative repercussions manifested largely in the rift in relations among Syrian communities.

The destruction of houses of some of these families or scenes of killing, kidnapping, and others created extreme instability and trauma for many. Being arrested and tortured traumatized others long after they were released. Furthermore, the financial insecurity that the war created led to a kind of anxiety toward the future. All this was compounded by the frequent news of deaths back in Syria and a sense of helplessness being away from it all. All these factors play a big role in the relationships within families. Therefore, in chapter 3 and 4 we seek to analyze these effects on the family in terms of the shifts in the modes of relationships with the new environment and within the members of the family themselves.