CREATING CONSENT IN BA'THIST SYRIA

WOMEN AND WELFARE IN A TOTALITARIAN STATE

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Esther Meininghaus is a researcher, policy analyst and writer currently based in Berlin. She worked previously with the Humanitarian Conflict Response Institute, University of Manchester. Her first monograph, *Musa al-Sadr and the Political Awakening of the Shiites in Lebanon*, was published in German in 2008. She holds a PhD in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Manchester.

'This book is an important contribution to our knowledge of modern contemporary Syria. More specifically, it examines the way in which the power and durability of the ruling elite in any state is based on "consent" even in totalitarian systems such as the Baʿth Party ruling Syria. The author reveals how the Baʿth state used coercion but also sought the consent of its public – many from the notable class of the pre-Baʿthi Revolution in the 1960s – in order to establish mass organisations to ameliorate the conditions of women and children. Although organised around the General Union of Syrian Women, the book offers a detailed history and contemporary analysis of the roots of Syrian women's engagement with welfare and development provision in the country as a whole. This research is well-documented, highly readable and makes a significant and long overdue contribution to our knowledge of the modern Syrian state as well as the role of women within it. It is a promising work which will appeal to a number of disciplinary specialists in Middle Eastern Studies, Political Theory, Women and Development literature and those studying Syria and Syrian society.'

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Dawn Chatty, Professor of Anthropology and
Forced Migration, University of Oxford

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'This valuable and meticulously researched study sheds light on the role of the Union of Syrian Women in shoring up support for the country's Baʿth regime between 1967 and 2008. The role of Baʿthist popular organisations in contributing to the resilience of Syria's authoritarian regime is under-researched and the Women's Union in particular is little known outside of Arabic-language scholarship. Meininghaus explores processes of negotiating and fostering political consent at the heart of Baʿthist Syria and opens up new research questions by bringing gender into the question of regime survival.'

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Paul Anderson, Prince Alwaleed Lecturer,
Department of Middle Eastern Studies,
University of Cambridge

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When I arrived in Syria for the first time ten years ago as a student to learn Arabic, I was curious to see how my knowledge about the country's politics would tie in with the world I entered. The Syria I knew from my books was a peaceful and safe country with a rich culture and history, but governed through a dictatorship that would not tolerate open dissent. But what would that mean in everyday life? I remember clearly my surprise when, walking through a small gate to the campus of the Faculty of Humanities in Damascus, I found it guarded by two young armed men in civilian clothes. Whilst politics was largely absent from the daily chatter of my host family and most of my friends, it was all too present in the many pictures of Bashar and Hafiz al-Asad on the streets, in shops and private cars, the scarcity of newspapers, and in seemingly normal practices such as the signatures and ID required to take public transport out of town. Ever since this first visit, I have been intrigued by the question of how, and why, a political system such as this persists. Among the people I met, some, surely, had vested interests; some resisted, despite the danger of being arrested; and some, I came to realise, saw themselves as not being interested in politics at all.

Along the way, I am deeply thankful to have received the support of many individuals and institutions who helped me to carry out a research project which proved to be both a challenge and a gift. At the University of Manchester, I would like to thank Dr Andreas Christmann, Dr Philip Sadgrove, Dr Ronald Buckley, and Dr Dalia Mustafa for countless thought-provoking debates, as well as Dr Michelle Obeid for her inspiring curiosity and unfailing support over the past years. Also, I am highly

INTRODUCTION

The enigma of Syrian stability under the Syrian Baʿthist regimes of Hafiz al-Asad and his son Bashar al-Asad has long struck observers of the Middle East. Even after the Arab Spring ignited in Syria from February 2011 onwards, pro-Asad demonstrations distorted the picture of an oppressed people calling for action to bring down the regime. Amidst the wave of anti-government demonstrations, hundreds of thousands of Syrians took to the streets in Damascus, Aleppo, al-Hasaka and Hamah, and in Hums in late March 2011, to show their support for President Asad.[1] More than half a year on the crisis had turned into a war, yet tens of thousands still took to the capital's streets in support of China's and Russia's veto on the UN Security Council draft resolution that sought to impose sanctions on Syria. Among the explanations offered for both former and continuing support for the regime are the rejection of US intervention in Syrian affairs, personal economic benefits from the regime, its protection of minorities, fear of the lack of political alternatives and the regime's coercing of protesters to join the demonstrations.[2]

Problematically, the situation is indeed far more complex, and it is a paradox that understanding and countering the danger of the present regime requires to also recognise its strengths. By early 2016, in the face of the impact of the war and the tragic loss of more than 470,000 lives in the struggle between government forces and an estimated 1,000 armed opposition groups, it has become exceedingly difficult to imagine that a regime like Baʿthist Syria might ever have made a serious attempt to cater for the well-being of the population at large, thereby attracting

genuine support.[3] As Michel Foucault has noted, the common dissociation of the state and society is 'never exempt from a sort of Manichaeism that afflicts the notion of "state" with a pejorative connotation while idealising "society" as good, living, warm whole'[4] – and this certainly holds good for the Syrian regime. Consequently, most of the literature on Syrian politics has focused on the negative aspects of more than five decades of dictatorship, such as nepotism, corruption, co-optation, surveillance, arbitrary arrests, intimidation, torture of prisoners, the violation of human rights, sectarianism, and censorship.[5] Alternatively, some authors have highlighted the oppressed resistance to the pre-war regime through secular civil society groups and religious movements, as well as through more individual, usually hidden ways of self-distancing, such as mockery or 'narrated involvement'.[6] An area which, however, has remained largely undiscussed is the question whether, alongside with illegitimate practices, the stability of the Baʿthist regimes and their continuous support in some parts of the country can also be explained with other ways of seeking support for their policies.

Addressing this gap, this book will argue that even a system that can be considered totalitarian will still seek not only to control its population and oppress opposition but also to stay in touch with its needs and foster consent. In order to do so, it needs to maintain an accurate sense of public opinion and concerns among the wider population beyond indoctrination, co-optation and surveillance oftentimes attributed to totalitarian rule. The means of achieving this understanding, I suggest, is a covert process of negotiation and communication practised in part through mass organisations, such as the General Union of Syrian Women established in 1967, ultimately aiming at regime stability. Theoretically, this approach is embedded in the work of Antonio Gramsci and his notion of 'hegemony' exercised by ruling elites with the aim of creating consent. A self-professed Marxist, Gramsci developed the concept of hegemony in order to grasp mechanisms of political control beyond the realms of state institutions. For Karl Marx, economic relations of production determined the struggle for political power between classes (base), and these were reflected in legal, political and cultural relations (superstructure).[7] While Gramsci maintained the division between base and super-structure, he further saw superstructure as being split into two spheres,

political society and civil society, which taken together constitute the state.[8] In the context of modern capitalist societies, Gramsci challenged the traditional juxtaposition of political forces, i.e. legislation and its enforcement through coercion vs civil society as the sphere of voluntary consent, by arguing that the latter was in fact 'hegemony protected by the armour of coercion'.[9] As a result, civil society is never free from the political, which manifests itself through hegemony: the 'intellectual and moral leadership' of the ruling elites.[10] From Gramsci's perspective, hegemony is the means which ruling elites adopt in order to create consent within society; traditionally understood, the latter is manipulated into believing that the ruling elites act in its interest.[11] Political elites exercise hegemony through culture, for example the media or education, within the framework of the permitted again being set and safeguarded by the state.[12]

Despite the predominance of the ruling elites through indirect and direct means, i.e. hegemony and coercion, Gramsci's concepts implied a process of power being negotiated between different groups within society as well as between society and the ruling elites.[13] Instead of focusing on the ways in which hegemony reflects the ruling elites' *domination of society*, it is argued here that it can actually also lead us to assume a different perspective: hegemony is exercised because it is perceived as being indispensable; it reflects the fact that the use of force alone would not be sufficient to maintain existing relations of power in the long term. In other words, hegemony also expresses the ruling elites' *dependence on society*. I further suggest that hegemony and consent can take two forms. On the one hand, hegemony is exercised in cases where demands that are raised among the population would run counter to the ruling elites' interests, and hence it appears beneficial or even necessary to distract or oppress them. For example, this is the case when the ruling elites seem to uphold the virtues of freedom of expression but indirectly influence the media industry in a way that serves ultimately to protect their power.[14] On the other hand, there are instances where the ruling elites opt to respond to the demands of the population in a receptive manner because they coincide with their own interests, and hence their neglect would endanger the regime. It is argued here that needs addressed by public welfare services can represent one such element: for example, standards of healthcare and education are inevitably linked to economic growth, a precondition for any system's survival. As Gramsci

has pointed out, education is a prime example of hegemony reflected in the design of school curricula.[15] Certainly the way that access to healthcare is regulated, or the level of care that is provided, are equally prone to reinforcing the existing order. Yet the quality of these types of hegemony is different. The first includes what could be termed 'demand-rejecting' hegemony, whilst the second type of hegemony is not only 'demand-rejecting' but also 'need-receptive'. I shall argue that under Baʿthist rule, mass organisations, bundling together large sections of Syrian society, are a prime example of need-receptive hegemony which illustrate that totalitarian governance is much more dynamic and adaptable than commonly assumed. Officially portrayed to strengthen the country's development in a socialist framework, mass organisations not only served to exercise control over the Syrian population, but also to identify local needs and to respond to them through their activities. As a case study, I shall analyse the genesis, composition and projects of the General Union of Syrian Women between its establishment in 1967, and the last series of its internal five-year reports before the outbreak of the war, in 2008. Throughout this period, the Union has addressed women's welfare through an array of social services ranging from literacy campaigns and vocational training to healthcare provision and childcare facilities, and it has continued to do so during the present war. In this way, I aim to offer a new and critical perspective to our understanding of the longevity of the Baʿthist regimes that have reigned in Syria for more than 50 years. These are the cornerstones of this book, which will be of most interest to readers of the literature of Middle Eastern studies, political theory, women and development studies, and Syrian social history.

Historical Overview

Not only in political, but also in economic and social terms, the Baʿthist regimes had to build on the legacy of their predecessors, whether it be in rejecting or accepting the reality previous regimes had created. After World War I, Syria emerged from the era of the Ottoman Empire to experience a two-year period of Arab rule under Faysal Ibn Husayn before becoming a French Mandate in 1920. It was only then that the basics of its current geographical shape started to develop. Following confessional lines, France first separated the states of Damascus and

Aleppo (September 1920), as well as Alexandretta in the north (1920), the territory of al-Ladhiqiyya in the west, Jabal Duruz in the south,[16] and the Jazira in the east (1922).[17] A federation of the states of Aleppo, Damascus and the state of the Alawis (as the territory of al-Ladhiqiyya was called by then) was formally created in 1924. The state of the Alawis broke away shortly afterwards and the federation was replaced by the state of Syria, including only Aleppo and Damascus, in 1925.[18] Two attempts were made to integrate the state of the Alawis as well as Jabal Duruz into the state of Syria in 1936 and 1942. However, both failed due to local resistance against centralist domination, and they only became part of the state of Syria on independence in 1946.[19] As for Alexandretta, it was annexed to Turkey seven years earlier.[20] The administrative status of the Syrian territories differed from one another in detail, and changed over time, but the question of the unity or separatism of the Syrian regions constituted a major theme during the French Mandate.[21] Likewise, the period was characterised by a struggle for citizenship and social rights by groups and individuals from various backgrounds, such as religious or workers' movements, women's societies, or politicians raising their demands towards the state. As a result, according to Elizabeth Thompson, Syria and Lebanon emerged from the Mandate as welfare states, albeit providing considerably more benefits to men than to women, whose voice lacked unity and weight.[22]

After Syria became independent of France in 1946, Syrian politics were unsettled by a series of military coups and counter-coups.[23] In the heated climate of the final Mandate years, the Baʿth Party, literally meaning 'Awakening' or 'Renaissance', was founded by the Greek Orthodox Michel ʿAflaq and the Sunni Muslim Salah al-Din Bitar.[24] Its ideology has developed over time, but is built on the three pillars of Unity, Freedom and Socialism. It stood for the ideal of one singular pan-Arab state defying the borders drawn by the West, freedom from Western political and economic oppression, and a fair and even distribution of resources. Following the proclamation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the ensuing war, the Baʿth fiercely opposed Zionism and declared its univocal solidarity with the Palestinians.[25]

Although, like all other parties, the Baʿth was officially dissolved during the United Arab Republic (1958–61), it was a group of Baʿthist officers stationed in Egypt who brought the Baʿth to power in a coup d'état in 1963. Ever since, Syria has been continuously ruled by

members of the Baʿth: first under a military committee from 1963–6, following closely ʿAflaq's rather liberal ideological leanings; secondly, neo-Baʿthist rule from 1966–70 under Salah Jadid, pursuing radical Marxist policies; thirdly, a period of forceful consolidation under Hafiz al-Asad (1970–2000); and fourthly, the reign of Asad's son, Bashar al-Asad, lasting until the present. Despite their ideological differences, all four Baʿth regimes have in common one singular dilemma: on the one hand, they aimed to execute exclusive political control; yet on the other hand, they were challenged to promote an inclusive sense of identity.[26]

The Baʿthist regimes were not the first in Syria to have acquired power by force, but despite their internal conflicts, they were the most successful in maintaining it against various internal and external obstacles. With the declared intention of breaking the political power of the former landowning elites, the status of many of whom dated back to French and even earlier to Ottoman times, measures such as land reform and the nationalisation of companies, banks and industries were announced to implement the Baʿthists' socialist vision of economic justice in the 1960s.[27] In their statist economy, the public sector evolved as a major employer, followed by agriculture and manufacturing. At the same time, oil became a significant source of state income.[28] Countering economic pressures, two periods of economic liberalisation (*infitah*) were implemented under Hafiz al-Asad, re-enhancing the role of the private sector. Nonetheless, public sector employment represented an efficient means of binding employees to the state. It provided a secure income for those abiding by the rules, otherwise linking open dissent to a loss of income opportunities. Under Bashar al-Asad, the Syrian economy was allowed to re-instigate private banks in 2004, and five years later it saw the opening of the new stock exchange in Damascus.[29] Whilst encouraging private investment, Bashar al-Asad's regime was troubled by the legacy of relatively high population growth, which had seen the population more than triple under the Asad regimes alone and unemployment increase to around 12–16 per cent by 2004.[30] With no official figures available, the poverty rate has been estimated to have risen steadily since the 1980s, leading to a growing gap between rich and poor.[31] This mainly affects the rural areas in general and the North-Eastern governorates in particular, where 58 per cent of the country's poor are located.[32] In addition, Syria saw an influx of Palestinian refugees caused by the 1948, 1967 and 1973 wars, and Iraqis following the 2003

war, posing further challenges to Syrian resources. By 2009, the country hosted almost half a million Palestinians and an estimated 1 million Iraqis, accounting for almost 7.5 per cent of the total population.[33] However, since the outbreak of conflict in early 2011, 4.3 million people have been forced to flee Syria itself as their home country, and as of January 2016, an additional 6.6 million have been internally displaced, their houses and livelihoods destroyed.[34] With half the country's original population on the move, the current Syrian war, now in its fifth year, has caused the greatest humanitarian crisis since World War II.[35]

Politically, the Baʿthist regimes displayed varying strategies. Unlike his predecessors, Hafiz al-Asad replaced the Baʿthist single-party system by re-instituting the Syrian parliament in 1971.[36] To this end, the regime established the National Progressive Front (NPF), which, in addition to the Baʿth Party itself, included parties such as the Arab Socialist Union and the Syrian Communist Party.[37] Yet access to the coalition of the NPF, as well as the admittance of 'oppositional' parties or, more recently, independent candidates was regulated by the regime. Crucially, the quantitative distribution of seats was fixed in a manner that automatically ensured a Baʿthist majority.[38] Accordingly, the parliament did not develop into an arena for representative decision-making and debates between coalition and 'the opposition', which consequently emerged in other areas of national life. Discontent with the Baʿth Party's secular outlook, economic policies and attempted control of mosques and Muslim foundations fused into Islamic resistance early on. Likewise, Christian communities resented the regime's secular stance and the nationalisation of education.[39] With Muslim religious sheikhs closely bound to the country's mercantile class, riots spread throughout the country in the 1960s, but were brutally suppressed.[40] Moreover, Baʿthist rule became closely associated with the minority sect of the Alawis – including the Asads – and which is situated mainly in the coastal governorates of al-Ladhiqiyya and Tartous. Their beliefs had been considered heretical by the Sunni majority for centuries, leading to the persecution and economic deprivation of Alawi communities. However, they enjoyed a more protected position under the French in their attempt to rule and divide, when a career in the military emerged as an alternative to peasantry. Due to purges in the late 1960s, Alawis came to be overrepresented in the Syrian officer corps, and their prominence in leading state positions was particularly resented.[41] The Syrian Muslim

Brotherhood (SMB), the major religion-based oppositional force, turned to violent resistance in 1976 after witnessing the brutal suppression of attempts at civil disobedience.[42] Following a series of bombings and assassinations of high-ranking Baʿth officials,[43] Islamic opposition led to the army's infamous crackdown on the city of Hamah in 1982, which left between 8,000 and 30,000 persons dead, half of the city totally destroyed, and the SMB banned.[44]

As a consequence of these events, the regime tried to channel Islamic sentiments in order to prevent further radical currents rather than seeking to suppress them.[45] To this purpose, the regime created a pool of religious scholars loyal to the Party[46] who were installed in newly built mosques, Qurʾanic schools and other Islamic institutions spread throughout the country, financed and controlled by the state.[47] Furthermore, it co-opted the Sunni Sufi order of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya-Mujaddadiyya-Kaftariyya, headed by Sheikh Ahmad Kaftaru (1915–2004). He ran the Abu Nur Institute, which represented one of the main institutes for religious learning in the country before the war.[48] The regime even went so far as to create sham fights between Muslim preachers loyal to the regime, transmitted to the public through the media.[49] Likewise, it was observed that the official Baʿthist discourse in the Syrian state-controlled mass media was increasingly infused with Islamic elements.[50] Similarly, controlled counter-discourse was disseminated through highly popular Ramadan serials financed by the state.[51]

Thus, commentators argue, the Baʿthist regimes have relied on direct and indirect means of control to create fear and demand mass public displays of loyalty to their government.[52] Until very recently, direct dissent in Syria has been silenced by state censorship of the media or by self-censorship and surveillance built on an extensive network of civilian informants and the secret services (*mukhabarat*).[53] Individuals accused of dissent were tried in closed hearings in special military courts set up on the basis of the state of emergency declared in 1962 and reissued by the Baʿthist military command one year later.[54] Justified by the threat of potential Israeli aggression, the state of emergency allowed for arrests and detentions that needed no legal justification by the *mukhabarat*.[55] Indeed, not only Islamic, but also secular opposition in Syria has been oppressed. As early as the 1960s, strikes and demonstrations led by the SMB coincided with those of associations of lawyers, engineers, doctors,

academics, and other professionals. They demanded democratic reform, the release of political prisoners and an end to Alawi domination of the state.[56] Similar demands shook the regime to the core in 1980, but were again brutally suppressed.[57] Likewise, the so-called Syrian Spring at the beginning of Bashar al-Asad's presidency was short-lived.[58] As reformist efforts by human rights groups, former opposition leaders, established parliamentarians and businessmen emerged,[59] demands such as an end to the state of emergency, democratic reform, freedom of expression and of the press, a pluralistic civil society, and the abolition of legal discrimination against women were finally formulated in the 'Statement of 1,000'.[60] Yet after only a few months, the regime reacted by arresting key activists and shutting down discussion forums. According to official statements, their initiatives had destabilised the unity of Syrian society, thereby exposing it to Zionist and imperialist (US) threats and endangering internal security.[61] With that, the Syrian Spring came to an end – until the country experienced renewed demands for reform in 2011, followed by the current Syrian war.

Mass Organisations and Women in Baʿthist Syria

With internal stability representing one of the key challenges for the regime, shortly after the coup of 8 March 1963 leading Baʿthist intellectuals developed the idea of channelling large groups of the Syrian population into mass organisations. Party-led organisations would serve to tie individuals to the regime and to its programme of comprehensive socialist reform of state institutions, the economy and society. Aiming at consolidation and control, the regime set out to restructure existing organisations as well as introducing new ones in the period between 1963 and 1967.[62] In Syrian discourse, mass or popular organisations (*munazzamat shaʿbiyya*) include, for example, the General Union of Syrian Women (here called the Union), the Students' Union, the Revolutionary Youth Federation, but also the trade unions, the General Union of Peasants, the Teachers' Union, and professional associations (*niqabat mihaniyya*).[63]

Although membership of Syrian mass organisations encompasses a large section of Syrian society, they have received little attention from academic observers, possibly due to the fact that research on the internal politics of Baʿthist Syria has remained a sensitive matter. There are some

exceptions, however. Thabita Petran devoted a section of her monograph *Syria* to the Peasants' Union, trade unions, the Students' Union and the Revolutionary Youth Federation, and also touched briefly on the Union.[64] In 1980, Raymond Hinnebusch dedicated a complete article to the youth organisation, paying particular attention to strategies of recruitment into the Baʿth Party.[65] Volker Perthes shed some light on the role of professional associations in a chapter discussing the General Federation of Trade Unions.[66] Otherwise, they remain largely hidden from view.

To my knowledge, publications concerning the General Union of Syrian Women are limited to Syrian sources, although it has been briefly mentioned in Western literature.[67] Syrian secondary literature on the Union, as well as the history of women's societies in the country prior to 1967, provide valuable insight into the historic evolution of women's benevolent or welfare work in Syria, as does archival material held by the Syrian National Archive. Added to this, Elizabeth Thompson's outstanding *Colonial Citizens* offers an excellent overview of women's quest for social and political rights in Syria and Lebanon during the French Mandate.[68] But while in the case of Egypt or Palestine, detailed studies of the women's movement have offered an intriguing insight into female agency and women's struggles in the Middle East, many gaps in the picture for Syria have yet to be filled.[69] This case study of the Union aims to add to the existing literature by focusing on shifts in women's development in Syria as initiated by the state after 1967.

Rather than simply representing a women's organisation that would have emerged naturally out of earlier private initiatives, the Union as a mass organisation in the context of Baʿthist state formation also built on a socialist tradition. Strictly speaking, mass organisations are institutions in their own right, whether in a socialist or fascist setting. In 1994, Gregory Kasza undertook a pioneering study tracing the historical origins of what he understands as mass organisations (AMOs) and their spread around the globe, in which he identified their original task to have been mass conscription. Based on a broad range of case studies in both socialist and fascist regimes, his work rests on the argument that mass organisations should represent a distinct entity in political science because they are substantially different from bodies that are often described as mass organisations due simply to their large membership, such as political parties or interest groups.[70] Although Kasza does not elaborate on the idea of mass organisations in political

theories on totalitarianism, their distinctiveness had indeed been recognised earlier. For example, Juan C. Linz, in his discussion of mass participation in totalitarian systems, stressed that in contrast to democracies, only one such organisation would be permitted in any sphere of totalitarian life, and the purpose of such 'controlled organisations' was prescribed by the regime.[71] Hannah Arendt gives a similar account of what she called 'front organisations'.[72] Nonetheless, Kasza's definition of mass organisations is concise, and bears three characteristics. Firstly, an AMO is an 'organisation' in the sense that it is a formal body with offices and by-laws.[73] Secondly, it is held to be 'mass' in that 'the targeted membership ordinarily includes all or most people of a particular place of residence, industry, workplace, age, or gender; most members are not regime officials, that is, they do not hold office in their governing Party, the military, or the state bureaucracy.'[74] Thirdly, it is administered, in that 'external agencies of the regime define the AMO and mission and appoint its top leaders, who do not rise independently from within the organisation.'[75] Crucially, Kasza identifies the AMO as part of the state, responsible for 'implementing public policy'. In that sense, it can be instructed by the regime, that is the state's decision-making institutions, but it does not represent one of these institutions.[76] It is this process of public policy implementation that positions mass organisations between the regime on the one hand and society on the other. It is suggested here that this process is twofold: through mass organisations, the regime seeks to influence and control the wider population but, at the same time, it is also being influenced by the expression of opinions, needs and wants from below.

Baʻthist Syria as a Totalitarian State and the Creation of Consent

With mass organisations emerging in both socialist and fascist settings, their context often proved totalitarian in outlook. The origin of the term 'totalitarian' has been ascribed to a young journalist named Giovanni Amendola, who described Mussolini's changes to the Italian election law as introducing a totalitarian system (*sistema totalitaria*) in 1923. Whilst he pointed out that it would not allow for any potent political opposition to Fascism, the term was henceforth even adopted by Mussolini himself, his aim being 'to make the nation fascist, so

that tomorrow Italians and fascists. . .will be the same thing'.[77] By 1932, the philosopher Giovanni Gentile had come to denote Fascism as 'totalitarian' because it would encompass all aspects of human life:

> The fascist conception of the state is all-embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value. Thus understood, fascism is totalitarian, and the fascist state – a synthesis and a unit inclusive of all values – interprets, develops and potentiates the whole life of a people.[78]

In the decades that followed, the notion of the totalitarian state generated an enormous body of academic literature mostly focusing on Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union. Authors pursued different interests: some works tried to uncover the anatomy of totalitarian systems by developing typologies or models of their structures, others sought to understand the conditions that allowed totalitarian systems to rise, and yet others undertook comparative analyses to point out similarities and differences between different systems.[79] Over time, a critical debate developed: were typologies perhaps too static to account for historical change as, for example, the transition from Leninism to Stalinism and the Gorbachev era in the Soviet Union?[80] Was not the Western academic discourse, especially on communism, politically charged, considering its Cold War environment? And was such a link legitimate?[81] Did detailed studies of the example of Nazi Germany not prove that the totalitarian state's apparent all-powerful strength and efficiency were in fact characterised by internal rivalries, chaotic bureaucracy and instability?[82] In other words, is the concept useful at all, and can it be applied to Syria?

I argue here that, indeed, the concept is essential, and that it is a framework indispensable for a comprehensive understanding of contemporary Syrian politics, past and present. Despite valid criticisms of our understanding of totalitarianism especially post-1989, the political theory of totalitarianism uncovers aspects of this form of non-democratic rule which theories of authoritarianism do not grasp, and which are hence at risk of being overlooked. The existence and function of mass organisations is one such aspect. Thus although the analytical understanding of totalitarianism will, as any other academic category, remain in need of continuous modification, its distinction from

authoritarian systems is imperative in gauging the strengths, ambitions and strategies of different forms of non-democratic rule, which in the case of Syria have been long underestimated.

Reminiscent of the early Italian understanding of a 'totalitarian system', the Syrian Ba'th Party itself suggested that its agenda is totalitarian in character as it 'relies on the people with whom it seeks to establish intricate contact, the spiritual, moral, material and physical level of whom it is trying to raise [...]'.[83] Thus,

> [t]he educational policy of the Party aims at creating a new Arab generation, which believes in the unity of the nation and in the eternity of its mission. This policy, based on scientific reasoning, will be freed from the shackles of superstitions and reactionary traditions; it will be imbued with the spirit of optimism, of struggle, *and of solidarity among all citizens in the carrying out of a total Arab revolution*, and in the cause of human progress.[84]

In this light, the Ba'th would not only re-awaken the nation, but also seek '[t]he overthrow of the present faulty structure, an overthrow which will include all the sectors of intellectual, economic, social and political life'.[85] Three years later, 'Aflaq specified that the envisaged revolution was to take the form of a 'powerful psychic current'.[86] In line with its aim to re-educate every single Syrian in accordance with the Party principles of unity, freedom and socialism, the Ba'th endeavoured nothing less than a total reform of both the state and society, dissolving existing borders and establishing a new order until the end of days. Initially, this was the aim, which, as we shall see, gave way to a more pragmatic approach over time.

The assessment that Ba'thist Syria not only claims to be, but is, a totalitarian system runs counter to most current research in Middle Eastern Studies, which tends to classify Syria as authoritarian.[87] Problematically, this literature is rich in empirical accounts, but it reflects a common separation of the literature of regional studies on the one hand and political theory on the other, the latter oftentimes being neglected. Usually, the categorisation of Syria being authoritarian is taken for granted, and the question of totalitarianism remains entirely untouched. Exceptionally, Perthes explicitly rejects the notion of Syria being totalitarian, stating that:

> The state does not, despite its deep penetration into society, control, let alone regulate, all spheres of life. The state, under Asad's regime, has become authoritarian, not totalitarian. There is no all-encompassing ideology which state and regime would offer or try to enforce on the population. Baʿthism and Arab Nationalism, as noted, have been watered down so as not to stand in the way of the pragmatic realpolitik of the regime. The personality cult around the President, including attempts at fabricating a charisma that extends to his offspring does not make an ideology.[88]

In contrast to this account, the present study offers an alternative reading of the Baʿthist political system. Whilst acknowledging the variety of definitions of totalitarian systems, this work is based on the writings of Hannah Arendt, Juan C. Linz, and Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski in identifying general characteristics of totalitarian systems. Next, these characteristics are applied to contemporary Syria while also considering the question of historical change. In a third step, these key points will be combined with Gramsci's notion of hegemony as a process of power negotiation, rather than as a process of indoctrination, and the idea of 'consent'. On the basis of existing critiques of totalitarianism, and in clear distinction to authoritarianism, I thus present a new approach which represents a shift in our understanding of totalitariarian theory and practice alike.

To begin with, it is suggested here that Baʿthist Syria should be regarded as a totalitarian system due to the following characteristics:

1) It exhibits a totalitarian ideology, i.e. that of the Syrian Arab Socialist Baʿth Party. This ideology represents a more or less elaborated set of utopian ideas that is original and serves as a source of legitimisation for the ruling individual or group. Furthermore, it serves not only to explain history, but is also referred to in order to justify the regime's actual policies on the political, economic and social level. Finally, it is totalitarian in the sense that it claims to create a new society, thus not only reforming the system but also re-educating all those living within this system.[89]

2) It rests on a monistic, but not monolithic, centre of power that can be centred on an individual (for example President Asad) or a group

(for example those selected for their office, or the Party) or a combination of both. In a totalitarian state, the lines between executive, legislative and judiciary power are blurred. The decision of whether or not pluralism in terms of institutions is admitted, and if so to what degree, is subject to the centre of power. This centre cannot be suspended against its own will in institutionalised ways, but only by force (such as a revolution).[90]

3) The centre of power and its affiliates control the means of mass communication, for example the media, by one or several secret police forces.[91]

4) They control the economy.[92]

5) They control the means of combat, in particular the military, police forces and secret services. They employ terror and disregard the principle of bodily inviolability in the sense that individuals fear the infiltration of society by informants who monitor and report attitudes and behaviour that are not in line with the regime's ideology to the secret service(s) on a great scale. This can result in punishments such as harassment, intimidation and imprisonment, possibly including torture, or even murder.[93]

6) Citizen participation in and active mobilisation for political and collective social tasks are encouraged, demanded, rewarded and channelled through a single Party and its secondary groups. Passive obedience and apathy, retreat into the role of 'parochials' and 'subjects', characteristic of many authoritarian regimes, are considered undesirable by the rulers.[94]

In response to Perthes' critique, I suggest that even if we concede that Syrian politics have not always complied with Ba'thist ideology – for example, striving for an all-Arab homeland or solidarity with the Palestinians – this does not necessarily mean that it lacks an ideology that, over the course of decades, has become deeply ingrained in the values and attitudes of many people, or that has led to the emergence of an awareness of the necessity at least to 'act as if' one believed in the system.[95] Firstly, research on Ba'thist ideology has mainly focused on the period up to the 1960s, with little insight being available into later developments.[96] Secondly, a turning point in Ba'thist policies occurred after 1982, when the regime's secular stance and Alawi-dominated minority rule were met by fierce Sunni Muslim opposition that

culminated in the events of Hamah. Since then, the regime has changed its strategy of sheer repression and replaced it with a system of control, funding specific forms of Muslim schools, centres of Islamic learning, mosques, or Ramadan serials, appealing to nationalism and religious morality instead.[97] In so doing, it particularly supported the Sufi orders, most strongly the institution of Ahmad Kaftaru, Grand Mufti of Syria between 1964 and 2004; but it carefully avoided raising mere syncophants, as well as a direct and exclusive nationalisation of Islamic religious learning, which would likely have led to a lack of credibility and the formation of radical currents underground. Instead, the regime gave room for religious education by preachers and scholars of various schools of thought, thereby increasing competition between different figureheads and their following, in Damascus most notably under Ramadan al-Buti (1929–2013), a 'papal' religious scholar and academic prominent on television and the radio for Syrian audiences and beyond and advisor to Asad post-1982, yet also mediating the return of exiled colleagues; the Zayd movement founded by ʿAbd al-Karim al-Rifaʿi (1901–73) and revived in the mid-1990s by his sons and volunteers as a network of mosques and circles of Islamic learning; and Ratib al-Nabulsi (born 1938), professor of education at the University of Damascus and preacher well-known beyond Syrian radio and television; in Aleppo with Suhayb al-Shami (born 1949) and Adib Hassun (1915–2008), both disciples of Muhammad al-Nabhan (1900–74) but rivals, who with their followers occupied leading positions in the religious administration and mosques in Aleppo, and with the son of Hassun, Ahmad Badr al-Din (born 1949), eventually becoming Kaftaru's successor as Grand Mufti; and others, since the 2000s even including scholars critical of the Baʿth.[98] Although the ruling elites allowed for a response to the thirst for religious guidance and education among the wider public, however, the selection of leading figures, the boundaries of their activities and the destruction of networks deemed unsuitable remained subject to the surveillance and manipulation through the secret services, and eventually, the regime returned to a policy of direct control in 2008.[99] Arguably, state intervention with religious belief has led to what has been called the creation of 'official' or 'public' Islam in Syria. According to Armando Salvatore, public Islam can be defined as 'the objectification and systematization of Islamic values and practices as a normative model for the moral order of society'.[100] The element of

morality is particularly important here as the Sufi form underlying this version of public Islam in Syria aims at the inner renewal and purification of the self. Paolo Pinto parallels this process on the moral level with that of the Ba'thist project of re-educating society by means of mass organisations on the political level.[101] More than this, for almost 50 years the whole Syrian education system has been tailored to postulate the Ba'thist worldview.[102] If we accept the argument that, by drawing on religion, the Asad regimes successfully sought to promote a value system ultimately rooted in the Ba'thist vision for Syrian society, and that significant parts of the population identified positively, even if unconsciously, with it, then the circle to Giovanni Gentile's original understanding of a totalitarian system is closed. To this, we can indeed add the cult surrounding Presidents Hafiz and Bashar al-Asad,[103] whose pictures are displayed not only in public buildings and schools but taxis and shops, or ceremonies such as mass parades and/or the playing of the national anthem during official celebrations. Also, official rhetoric has become increasingly infused with transcendental and metaphysical elements, in particular with regard to the President's personality cult. For instance, the President is addressed as the 'eternal leader' who will guide his people to becoming the 'true' Arab nation.[104] The recent slogan of 'Bashar, Allah, Suriyya wa-bas' (Bashar, God, and Syria – that's it) possibly best epitomises how close the regime has come to creating a Syrian public religion in its own right. Whether the outward performance of 'regime rituals' was actually fully internalised or secretly mocked, it had to be practised and obeyed.[105]

For these reasons, the first criterion of a totalitarian system can be seen as a given. Syria's monistic, but not monolithic, centre of power can be found especially in the Syrian presidents Asad, senior and junior, and their entourage (point 2). Whilst the first years after the Ba'th Party's ascension to power were still visibly characterised by internal struggles, they only rarely emerged into the open after 1970 and until the recent uprisings. This said, the centre is not considered monolithic in that military personnel and civilians close to the presidents have changed over the decades. This has been especially the case since Bashar al-Asad's coming to power.[106] Yet the centre is monistic in that it self-regulates access. The requirement of blurred lines between executive, legislative and judiciary power is certainly fulfilled and characterised by extensive presidential interference.[107] Pluralism has increasingly been admitted,

in particular during the Damascus Spring in 2000, but until 2011 was subject to the goodwill of the ruling elite alone.[108] Even though there are regular parliamentary elections, these are not free. Bashar al-Asad was nominated by the parliament for the office of president without a rival candidate and received 97.29 per cent of votes in the following national referendum.[109] The current war sadly illustrates the price the regime is ready to pay in order to maintain its grip over the country by sheer force – though not by force alone.

As for control of the media (point 3), all Baʿthist regimes exercised strict censorship.[110] Although the rise of new media such as the internet challenges such practices, the regime has at times managed to shut down popular websites like Facebook.[111] Furthermore, according to World Bank estimates, only around 20 out of 100 Syrians had access to the internet at all by 2008.[112] As far as the economy is concerned (point 4), state control is decreasing in favour of economic liberalisation, but is still highly influential.[113] The scope of permitted privatisation has remained subject to state planning.[114] With regard to the means of combat (point 5), the Syrian military and police forces have for a long time been headed by members of the Asad family or their close and longstanding allies.[115] Not only the current mounting death toll but many earlier reports of disappearances and torture of dissidents demonstrate the Baʿthist regimes' willingness to resort to terror and physical harm not only in times of crisis (point 5).[116] The participation and mobilisation of the masses (point 6) has clearly been one of the most important projects of the regime, in particular during the first decade when it restructured and newly established a variety of mass organisations, amongst them the General Union of Syrian Women.[117] Indeed, the active and continuous mobilisation of the masses is crucial for understanding both totalitarian theory and practice. As Peter Kenez emphasised in his analysis of propaganda in the Soviet Union:

> Mass mobilisation is possible without totalitarianism, but the reverse cannot be. The education of cadres, the development of a political language, the incessant politicisation of an ever-larger segment of life, the substitution of 'voluntary' pseudosocieties for independent public organisations – all these were the preconditions of the coming of the age for Stalin.[118]

Hence mass mobilisation is indispensable for a totalitarian system to emerge, and mass organisations such as the General Union of Syrian Women have been used to reach out to individuals even in the remotest areas of the country in order to try and integrate them into the new system. It is this attempt to establish a permanent, but flexible link between the ruling elites and the masses that leads us back to Antonio Gramsci and the concept of hegemony. At first sight, it may appear as if Gramsci did not intend his analysis to be applied to settings beyond Western industrialised states. Indeed, he explicitly distinguished between East and West, arguing:

> [I]n the East the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West there was a proper relation between the State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks.[119]

In the West, civil society was seen as a complex interplay of manifold actors such as trade unions, political parties, religious associations, publishing houses and so on. The more such groups flourish, whether in alliance or competition with each other, the more political society disappears.[120] By contrast, the Soviet Union was an example for a state in the East in which civil society still seemed poorly developed during the time of Gramsci's writing, i.e. until his untimely death in 1937.[121] The presence of a strong state is taken to indicate that coercion has become the dominant mode of power. For this reason, the reliance of dictatorships on force is seen to reveal their failure to create consent.[122] For modern analyses of totalitarian systems as the most pervasive form of dictatorship, it was thus suggested that civil society could only exist to a very limited extent, if at all.[123]

Against this line of argument, it is proposed here that whilst the sphere that Gramsci understood as civil society in democratic systems is different to that in totalitarian systems, it nonetheless exists as a sphere in which hegemony is being created. With regard to Gramsci, one might respond that his writings need to be understood in the context of his times. Since the 1920s, the advancement of technology, urbanisation, accessibility of the media and expansion of welfare have created a space

between the private realm and that of state institutions which, in the Soviet Union of Gramsci's lifetime, had not yet emerged in a comparable manner. With increasing modernisation, this space has expanded to a greater or lesser extent according to the political systems within which societies are embedded. Nonetheless, this space is present, representing a field of power relations that different groups would occupy and seek to dominate.[124] As a result, it becomes explicable why, from the 1970s onwards, prominent intellectuals in Central Eastern Europe embraced both the notion of a totalitarian regime and civil society as the sphere for gradual democratisation. In the following decades, activists and researchers alike highlighted the complexity of civil society under Soviet rule. Problematically, in Western scholarship in particular, these findings were seen to plunge the notion of totalitarianism – associated with total state control – deeper into crisis.[125]

In response to this impasse, I suggest that the concept of hegemony is key to acknowledging that not only democracies, but also totalitarian states develop and diversify. Nonetheless, their core features remain distinctive from authoritarian and democratic systems. In the case of Syria, the space for hegemony to be maintained is indeed reflected in the model of totalitarian systems presented above. At the base, the economy, albeit state-planned and entrenched in socialist ideals, is state capitalist. On the level of superstructure, the centre of power[126] and its control over the means of combat represent the political sphere of coercion. Crucially, the equivalent of civil society, i.e. the sphere of hegemony and consent through 'moral and intellectual leadership', is formed by ideology, the media, limited plurality of institutions and the mobilisation of the masses, while the space for counter-hegemony has been highly constrained. As Gramsci indicated,

> A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to 'liquidate', or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power (this is indeed one of the principle conditions for the winning of such power [in democratic settings, EM]); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well.[127]

The role of leadership through hegemony, I argue, has become as crucial in totalitarian systems as it appeared to Gramsci in democratic settings. The difference is that in the former, it is covert, while in the latter, it appears more clearly. In both cases, the emergence and daily work of such institutions are regulated by the law and are thus framed by coercion. Potentially, civil society groups in democratic systems could be either hegemonic or develop an oppositional agenda. In totalitarian frameworks, civil society groups are comparatively more restricted in number and outlook, with hegemonic groups being more directly supported and protected by the ruling elites. Nonetheless, coercion and hegemony remain substantially different. While coercion safeguards compliant behaviour through force, it cannot account for either co-optation or consent, and it leaves little room for explaining change.[128] This said, what is consent?

Historically, the notion of consent in the context of governance has undergone several shifts in meaning. The social contract theories of John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and, closer to our times, John Rawls, are concerned with the way in which individuals enter into tacit agreement with the state, how they can be seen to consent to being ruled by a certain form of government, or how they reaffirm their acceptance of it by their own will. Consent in social contract theory is often tied up with questions of legitimacy, morality and justice, thereby anchoring political rule in the belief in God, the general will or individual reason.[129] As a result, consent has become associated with procedures of democratic governance and its conditions, such as elections or freedom of speech.[130] Hence in this sense, consent based on social contract theory seems out of place in a totalitarian system that came into power by force. However, does the initial lack of consent equal an ongoing lack of consent? And is the question of consent inevitably linked to agreement with the political system as a whole?

Based on his extensive study of Gramsci's writings, Joseph Femia would answer these questions in the negative. While asserting that Gramsci's understanding of consent remains vague, he concludes that for Gramsci, consent is

> a psychological state, involving some kind of acceptance – not necessarily explicit – of the socio-political order or of certain vital aspects of that order. Gone are the moral and prescriptive

connotations which traditionally have been attached to the term: his conception of consent is purely descriptive, referring to an empirical, if not directly observable, fact. Thus, a hegemonic order need not incorporate liberal institutions and practices; indeed, it may be totalitarian in the strictest sense. To Gramsci, the contemporary liberal assumption that a people without the opportunity to express opposition or dissent cannot truly be said to consent would seem most curious. But, assuming that consent refers to a mental disposition, there are weaker and stronger, more passive and more active forms of it.[131]

In other words, the politics of consent might be more difficult to unravel in a totalitarian system that lacks 'liberal institutions', but this should not lead us to assume that consent does not arise. Also, consent is not absolute; it may only concern 'certain vital aspects' of governance. In democratic settings, elections enable individuals to pass their vote in favour of the political authority of a given party. Abstention can signal indifference or refusal to support the options available. However, the question whether the proportion of votes and abstentions reflects consent or dissent as the acceptance or rejection of the political system *per se* would be a matter of debate for policy makers and scholars alike.[132] In totalitarian systems, elections are likely to be unreliable indicators of consent to either the governing party or the political system in place.[133] Due to the system's repressive character, alternative methods of openly assessing public opinion, such as surveys, would not deliver dependable results either. Therefore, insight into political 'projects' other than elections is needed in order to evaluate consent.

Participation in mass organisations is one such project. Bearing in mind the fact that the ruling elites do not only dominate, but also depend on society in their quest for maintaining stability, the question of popular consent is a matter of interest not only for foreign political analysts, but also for policy makers within such systems. For our purposes, the study of mass organisations can help us gain a better understanding of processes of consent even in a non-democratic environment. For example, the composition of mass organisation membership and its fluctuation over the years can reveal some of the reasons for volunteers to join. Also, the way in which projects are drafted and services are provided to the wider population can illustrate whether,

or to what extent, mass organisations are concerned with the actual concerns of individuals, thus addressing matters of creating consent.

Recognising hegemony as an integral element of the governance of totalitarian systems addresses a major challenge brought forward against their allegedly static character: Hegemony is dynamic; the necessity of creating consent implies a two-way process of negotiation, adaptation and compromise not commonly associated with totalitarian governance. The attempt at securing social control through 'leadership' can be successful to various degrees – or it can fail. Unlike Karl Marx, Gramsci did not perceive superstructure to be a mere reflection of economic relations. Instead, he considered economic relations and the political and civil spheres to be mutually dependent.[134] For Gramsci, the partial incongruency between the economic and the non-economic, taken together with the freedom of civil society from coercion, opened up a new space that could, potentially, lead to revolution. Through certain institutions, in his mind the Italian Communist Party as one of the main oppositional forces against fascist rule, civil society could harbour forces that would challenge existing power relations through counter-hegemony and create the conditions for change.[135] Gramsci's political thought can thus help to understand not only revolution, but also gradual transition processes from a totalitarian to an authoritarian system (or indeed democratisation), as empirically shown by Andrzej Walicki in his work on Poland.[136] Models such as the above are never fully translated into reality: they will only ever be fulfilled to a certain degree, some aspects will be more pronounced than others, and at some times more than at others.[137] Not only do socio-economic conditions change, but power itself is constantly negotiated through hegemony, and only successfully exercised hegemony can ensure consolidation. In view of these dynamics, it can be assumed that a system can move not only from a totalitarian to an authoritarian stage but also back the other way. In the case of Syria, for example, the regime's brutal crackdown on Hamah and the subsequent takeover of religious institutions throughout the country can be held to represent a point in time when the regime's power appears to have been particularly *total*. By contrast, the Syrian Spring of 2000 represents a short period when control of the media and civil society organisations was relaxed, to some extent questioning the regime's practices, only to be followed by another crackdown. Only when a regime withdraws from its claim to perpetuate society in its

totality to focus instead on selected areas of governance would the shift to authoritarian rule be complete.

As a result, I argue that a conceptual framework that considers Syria under the Baʿth as a case of *imperfect totalitarianism* is the most useful.[138] With Linz, I consider the distinction between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes to be necessary and essential. Both are distinguished through their scope.[139] According to Linz, regimes can be considered to be authoritarian if they are

> political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.[140]

In the case of Syria under the Baʿth, these boundaries have clearly been transcended. The mobilisation of ordinary citizens, the establishment of a distinct – albeit changing – ideology, and the extent to which the lines between executive (including the military), legislative and judiciary powers have been blurred, all point beyond the limitations of authoritarian rule. In this sense, Syria also goes beyond cases of 'authoritarian upgrading' in the Arab Middle East.[141] Egypt under Mubarak, by way of contrast, does represent an authoritarian regime. Here, indeed, we see a regime that did not develop an ideology; it allowed for a regulated, but nonetheless flourishing, civil society to operate; and until the emergence of the military interim government under ʿAbd al-Fattah al-Sisi, by and large it maintained a separation of powers. Last but not least, since Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir's time, mass mobilisation has never been on the agenda.[142] While thus asserting that Syria's political system sets it apart from other regimes in the region, this book builds on previous literature that explored in great depth the regime's grip on state institutions and society through the means described above. It stresses the fact that even a regime that aspires to exercise total control can never fully implement this aim. Furthermore, understanding Syria as totalitarian rather than authoritarian leads us to focus on the role of the masses as one of the central points that clearly distinguishes totalitarian from authoritarian

rule in political science, and which has represented one of the prime concerns of the Baʿthist system. Read with Gramsci, mass organisations as implementers of public policy between the regime on the one hand and the masses on the other do not form part of political society, but form sites of the struggle for hegemony. In this regard, the General Union of Syrian Women addresses a field which is, indeed, of concern for the masses: that of welfare.

Totalitarianism, Welfare and Gender

While the oppressive nature of regimes such as that of Syria is blatantly obvious, criticisms of a bias in Western political analysis, especially towards socialist or communist totalitarian systems, still need to be taken seriously. In fact, the question of what positive contributions such regimes can offer to their citizens is rarely considered unless in the context of personal benefits that are considered illegitimate, such as nepotism or corruption. With regard to Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, the theologian Paul Tillich pointed out that totalitarian systems were based on myths – be it nationalism, in the case of fascist regimes, or social justice in that of communism.[143] Later though, political theorists such as Robert J. Osborn went beyond the myth to analyse in what ways welfare, together with social justice, really *were* integral parts of the system. For his study, Osborn defined welfare as 'the commitment by governments to enhance the well-being of their citizens'.[144] In the case of the Soviet Union, he concluded that welfare provision was tied not only to need, but also to labour, and was seen as a means to the end of increasing economic growth.[145] Whether the main motivation was labour mobilisation for the sake of production increase, or an economy-led shift in the country's political and social structure, communist welfare in the Soviet Union did provide extensive need-based services. These included, for example, food subsidies, pensions, housing, and social insurance, demonstrating a concern for women's needs that was otherwise unusual at the time.[146]

In this sense, welfare that is provided by the state is public welfare. Although a key aim of this study is to shed light on the way in which the Union as a Syrian mass organisation has contributed to the provision of welfare through social services, it does not set out to assess whether or not Baʿthist Syria can be considered to be a *welfare state*. Such an

assessment would encompass the study of a wide range of services and benefits lying beyond the scope of this book, such as housing or unemployment benefits. Also, whilst current scholarship is rich in empirical studies, comprehensive theoretical underpinnings of the socialist or communist non-democratic welfare state have yet to be elaborated.[147] Problematically, the vast majority of extant studies on the welfare state stress that the concept is inseparable from (liberal) democracies and capitalist economies.[148] Firstly, this may be attributed to the historical origins of the welfare state in Germany and Great Britain, where, in the late nineteenth century, industrialisation paved the way for social and workers' rights, and for the state's commitment to poverty reduction and the provision of public goods, such as infrastructure, by means of surpluses.[149] Classical welfare state models developed on the basis of such features can hence not be applied to developing countries under non-democratic rule. Secondly, the link between welfare, democracy and capitalism arises out of the relation between political systems, the redistribution of profits and resources and the individual. For example, Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufmann have pointed out that democracies are prone to electoral pressures; competing parties and individuals trying to win votes will tailor their programmes to suit their potential voters, whilst interest groups compete for benefits distributed through the state.[150] At the same time, major players in the economy, such as the financial service sector, manufacturing companies and others, exert pressure for the sake of maximising profits whilst contributing to the state's income through taxation.[151] As a result, to quote only one definition amongst many, Robert Goodin suggests that the welfare state is that state that 'intervenes (a) in a market economy (b) to meet certain of people's basic needs (c) through relatively direct means'.[152]

It could be argued that, in a socialist totalitarian system, these mechanisms would not take root due to their dictatorial leadership and state-led economies. However, Haggard and Kaufmann found, on the basis of extensive comparative studies in Latin America and Eastern Europe, that

[t]he highly comprehensive socialist welfare states provide the most obvious anomaly. Despite the most rigid authoritarian rule in our sample, socialist governments were committed to universal

and quite extensive social protections. They did so [...] as a component of a larger socialist economic project.[153]

An observation of Martin O'Brien and Sue Pennar's might offer the solution to this apparent paradox. They point out that whilst some studies consider the 'welfare state' as a separate political system, others treat it as 'a collection of organisations of policy formation and implementation', that is, one feature amongst many of 'classical' political systems such as democracies, monarchies and so on.[154] In addition, bearing in mind the hypothesis of this study – that even totalitarian regimes need to respond to needs – then it is clear that even without free elections, populations do exercise pressure on their regimes by the mere threat of potential civil discontent.[155]

Whilst the question of whether Baʿthist Syria can be considered a *welfare state* is left to future research, there can be no doubt that the provision of welfare services is different for men and women. Often, the academic literature has focused on the rich contribution that informal groups and NGOs both in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East have made to women's welfare.[156] However, the public policies encouraging such action, systematically and over a period of several decades, have been less well explored. The very establishment of a women's mass organisation led by women and acting as a provider of women's welfare indicates a strongly gendered approach to welfare in Baʿthist Syria. For several decades, feminists have called for research to consider how both reality and our understanding of it are gendered; that is, how characteristics ascribed to the male and female sex influence our perceptions and expectations of the role of men and women in society, and how these ideas are reflected in the make-up of state and society. Gender studies have uncovered the ways in which value systems derived from cultural, religious, economic or other notions often result in the subordination of women to men.[157] This is true for the Middle East as for other parts of the world, most fundamentally expressed in unequal citizenship rights for men and women.[158]

In this gendered nature of everyday life, public welfare is drawn up and implemented by the state, for example through services such as daycare for children or maternity/paternity leave, and has a direct impact on the lived reality of gender relations in two ways.[159] Firstly, feminists have criticised the way in which public welfare can replicate gender

hierarchies upheld in the private sphere through the state.[160] If, for example, public welfare does not provide access to affordable daycare for children, women will be less likely to enter or remain in the workforce. Secondly, however, it has been argued that public welfare can also serve as a means to achieve a shift in gender patterns through the state. Thus if, for instance, public childcare is introduced on a large scale, or both parents are held equally responsible for childcare by law, these measures encourage female employment, and with that a resulting shift in role models.[161] In the light of this debate, the setting up of the Union, its anticipated aims and its implemented projects all serve to delineate the Baʿthist understanding of gender and welfare through its actual policies.

Background to this Study

The present study relies on a wide range of sources collected at a time when Syria was a tightly controlled, yet peaceful country. These circumstances placed restraints on the work of researchers for ethical and practical reasons, explaining why research on political issues that is based on fieldwork in the country is notably rare. In view of the shortage of information on the Union in secondary literature published outside Syria, I made two fieldtrips in summer 2009 and spring 2010 to gather historical material on women's societies in Syria prior to 1967 and on the Union itself. This research was subject to research permissions by the Syrian authorities, including various ministries, which I was granted after several weeks. These permissions had to be renewed for each trip, and they were issued separately for each governorate in which I worked. Thanks to these opportunities, this book has been based on the critical analysis of primary and secondary sources, including statistical material, as well as interviews conducted with Union members, non-members and Party officials.[162] Originally, I had planned to make contact with the Union in the governorates of Damascus and Aleppo in order to compare the work of Union offices in each and to identify local differences. Consequently, I divided my time between both cities. By and large, most of my time during the first trip in 2009 was spent resolving bureaucratic issues, identifying sources and building contacts, whilst the second trip proved much more fruitful in terms of interviews. Since permission to resume my work in Damascus was delayed in 2010, part of the purpose of my planned third trip was to complete my interviews there, and to

interview more activists working in other organisations and initiatives. However, this turned out to be impossible due to the war, forcing me to drop the comparative angle. Unfortunately, this meant that some of the questions that emerged after I had fully analysed the sources available could not be answered. This problem is addressed as it arises in the text.

At the start of my research, I had no contacts within the Union. Thanks to the advise of a colleague at the Institut Français du Proche Orient (IFPO), I was pointed to the Union's executive office in Abu Rummana, Damascus. Upon my first visit to the office in summer 2009, I was greeted by guards and caretakers sharing a little room just next to the entrance, watching visitors coming and going. I was invited to enter the two-storey building and was sent upstairs to introduce myself to members of the foreign relations section. In the following weeks, I was allowed to visit different sections of the executive office, to observe their work and chat with leading members. Usually, I visited the office several times a week. This way, I gained my first insights into the Union's day-to-day work. I learned that for purposes of administration the Union was hierarchically organised, and was comprised of four levels, with the higher offices supervising the work of the lower offices: the executive office was at the top, with the administrative offices (one per governorate) below, then the village and suburban or urban associations, and lastly the neighbourhood units. When I asked for a list of offices so I could see the Union's work at all levels, to my surprise I was informed that no such list existed. It was only when I came to analyse my material that I understood that the reason for this situation was that most of the Union's activities were not in fact administered or held in Union-owned premises, but in private houses, Party offices and other state institutions. On my first and second trip, I also paid visits to the administrative office in Damascus as well as an association and a unit attached to a Union nursery, at first always accompanied by an experienced Union member from one of the other offices. I adopted the same approach in Aleppo as I had in Damascus, covering offices in the city centre as well as on the outskirts.[163] In addition to this top-down approach, I was given introductions to several women from well-known families who were keenly interested in my work on the Union. I am very much indebted to them for their help in setting up and often accompanying me to meetings with leading members of the Union, including some of the founding members of the Union in Aleppo (and

in two instances in Damascus) who had retired many years earlier. During these meetings, I combined informal chats with semi-structured in-depth interviews and open-ended life-history interviews, conducting a total of 20 over a period of six months. Of these, five interviewees were former founding members, two parliamentarians, two non-Union party officials, two housekeepers, four employees, and five current leading members.[164]

At the onset of my fieldwork, I intended to pursue a bottom-up approach rather than entering the Union at the top level. This, however, proved difficult. To begin with, I had planned on gathering a varied sample of representative interviews to include more low-ranking than high-ranking members. I had hoped to be able to establish contact with ordinary members by attending Union classes, and that I could observe meetings to get a clearer idea of the Union's day-to-day work. However, it was pointed out to me that only Union members could attend classes or meetings, and only Syrian nationals and residents could become Union members. As a German national and non-resident, I could not pursue this idea. Eventually, I conducted interviews with any members, and in some cases non-members, who were willing to contribute. As a result, the final sample of 20 interviewees is not representative, but it is varied in that it includes women and men from different age groups, social backgrounds and ranks within the Union.

A second bottom-up approach that I had to drop was the attempt to distribute questionnaires to a wider group of members to gain a better understanding of their motivations for joining. The questionnaires asked about a member's personal background including origin, age and family status, education, occupation, their first point of contact with the Union, reasons for joining, services used and benefits. As I could not attend Union classes, members of one of the offices in Aleppo office offered to distribute the questionnaires for me during meetings, and collect them afterwards. However, I became aware that rather than filling in the questionnaires anonymously and in private, as requested, members were asked to do so in a meeting supervised by the chairwoman, during which they read out their responses. Whilst I appreciated the attempt to support my research, this procedure put participants under pressure and did not allow for reliable results. Although I was unable to pursue this approach further, I wish to express my gratitude to everyone who made the effort to fill in these questionnaires.

I soon realised that the task of gathering written material, in addition to my interviews, would also be more difficult than I had expected. However, although I was told that the Union itself never systematically collected its publications, it turned out that members welcomed the idea of participating in documenting their organisation's history and helped me to retrieve information. Over time, I collected a complete set of the Union's national activity and organisational reports from 1967 to 2008. These reports were circulated internally, but have never been published for wider distribution.[165] They constitute the second pillar of this study. I was also supplied with old photographs and other Syrian publications on women, booklets and sometimes handwritten pieces unearthed from Union cupboards or private bookshelves.

Unexpectedly, I could retrieve relatively little material from the National Library in Damascus despite the best efforts of their staff. However, the library does hold a complete set of all editions of *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya* (The Arab Woman), the Union's magazine, which surely offers fascinating material for future further research. Some of the earliest monographs on women in Syria I found in the IFPO library. In addition, the National Archive in Damascus provided me with invaluable material on the pre-Union years. Sources held in the Staatsarchiv für Massenorganisationen und Parteien in Berlin allowed me to explore the Union's foreign relations from an outside perspective. In this book, all sources are quoted in English translation. Following the guidelines of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, all Arabic terms, names and places have been transliterated without the use of diacritics except *ʿayn* and *hamza*.

Chapter Outline

Within the framework of Baʿthist Syria as a totalitarian state, this study explores the role of the General Union of Syrian Women as a mass organisation between 1967 and 2008.[166] In doing so, it rests on the hypothesis that even a totalitarian system seeks to make a positive contribution to the well-being of its citizens through the provision of services and the introduction of mechanisms which can be characterised as need-receptive, and which ultimately create and negotiate consent among the wider population. Which continuities can we observe between pre-Baʿthist and Baʿthist forms of women's

activism? How did the Union as a mass organisation contribute to girls' and women's welfare in Syria? How did the organisation develop over the years in terms of active and wider membership, what were its ambitions, and what challenges did it face? Based on these findings, how has the understanding of women's welfare changed under the Baʿth, and to what extent was its work based on consent? And finally, what are the theoretical and practical implications of these findings for our understanding of totalitarian systems and current interventions in the Syrian war?

Since the Union is a women's organisation, the second chapter presents the origins of women's charitable work in Syria from the early twentieth century until the establishment of the Union. Through an analysis of early societies in this field, it outlines the understanding of women's welfare before the Baʿth came to power, with special attention paid to the personal biographies of their founders. This allows for a later comparison of their motivations, societal standing and relationships with those of Union members under the Baʿth regimes. Chapter 3 investigates how the idea of introducing mass organisations, which claimed to replace individual small societies, emerged both ideologically and practically under the Baʿth. The seizure of power by the Syrian branch of the Arab Socialist Baʿth Party through a military coup on 13 March 1963 is analysed as a turning point in Syrian state-building, eventually leading to the creation of mass organisations in the framework of a totalitarian system. This chapter also discusses the ideological roots of the concept of mass organisations in general, before looking at the emergence of mass organisations especially for women around the globe prior to 1966, when the Union's preparatory councils started to arrange for its setting up. Next, it points out what role the Baʿth assigned to women within the new system, as a result of which the Union was created. With these developments in mind, Syria's foreign relations between 1963 and 1966, and the international contacts of earlier women societies, are analysed so as to identify the roots of the Syrian organisation. Against this backdrop, Chapter 4 examines the composition of Union membership between 1967 and 2008. Based on a discussion of the space for consent in a totalitarian setting, the extent to which membership with the Union was spontaneous, i.e. voluntary, or directed by the regime, is evaluated using quantitative data on members' education, occupation and membership in the Baʿth Party, combined

with an analysis of recruitment strategies. Chapter 5 sheds light on the social services the Union provides, aiming to explain how the Baʿthist vision of women's welfare expressed therein differs from earlier activities. Focusing on the Union's outreach activities, this chapter analyses the Union's position vis-à-vis the wider population and its role in identifying local needs and negotiating interests. Chapter 6 takes a look at the Union's internal setup and procedures, providing insight into the Union's day-to-day work through its wider administrative structure. This chapter also highlights the common challenges that active members face in their engagement, delineates the incentives for women to dedicate many years of their lives to this form of voluntary work, and explores the space of hegemony within the organisation. Finally, the conclusion summarises these findings by pointing out in what ways the Union contributed to the welfare and the development of women in Syria at the interface of public policies and voluntary mobilisation. Based on the combination of concepts of totalitarianism and Gramscian hegemony outlined above, it discusses the extent to which the Union as a mass organisation has created or depended on consent in spite of its totalitarian context. This said, this work should not be misused in defense of totalitarian practice. On the contrary, it is intended to uncover the full complexity of totalitarian governance in order to explain some of the reasons as to why it is still persisting. Indeed, it makes the case that totalitarianism, as a political system, is not as all-encompassing as it has long been assumed, but that it reaches much deeper than previously recognised. In this way, I argue that a more nuanced insight into the interdependence of regimes and populations in totalitarian settings is indispensable for understanding their weaknesses and strengths, their vulnerability, their resilience, and their potential for change. In this sense, this book seeks to foreground previously hidden dynamics of the negotiation of power in modern-day Syria in the quest for hegemony, which remains ongoing even in the current war.

CHAPTER 1

THE ROOTS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN SYRIA

In the region that comprises Syria today, the cornerstone of women's welfare initiatives was laid by private societies more than half a century before the General Union of Syrian Women was born. Shaped by their founding members, these initiatives provide an insight into the concept of women's welfare before the Baʿth came to power. At times the activities of these societies, for example in the fields of literacy or social work, were accompanied by a campaign for political rights. Against the background of the end of Ottoman rule, then the Mandate and lastly post-independence politics, this chapter uncovers the work of these early initiatives.

The Setting: Breakdown of the Ottoman Empire, Rise of Arab Nationalism, and the Syrian Elite under the Mandate

In the early twentieth century, women's engagement in benevolent work in the region was closely linked to a local elite of affluent families. Both under the Ottomans and the French, this elite was composed of the families of notables who occupied leading positions in the state administration or the law courts, often for many generations, and whose wealth was derived from land ownership and commercial enterprise.[1]

Yet this structure was unsettled from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Attempts by the Ottomans to strengthen their influence throughout the Empire through major reforms (Tanzimat) in 1839 and 1856 prompted a growing awareness of a distinctly Arab identity, especially within these circles.[2] Wanting to hold on to the established order, some members of these families envisaged reforms such as greater Arab representation in the Ottoman administration or the use of Arabic as an official language.[3] Others, convening in secrecy, aimed at removing Ottoman domination altogether and raised demands for Arab independence.[4] In growing numbers, these men formed Arab nationalist groups such as al-ʿAhd (Covenant Society), al-Fatat (Young Arab Society) as well as the Arab Decentralisation Party and others. These oppositional activities brought the risk of arrest and even execution, particularly in Damascus and Beirut.[5]

The involvement of the Ottoman Empire in World War I in 1914 seemed to turn the tide in favour of such nationalist groups.[6] Their members secretly established contact with Sharif Husayn of Mecca who, as the respected ruler over the Muslim Holy Places, had come to oppose Ottoman efforts to diminish his influence in the Hijaz.[7] Amir Faysal, one of the sons of Sharif Husayn, led the successful Arab Revolt of 1916–18 to bring about Arab independence.[8] However, in the years that followed, Faysal's attempts to establish a civil government were severely impeded by the presence of French and British troops in the former Ottoman territories of the Middle East.[9] With peace negotiations pending, the area of Iraq was placed under British administration, while the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA) for Syria and Palestine was divided into three parts: Arab (inner Syria/Jordan) under Faysal, British (Palestine) and French (Lebanon and coastal Syria).[10] Notwithstanding the fact that Faysal's government held elections for a national assembly that drew on representatives from all three OETAs and called for the region to be independent, France and Britain pursued their own agenda.[11] In secret correspondence with Sharif Husayn, Sir Henry McMahon, acting for the British government, had initially pledged support for a united and independent Arab state. However, the Sykes–Picot agreement of 16 May 1916 between Britain and France, also concluded in secret, stipulated the division of the Middle East into a French and a British zone. In addition, there was to be an Arab independent state and the area of Palestine would be put under

international administration.[12] Although British troops withdrew in 1919, the San Remo Conference decided in April 1920 that indeed, the former Ottoman territories would be divided into a French zone in the north (Syria and Lebanon) and a British zone in the south (Iraq and Palestine). The latter was bound to implement the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 that declared support for the establishment of 'a national home for the Jewish people'.[13] In contravention of the Husayn–McMahon correspondence, both parts were to be administered through mandates.[14] Since further negotiations proved of no avail, Arab troops rushed to impede the advancement of French deployments towards Damascus. They were defeated at the pass of Maysalun on 25 July 1920. Faysal, who had been crowned king of Syria and Palestine in 1920, was forced to leave the country, and French troops occupied the whole Syrian and Lebanese territory.[15]

These upheavals reverberated not only in the public sphere but also at home. Women in the higher circles of society became involved in their male relatives' debates on politics and were, in some instances, directly affected by the arrests, dismissals or executions of their husbands, sons and fathers. Meanwhile, the middle and labouring classes felt the strains of the war in the shortage of foodstuffs, with an estimated 300,000 becoming victims of hunger and disease.[16] Rather than remaining mere witnesses to these events, women from all classes, under the Ottomans as well as later under the French, actively supported the men in their fight for independence. They provided them with food and clothes, took care of the wounded, loaded weapons, and even fought.[17] Many delivered secret messages to the resistance fighters, smuggled weapons hidden under their garments or in fruit baskets, or participated in demonstrations.[18] Some even gave their lives. One such was Salma bint Muhammad Dib Qirqura who died whilst carrying munitions in a battle against the French at Jabal al-Salihiyya in Damascus.[19]

In the years to come, Arab nationalism would continue to serve as a focal point for resistance against on-going foreign domination, even after the dream of a pan-Arab kingdom had been shattered by the colonial powers. It is within the context of these developments that, in addition to their immediate involvement during periods of unrest, if not violent conflict, women of high social standing began setting up private societies, most of which were exclusively dedicated to women's and children's issues, fields that had been otherwise neglected. Some were

concerned with education, whilst others focused on providing health services or fostering interest in culture and the arts.[20] Often, one benefactor would support several projects at the same time. Although mostly supported by their own families, these women's efforts often met with strong disapproval from more traditional segments of society.[21]

Women's Societies for Education

Responding to need, the education of girls represented a major field of social engagement for Syria's elite women in the early twentieth century. The lack of state provision of education in fact applied to both sexes, but females were particularly badly off in this respect. The Ottoman administration in what was to become Syria had introduced Western-style government schools for both sexes from the mid-nineteenth century to supplement the traditional religious education undertaken in Muslim *kuttab* (Qur'an schools) based on memorising the Qur'an. Foreign Protestant and Catholic missionary schools had opened their doors even earlier.[22] Although government schools increasingly came to outweigh private and foreign schools during the Mandate, non-government schools were still educating more than 40 per cent of all pupils at independence.[23] Data on overall literacy rates in the Syrian territories during the first half of the twentieth century is fragmentary. However, it has been estimated that in 1931 less than a third of the population was literate, with considerable regional differences.[24] Although elementary schooling became compulsory in that year, fewer than half of all children were actually enrolled in any primary school at all by 1946.[25] As a result, by 1970 the country's overall illiteracy rate for ten year olds and over was 53.5 per cent, affecting three out of ten males but as many as seven out of ten females.[26] Indeed, although overall school enrolment increased, female school attendance effectively dropped after independence.[27] Following the bombing of Damascus by the French in 1945, most private/foreign schools were closed, but it had been those institutions that provided more (often Christian) schools for girls across the country, educating more than half of all female students.[28]

Generally, girls were more likely to attend formal schooling in the cities than in the countryside, and this is likely to have been matched by a concentration of private and foreign schools in urban areas.[29]

In addition, economic need was often an obstacle to schooling, especially for girls. After 1930 state-run schools were free at elementary level but private schools and schools above primary level were generally not. With only a limited number of bursaries, this made them unaffordable for most. Until 1950, even state schools charged fees at preparatory and secondary level, although these were often reduced. By comparison, private and foreign schools were rather expensive. Moreover, even if schooling was free, the costs of textbooks and transport to school were beyond the reach of many families in the countryside – either for boys or girls.[30] Large families were still common in the 1940s and for many decades to follow; if education could be afforded at all, boys were given preference over girls as they were seen as the future heads of households and the main providers for their families.[31] The education of girls was often considered unnecessary, while their contribution to household chores and labour in the fields was crucial.[32] Fears were even expressed that educating girls would make them dissatisfied with their traditional role, or that allowing them outside the house to attend school would expose them to moral corruption.[33]

For those who did attend schools, the education system comprised several stages. Children at the age of six attended either five years of primary school (*madrasa awwaliyya*) – though in fact many schools did not offer all five grades[34] – or four years of elementary school (*madrasa ibtida'iyya*), the latter mostly being offered in the countryside with a reduced and season-dependent curriculum.[35] Depending on their grades, pupils were admitted to secondary schooling, which was made up of a four-year preparatory and a three-year secondary stage.[36] Preparatory schooling ended with different types of certificates, but on the completion of primary school students could choose to attend complementary courses in technical, commercial and agricultural schools, leading to a general or vocational *brevet*, rather than go on to secondary school.[37] After the 1943 reforms, complementary courses were transformed into separate vocational schools, and secondary schooling was shortened to six years.[38] After graduation, students who held either the *brevet* or had completed the full course of secondary schooling were equally eligible to apply to a teachers' college for between one and three years of study.[39] These programmes were free of charge, and students were provided with board and lodging by the state.[40] Access to the teachers' colleges as well as to the School of Nursing and Midwifery were

regulated by the state, depending on needs and funds.[41] Lastly, from 1923 onwards, secondary education also opened the path to attending the Syrian University.[42]

In practice, if education as such remained a privilege, schooling above primary level was exceptional. Of all students in education in 1944–5, 92.1 per cent were at primary school level. Only 7.4 per cent could be found at secondary school level or teachers' college. Just 0.5 per cent attended university. By 1970, education at secondary level had become more accessible: 72.7 per cent of all students were enrolled in primary schooling, 25.1 per cent were at secondary school level, the higher institutes introduced in 1955 or teachers' college, while 2.3 per cent attended university.[43] However, as reflected in overall literacy figures, significantly fewer girls than boys were enrolled at all levels, with the exception of the teachers' colleges, where admission was directed by the state.[44] In addition, the availability of certain forms of schooling was very limited. For example, by 1944–5, teachers' colleges existed only in Damascus and Aleppo.[45] Furthermore, until independence, students from across the territories had to move to Damascus to pursue their university studies. Whilst the university was known as the hub of Syrian nationalism, it offered only a limited number of subjects. In 1946 an additional branch was founded in Aleppo.[46]

It is against this background of very low overall literacy rates, few schools being open to girls, and the pressure of socio-economic conditions favouring boys' education that Syrian women started to address the deficiencies in girls' education by launching their own initiatives. Most of the societies for which some detail is available were founded in Damascus, and reveal a complex net of relationships among a handful of families. Shortly after World War I, a women's society called Nur al-Fayhaʾ (Light of Damascus) was set up, leading to the foundation of a school for girls whose fathers had lost their lives fighting against the Ottomans: the Madrasat banat al-shuhadaʾ (School for Daughters of Martyrs). In addition, Nur al-Fayhaʾ opened a library.[47] Among the founding members were Nazik al-ʿAbid and Mari ʿAjami,[48] two of the first women to be involved in such charitable work that we can trace. Nazik al-ʿAbid was born into an affluent Damascene family, the daughter of Mustafa al-ʿAbid, a Damascene notable in charge of the administrative district of Kirk and the *vilayet* of Mosul in Iraq under the Ottomans, and her mother Farida al-Jalad.[49] Like her father, her paternal

uncle Ahmad ʿIzza al-ʿAbid (1849–1924) featured prominently in the Ottoman administration as a judge, eventually becoming a private advisor to the Sultan. Following the 1908 revolution, both he and his son Muhammad al-ʿAbid (1868–1939) were forced into exile in Egypt, returning to Syria ten years later.[50] Muhammad al-ʿAbid, Nazik's cousin, later became the first Syrian president under the French for four years from 1932. The councils that were first appointed in each territory at the beginning of the Mandate began to be replaced by representative bodies in 1923,[51] and the first 'Syrian' parliamentary election was held in 1927. By this time, an alliance of nationalists had formed the National Bloc, which emerged as the major opposition force. Issues of debate between government and opposition included the highly controversial draft of a Franco-Syrian Treaty proposed in 1933, which laid down the terms for relations between Syria and France after the end of the Mandate.[52] Its ratification by the Chamber was delayed due to demonstrations and riots, mainly because the treaty did not include the Druze and Alawi territories in post-Mandate Syria.[53] It is in the context of these negotiations between the French and the official main opposition force in parliament, the National Bloc, that the position of its leader Muhammad al-ʿAbid was discredited, leading to his resignation in 1936.[54] Despite his support of charities to the poor, Muhammad al-ʿAbid's pro-French leanings made him unpopular and he was possibly envied for his fortune, considering that some people believed him to be the wealthiest man in Damascus, or even in Syria.[55]

Thus, philanthropy ran deep in Nazik al-ʿAbid's family. Her family's favourable attitude towards the education of girls allowed her to attend various Turkish, American and French schools in Turkey, where her father was then living, and she became acquainted with foreign languages, literature, music and the arts. Back in Syria, she decided to open Nur al-Fayhaʾ as a society dedicated especially to the education of Muslim girls. This idea stemmed from her realisation that, while private education was available for Christian girls, for Muslim girls it was not. Nonetheless, she was joined by a Christian in this enterprise. Born in Damascus, Mari ʿAjami (1888–1965) also received her education in foreign schools – in her case Russian and Irish.[56] We know that she was a Greek Orthodox Christian, but none of the available sources provide any more information on her family background. After school, Mari ʿAjami moved to Lebanon to study nursing at the American University

of Beirut but did not finish her degree due to health problems.[57] Instead, she worked as a teacher in Lebanon and Egypt before returning to Syria around 1910.[58] Best known as a critical and prolific writer in the Egyptian and Syrian press, Mari ʿAjami joined forces with Nazik al-ʿAbid in 1920, heading the Madrasat banat al-shuhada' until it was closed down by the French.[59]

Another private school set up by a women's society in Damascus was the Dawhat al-adab (Tree of Social Graces), which opened in 1931. From the start, the explicit aim of the Dawha was to offer nationalist education (*tarbiyya qawmiyya*) to female students, which at that time meant an education based on their being Arab in marked distinction to their being Ottoman or French. The Dawha set up classes at nursery, primary and secondary level for day, and later boarding, students,[60] paid for by donations from members of the society. The first to open were the primary classes, followed by preparatory and secondary classes in 1936. Although the society vowed to abstain from politics and political parties in its statute,[61] teachers at the school were active in the resistance during the Mandate.[62] By the end of the Mandate, it was one out of 29 schools offering secondary education to girls in the country.[63] The school proved so successful that in 1949 a boarding school was added, allowing it to

Figure 1.1   Members of the Dawhat al-adab (1947)

open its doors to girls from all over Syria and other Arab countries for the first time. A year later, a summer school held in Bludan was also started.[64] A picture of Dawha students taken in 1947 (Figure 1.1) reveals a rather unexpected scene: It shows a group of some 20 young women fashionably dressed in knee-long skirts and trousers, some wearing sunglasses, and all of them with their hair uncovered.[65]

The Dawha had been founded as a women's society by ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri and others three years before the founding of the school in 1931.[66] It remained ʿAdila Bayyhum's main educational project, and she became one of the leading figures in Syrian women's charitable work from the 1930s onwards. Originally, though, she was from a prominent and wealthy Sunni family in Beirut, born in either 1900 or 1902.[67] As the daughter of ʿAbd al-Rahim Bayyhum, ʿAdila attended a Prussian school in Beirut and received additional private tuition in French and Arabic. ʿAdila was active in women's groups from a young age.[68] Her earliest contact with educational charitable work seems to have been the founding of the Jamʿiyyat yaqazat al-fatat al-ʿarabiyya (Society for the Awakening of Arab Girls), offering classes to girls from poor families in Beirut in 1915. Also, she had been involved with the establishment of the Umur al-khayriyya li'l-fatayat (Girls' Benevolent Society) back in Beirut, which ran a club and a school in which members of the society taught voluntarily.[69] ʿAdila Bayyhum moved to Damascus in 1922 on her marriage to Amir Mukhtar, a judge from the Jazaʾiri family, with whom she would have two children.[70] Her experiences from her time in Beirut must surely have benefitted her later work in Syria.

One year before the establishment of the Dawha, ʿAdila Bayyhum witnessed the opening of another women's society in Damascus concerned with education, the Jamʿiyyat al-dur li'l-muʿallimat (Society for Women Teachers' Colleges). This was started on the initiative of a young woman, only 15 years old at the time, called Thurayya al-Hafiz (1912–2000). Like ʿAdila Bayyhum, Thurayya had not been born in Damascus, but in Istanbul, although she had lived in Damascus since the age of two.[71] Her father, Amin Lutfi al-Hafiz, co-founder of the al-ʿAhd Party, was executed in 1916 for his fierce opposition to the ongoing Turkification of the Ottoman Empire.[72] Her mother, from the prominent merchant Abu Sumaraʾ clan in Damascus, then married Mustafa al-Shihabi (1893–1968), a member of the well-known family of

Hasbayya, which is still living today in Lebanon. Mustafa al-Shihabi had studied in France and pursued a successful career, first in the Ottoman administration, then in Mandate Syria, occupying various governmental positions, although he had secretly joined the ʿAhd during World War I. In 1936 he was a member of the same National Bloc delegation to the French that led to the resignation of Nazik al-ʿAbid's cousin, Muhammad al-ʿAbid, from the presidency.[73]

Supported by her stepfather, Thurayya completed her primary education and entered the Teachers' College in Damascus in 1926.[74] Her stepfather's moral and financial support would have been invaluable to Thurayya in realising her ambitious plan to establish the Jamʿiyyat al-dur li'l-muʿallimat, but she also remembered having been encouraged by Muhammad ʿAli al-Sarraj and Farida Qabbash, who had set up the Jamʿiyyat li-musaʿadat al-mankubin fi l-fayyadan (Society for the Aid of Flood Victims).[75] Her stepfather helped her draw up the rules for her group, which aimed to provide classes in literacy, the reading of the Qurʾan, and traditional handicrafts. It also offered regular lectures. A distinguished audience was present at Thurayya al-Hafiz's opening lecture: apart from ʿAdila Bayyhum, all the women of the ʿAzm family are said to have attended, although their full names are unfortunately not recorded. The ʿAzm family had been one of the most influential in Ottoman Syria, and traditionally provided the governor of Damascus.[76] The ʿAzms had accumulated considerable wealth under the Ottomans, and many had occupied leading positions before the 1908 revolution but were subsequently dismissed for rejecting the Turkification programme. They found it difficult to resume a prominent role in Syrian politics under the French.[77] The women of the ʿAzm family are recorded as having made donations to Thurayya al-Hafiz's society,[78] but none of them appears from the sources to have run their own charitable work, although they re-emerge in the context of ʿAdila Bayyhum's work a few years later.

The next educational project of a similar scope to the Nur al-Fayhaʾ, the Dawhat al-adab and the Jamʿiyyat al-dur li'l-muʿallimat was launched only after the end of the Mandate. In 1955, a group of teachers, university students and students of the Teachers' College for Women in Damascus, most of whom were members of a political party by this time, founded the Jamʿiyyat irshad al-fatat al-ʿarabiyya (Society for the Guidance of the Arab Girl).[79] Neither Nazik al-ʿAbid, Mari

'Ajami, 'Adila Bayyhum nor Thurayya al-Hafiz, who were in their 40s, 50s and 60s at the time, are mentioned in connection with the Jam'iyyat irshad al-fatat al-'arabiyya. However, amongst its young founders was Su'ad al-'Abd Allah (born 1931), who would later become the new face of the General Union of Syrian Women in 1967. Interestingly, Su'ad al-'Abd Allah's background was markedly different from that of the early pioneers. Rather than coming from Damascus, Istanbul, or Beirut, Su'ad was born in a small Syrian village in the mountains around Banyas. Although her parents Wajih al-'Abd Allah and Habbaba al-Khayr regarded her education, and that of her siblings, as a priority, her father's work as a financial employee meant the family had to move frequently, and Su'ad attended schools in al-Ladhiqiyya, Tartous and Masyaf before moving with her sister to her uncle's house in Hums in order to be within reach of a preparatory school. After working as a teacher to earn a salary to help her father pay for her further education, she completed her secondary schooling and enrolled at the University of Damascus. By that time she had become a member of the Ba'th Party and actively participated in demonstrations as well as writing in support of the Party. It was during these years that Su'ad al-'Abd Allah was involved in setting up the Jam'iyyat irshad al-fatat al-'arabiyya.[80]

As an initiative led by female students, the main aim of the society was to reduce the very high rate of illiteracy amongst females in the country. To this end, they opened literacy centres in which members taught reading and writing for nominal salaries. Financially, they relied on limited support from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, but mostly funded themselves on the basis of membership fees and the private means of members. As the society steadily grew in numbers, it became active in the Syrian countryside. Once the establishment of a new centre had been decided, the members would organise themselves in groups, commute to the surrounding villages on a regular basis and walk from door to door to try to convince husbands and fathers to allow female family members to attend their literacy classes.[81] At first they used books designed to teach boys how to read and write, but successful graduates of the society's literacy classes later developed their own book, *Irshad al-fatat al-'arabiyya*. Additionally, the society tied its literacy programmes in with vocational training, in particular sewing and embroidery.[82] In 1956,

one year after the society's establishment, Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah left the initiative and the country to continue her studies in Cairo.[83]

Initially, therefore, women of privileged families founded societies that helped them to establish their own schools. They had identified a gap in the provision of state schooling for girls, which their privately funded initiatives aimed to fill. In so doing, the Madrasat banat al-shuhada' and the Dawha aimed to educate a new generation of nationalist women in opposition to the Mandate state. Although the agenda of the Jamʿiyyat al-dur li'l-muʿallimat is less clear, it is likely to have taken a similar stance, considering the family background of Thurayya al-Hafiz. Open to the daughters of soldiers, or to girls whose parents could not otherwise afford their education, these initiatives provided education as a form of welfare. Although they were not targeting the elite, the focus of their activities naturally remained in Damascus, where they were based. By contrast, the Jamʿiyyat irshad al-fatat al-ʿarabiyya represented a network of students and teachers going beyond the urban capital to visit remote areas in order to target illiterate girls outside the reach of formal schooling. Set up after the end of the Mandate, the society drew on both private funding and state support. Amongst its members, women like Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah belonged to the new middle class with fewer financial means at their disposal than the pioneers had had but with new political ambitions such as the Baʿthist aim of improving the situation of the deprived masses.

Vocational Training

While education was one of the primary concerns of early initiatives for the welfare of girls and women in the first half of the twentieth century, the idea of creating employment opportunities especially for women, and offering special training, was not yet widespread. In fact, little is known about women's work during that time. Agriculture was the major source of income for most people before World War I, while about 10 to 15 per cent of the workforce is estimated to have been employed in industry.[84] At the time, Syrian industrial production was largely carried out in artisanal workshops and at home, with only very little factory production.[85] Syria was particularly strong in the production of cotton, silk and woollen textiles, metal goods, and jewelry. With few exceptions, weaving and carpet-making were mostly done at home.[86] Since the late

nineteenth century women from the rural and urban poor had been employed as pieceworkers in weaving or spinning.[87] They were paid less than men, while their labour was more efficient than that of children and, unlike men, they rarely joined organised protests against low wages, making their employment attractive.[88] Outside agriculture and the textile industry, women to a lesser extent worked as servants, midwives, nurses, in body decorating and grooming, or as magicians and sorcerers.[89] Some worked in tobacco factories, and by 1945 a few hundred were employed as teachers.[90] However, it is impossible to obtain accurate figures for female employment in general before independence.

This was the setting in which, a few years after her move from Lebanon to Syria, ʿAdila Bayyhum founded the Jamʿiyyat yaqazat al-marʾa al-shamiyya (Society for the Awakening of Damascene Women) in 1927. Its aim was to encourage traditional handicrafts amongst women in the countryside, allowing them to earn a modest income.[91] According to Sami Moubayed, Nazik al-ʿAbid joined ʿAdila Bayyhum in this initiative. However, in the same year, she had to flee Syria for Lebanon following a French warrant for her arrest. In Beirut, she married into ʿAdila's Bayyhum's family by becoming the wife of Muhammad Jamil Bayyhum.[92] For Nazik al-ʿAbid, this marked the end of her involvement in Syrian women's societies but heralded the beginning of her charitable work in Lebanon.[93]

As for ʿAdila Bayyhum, she was able once again to draw on her earlier experiences in Beirut, where she had opened the Nadi al-banat al-muslimat (Muslim Girls' Club), which offered handicraft classes alongside lessons in English and regular lectures on literature and religion. This club was linked to the Beiruti educational initiative mentioned above, the Umur al-khayriyya li'l-fatayat, and at the advent of World War I the society maintained a factory employing 1,800 female workers in weaving, spinning, and various needlecrafts. In addition to their regular wages, workers were also given free meals.[94] Unfortunately, it is not known whether the Jamʿiyyat yaqazat al-marʾa al-shamiyya, which continued to exist until at least 1975,[95] ever reached a similar scale. Generally, formal female employment remained an exception to the rule, even in later years. In 1960, only 7.1 per cent of the total workforce were women.[96] Amongst the female workforce, 51.7 per cent worked in agriculture, 28.3 per cent in the public sector, 8.2 per cent in manufacturing and the remaining 11.8 per cent in trade, transport and other fields.[97] Such low employment

figures amongst women in the 1960s illustrate how exceptional projects such as the Jam'iyyat yaqazat al-mar'a al-shamiyya must have been 50 years earlier. Even if they were contributing to their families' livelihood informally, women's employment was clearly not encouraged, leaving them dependent on their relatives.

Healthcare, Poverty Relief, First Aid and Civil Defence

Healthcare and civil defence were two other areas in which women's private societies emerged to provide welfare, in these cases not only for women. Most of these health initiatives were set up at a time when the medical care of French troops in Syria and Lebanon was given priority by the Mandate over the treatment of common diseases such as gastroenteritis among the population, despite high infant mortality rates. The care of civilians was delegated to the Red Cross, which set up mothers' societies in the bigger cities, founded clinics, schools and orphanages and ran programmes for nurses. Welfare programmes included the Nuqtat al-halib (Drop of Milk Society) established in Syria in 1922, which distributed bottles of sterilised milk, food and clothes to the poor and their children. Both the Red Cross and the Nuqtat al-halib were funded and directed by the French, but while the Red Cross was headed by the wife of the French high commissioner as honorary president, the wife of the Syrian governor-general took on the same role for the Nuqtat al-halib, and its daily work was based on the efforts of volunteers.[98] In Syria, the Nuqtat was maintained after the French withdrawal, and it remained active until at least 1975.[99]

In general, local health departments faced struggles with malaria, poor sanitary conditions, and restricted access to clean drinking water. Although the availability of medical care increased under the French, by 1946 Syria still numbered only 35 hospitals with 1,700 beds, mainly concentrated in urban centres. This deprived large sections of the population, amounting to 3.5 million people, of access to treatment.[100] At a time when birth and infant mortality rates were high, women were particularly hard hit by the shortage of medical facilities and staff.[101] Once again, women's private societies attempted to provide alternatives to inadequate state services. In 1927, a society called Dar kafala al-fatat (House for Girls' Protection) opened its doors to offer basic education, vocational skills and free medical care to orphaned girls. This society was

set up by Thurayya al-Hafiz together with a certain Sunya Qabbani.[102] Thurayya also founded the Jamʿiyyat al-ʿinaya bi-mashfa al-sill (Society for the Treatment of Tuberculosis) at an unknown date to collect donations to help those infected with the disease.[103] However, it appears that most societies working in the field of health and poverty relief were established only after independence, though this may due to a lack of source material. Some of these later societies aimed at easing the situation of widows or supported prisoners and their families.[104] Others were dedicated to the elderly, or took care of abandoned babies.[105] In some instances, the exact purpose of such societies remains unclear.[106]

These civilian activities were complemented by women's societies that emerged in response to armed conflict. Amongst these, the Najmat al-hamraʾ (Red Star), founded in 1920, was an offshoot of the Nur al-Fayhaʾ, both of which were initiated by Nazik al-ʿAbid. As the counterpart of the French Red Cross, they assisted doctors and nurses in permanent and mobile hospitals to support King Faysal's troops, and even accompanied them into the battle of Maysalun.[107] Nazik al-ʿAbid

Figure 1.2 Members of the Women's Union at the Red Crescent, Damascus (1948)

was thereafter described as a war heroine.[108] In addition, in 1922, she founded the Hilal al-Ahmar (Red Crescent).[109] The French, however, regarded the Najmat al-hamra' and the school of Nur al-Fayha', the Madrasat banat al-shuhada', as undermining the Mandate even though they partly drew on French funds, and they were shut down.[110]

During the French bombing of Damascus on 29 May 1945, women helped to treat the wounded on the streets and in hospitals, whilst others distributed food. They volunteered through the Ittihad al-ʿarabi al-nisaʾi fi Dimashq, the first Arab Women's Union in Damascus, which had been set up by ʿAdila Bayyhum in 1933,[111] and were also organised into sewing clothes for Syrian soldiers and later to collect money, food and clothes for the Palestinian refugees who streamed into the country after the 1948 war.[112] Similar ideas lay behind the Jamʿiyyat al-isʿaf al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (Society for Women's First Aid), which was established in Damascus in 1945.[113] In addition to providing first aid and nursing the wounded, it also set up its own hospitals and emergency centres thereafter to offer free treatment to the sick and the poor.[114] Other societies dedicated their work to the families of wounded or fallen soldiers. Amongst these were the Riʿayat al-jundi (Society for the Care of Soldiers) launched by Thurayya al-Hafiz in 1945, and the Jamʿiyyat usrat al-jundi (Society for the Family of the Soldier).[115]

Amongst other societies providing health and social services in times of both peace and war was the Rabitat al-nisaʾ al-suriyyat li-himayat al-umuma waʾl-tufula (Syrian Women's League for the Protection of Mothers and Children), established in 1948. Unlike all other groups mentioned here, the Rabita was not a private initiative but had been founded by the Syrian Communist Party (SCP). Claiming equal rights for women in general, it endeavoured to improve the situation of female workers and their children.[116] In the case of Hums, it did so by establishing emergency centres, a nursery, and giving out free medication, starting in 1957.[117] The case of Hums is documented in the biography of Najah Saʿati, who joined with several other women in setting up this branch at that time and put her skills at the disposal of the Party. Her account offers an alternative perspective on women's welfare in Syria before 1963. Najah Saʿati was born in Hums in 1924, and formally joined the SCP at the age of 33. Her father, Adib Saʿati, was a journalist. After attending a school run by Roman Catholic nuns, Najah had to move to Damascus to complete her secondary education.

She went on to study medicine in Damascus, one of only three young women to do so at the time, and in 1949 graduated in pharmacy as the only female student. Upon her graduation, she returned to Hums, where she worked for the local branch of the Najmat al-hamraʾ and opened her own pharmacy.[118] In 1952, she married Badr al-Din al-Sibaʿi, a doctor of law, who like her brother was a member of the SCP. Najah's first personal contact with the Party occurred in 1955 when she was asked to attend the International Women's Democratic Union's Conference in Lausanne as the Communist Party delegate for Hums.[119] It was here that she became acquainted with Khalid Bakdash, the SCP general secretary. In the following decades, Najah Saʿati attended dozens of international conferences on behalf of the SCP. During the tripartite attack on Egypt by Israel, France and Great Britain after the nationalisation of the Suez canal, when pipelines of the Iraqi Petroleum Company in Syria were blown up, Najah transformed her pharmacy into a first aid station for the wounded. However, following a wave of arrests, she and her husband fled to live in Moscow for six years in the late 1950s, thus bringing a temporary end to her social engagement in Syria.[120] Another society which was similar to the Rabita in that it operated in several governorates was the Jamʿiyyat al-marʾa al-ʿarabiyya (Society for the Arab Woman) established in 1959. In addition to its health and social services, this society also ran nurseries and literacy classes.[121]

Although women's societies were active during times of armed conflict before independence, it appears that it was only after the declaration of the state of Israel and the war that followed that women and girls in Syria could volunteer to be trained in civil defence. In some instances, this also included shooting practice.[122] In May 1956, the Lajna farʿiyya nisaʾiyya li'l-difaʿ al-madani (Women's Branch of the Committee for Civil Defence) was founded in Damascus shortly before the Suez Crisis by ʿAdila Bayyhum and a group of women to provide funding and support to refugee centres in times of crisis through volunteers trained in nursing and social work.[123] However, this is the only women's society explicitly mentioned in this context with the curious exception of the earlier French Girl Scouts' movement, which mainly brought together girls from a Christian background.[124]

To summarise, women's societies provided welfare services such as financial and material support or medical treatment to those in need in

times of war and peace. They addressed vulnerable groups such as the sick and the poor, prisoners, and those abandoned by their families as babies or in their old age, stepping in when neither the state nor kin offered support either through lack of resources or neglect. Nor did they restrict their efforts to girls and women only, showing that social care was counted amongst women's tasks regardless of sex. Other societies were established specifically to provide first aid, nurse the wounded, and look after the families of victims of war and armed conflict. Under the French, this took place in direct opposition to the Mandate state. After Syria gained independence, similar initiatives were launched by the Rabita, meaning that such services were provided by a political Party rather than a private society for the first time.

Cultural Activities, Writing, and Journalism

Whilst the activities of the early women's societies in education, vocational training and social work were directed at those otherwise deprived of such possibilities, fostering interest in culture and the arts was the pre-occupation of and for the educated elite. Although these activities were not directly related to welfare, they allowed the founders of these early societies to strengthen their relationship with influential personalities. In this way, they were vital in winning support for attempts to improve women's legal rights, as is shown later, together with their entitlement to public welfare in the long run.

   One of the earliest women's societies in the field of culture and the arts was the literary salon opened by Mariyana Marrash (1848–1919) in Aleppo in the late nineteenth century. Born into a family that appreciated literature, the arts, and politics, Mariyana attended a nuns' school in Aleppo for her primary schooling. While she learned French and music, her brothers Fransis and ʿAbd Allah were to become a poet and a writer of prose respectively. As for Mariyana, it was only after her marriage to Habib al-Ghadban that she started her salon to which she invited literati, basing her idea on the model of the salons of Paris.[125] Back in Europe, women's salons such as these had seen their glory days during the French enlightenment of the eighteenth century with the likes of Madame de Lambert, but they had continued to thrive, especially in France, Germany and Austria,[126] serving as an inspiration to similar salons around the world. Mariyana Marrash also wrote poetry

and articles herself, which appeared in her book *Bint fikr* (*Daughter of Thought*) and magazines such as *al-Jinan* (Paradise) as well as the newspaper *Lisan al-hal* (*The Spokesman*).[127]

The first Syrian political women's magazine to be run by a woman was Mari ʿAjami's *al-ʿArus* (The Bride), founded in 1910. Due to lack of funds, she could only keep it going until 1925.[128] Whilst being very popular with the Syrian elite, conservative Muslims were hostile to it, and most of its female contributors felt compelled to write under false names when discussing women's rights.[129] Mari ʿAjami's own literary activity encompassed the writing of poetry, and she also established al-Nadi al-adabi al-nisaʾi (Women's Literary Club) in 1920, the same year that she set up the educational society Nur al-Fayhaʾ with Nazik al-ʿAbid.[130] Like Marrash's initiative, al-Nadi al-adabi al-nisaʾi took the form of a weekly salon in Mari ʿAjami's house, where its members discussed politics, religion or philosophy with the aim of 'reviving the female intelligentsia'.[131] It was one of the very few women-led societies to which men were admitted as well: among its guests were Faris al-Khuri (1877–1962), who held several ministerial portfolios under the French and would later become a prominent National Bloc politician, and Fakhri al-Barudi (1889–1966), who had joined the anti-Ottoman al-Fatat movement in 1911. Returning to Syria in 1923 after several years of jail and exile, he was to become known as a writer, journalist, benefactor and a highly popular politician, entering parliament for the National Bloc several times after 1928.[132] The club held regular meetings with lectures given either by one of its own members or by other well-known speakers. In line with its aim of raising interest in Syrian culture, the club had its own library, and it also encouraged the consumption of Syrian products to strengthen the Syrian economy. Members of the club advised factories on ways of improving the local production of traditional handicrafts such as woven fabrics.[133] In 1921, Mari ʿAjami also founded the Rabitat al-thaqafa (Association for Culture), whose members included Fakhri al-Barudi, a highly popular National Bloc politician, as well as other prominent males such as the poet Khalil Mardam Bek (1889–1959), the journalist and founder of the newspaper *al-Qabas* (*The Firebrand*), Najib al-Rayyis (1892–1952), the poet and later National Bloc leader Shafiq Jabri (1898–1980), and Habib Kahala (1889–1965), who was a journalist and a later National Bloc member as well.[134] Although the Association lasted for only three

years until it was closed down under French pressure in 1924,[135] the Nadi al-adabi al-nisa'i continued to exist until at least 2010.

While Mari ʿAjami's family background and the funds she must have had at her disposal for her charitable work remain obscure, her determination and unceasing efforts are particularly remarkable considering that she remained single all her life. As a young woman, Mari ʿAjami had been engaged, but her fiancé was executed in 1915 due to his oppositional activities against the Ottomans.[136] Yet by herself, she maintained initiatives such as the Nadi al-adabi al-nisa'i, thereby breaking traditional ideas of gendered societies without seeming to have enjoyed the support and backing that, for example, Mariyana Marrash received from her husband.

More than 20 years after the Nadi was established, another society with aspirations in the same field opened its doors in 1942. The Nadwa al-thaqafiyya al-nisa'iyya (Women's Cultural Club) aimed at supporting female students from poor backgrounds and their families and was particularly eager to facilitate women's access to culture and the arts by organising regular lectures from writers and scholars. It also had its own library.[137] This initiative was launched by a number of women grouped around Jihan al-Musuli (1908–96). Like Mari ʿAjami, Jihan al-Musuli remained single, but her career stirred controversy even within her own family. Indeed Jihan, who would be one of the first two Syrian women to enter a legislative body during Syria's Union with Egypt, did not achieve her position in women's charitable work easily. Her parents being Salih al-Musuli and Fatima al-Sidawi, Jihan was born into a large traditional Damascene family in 1908. Her mother died when she was three, leaving her, one elder sister and four elder brothers in the care of her father, who never remarried. As Jihan proved very talented in memorising the Qur'an and principles of *fiqh*,[138] unlike her sister, she was allowed to attend the only elementary school for girls in the neighbourhood, but only if accompanied by her brother ʿAbd al-ʿAziz. After her father decided to move away from the extended family in the early 1920s, Jihan completed not only the teachers' college, but also passed her *baccalauréat* in 1927 and pursued further studies at the higher teachers' college. For many years, Jihan worked as a teacher, and later became a headmistress at preparatory and secondary level. She remained close to her brother ʿAbd al-ʿAziz,[139] although her unconventional lifestyle made relations with her extended family difficult throughout her life, and it was only after

the death of her father, two years after the foundation of the Nadwa al-thaqafiyya al-nisaʾiyya, that she opted to unveil. She completed an additional degree in law in 1947.[140]

Another literary salon, the Muntada al-sakina (Society of Tranquillity) set up by Thurayya al-Hafiz, held monthly meetings for two decades from 1943 to 1963. Thurayya also convened the Halqat zuharaʾ al-adabiyya (Circle of Literary Flowers) in the house of her friend Zahra al-ʿAbid for ten years (1953–63) after the death of Zahra's husband. While no more details are known about Zahra al-ʿAbid's background, it seems likely that she belonged to the extended family of Nazik al-ʿAbid. Like Mari ʿAjami's salon, both these associations welcomed writers, politicians, poets and scholars from Syria and beyond.[141] The circle of guests included Mari ʿAjami and Khalil Mardam Bek as well as the Shiite lawyer and League of National Action member Ahmad al-Shihabi and the Aleppian writer Shafiq Jabri (1912–96). Other regulars, of whom little or nothing is known, included Anwar al-ʿAttar, Salim al-Zarkali, Mamduh Haqqi, Ahmad al-Safi al-Najfi, ʿAbd al-Salam al-ʿUjayli, ʿAfifa Saʾb, Ilfat Amr Basha, Maqbula al-Shallaq, ʿAziza Harun, and Munira Mahayri.[142] However, Thurayya's husband Munir al-Rayyis (1901–99) interfered with her ambitions at times. As one of the founders of the League of National Action, which aimed at eradicating all foreign presence from the region, he fought in Palestine after 1936 and also in Iraq during World War II. Taken prisoner, he was exiled to Algeria but moved on to Germany where he married his second wife with whom he had a daughter.[143] After his return to Syria with his new family in 1946, he forbade Thurayya from attending her circle; it is not clear though why or for how long he upheld this attitude. However, Munir's publication of the newspaper *al-Barada* gave Thurayya al-Hafiz a forum in which to write promoting the rights of women at a time when the political and legal demands voiced by women such as ʿAdila Bayyhum had come under attack from traditionalist circles.[144]

A final society in the field of culture and the arts was the Jamʿiyya al-suriyya li'l-funun (Syrian Society for Arts), established in 1950. Also open to both sexes, it took an interest in promoting all kinds of arts, including music, drama, literature and painting. Most of its members were teachers, lawyers or other academics, and did not adhere to any particular political orientation. The Jamʿiyya al-suriyya li'l-funun was

particularly active in holding lectures and staging exhibitions of oil paintings, photographs and fashion.[145]

Without any doubt, women's societies active in the fields of culture and the arts targeted the enclosed circles of the elite. Bringing together writers, journalists and politicians, they were often gender-mixed and were not concerned with welfare activities as such. However, they allowed the pioneers of womens' charitable projects to discuss the political ideas that some of them also articulated in their own publications or other magazines. As the actual initiators and driving force behind these societies, these pioneers opened a forum to push for more fundamental changes than individual societies could bring about, by demanding women's political rights.

Women in the Political Sphere

The founders of women's societies who became active in demanding political rights looked back to a long tradition of tying the provision of women's welfare to a nationalist agenda. Many of them were personally involved in the struggle for independence, either because they had lost family members or because they lent direct support to nationalist circles. In the period of Ottoman rule, ʿAdila Bayyhum had helped carry secret Syrian nationalist documents to Beirut,[146] and she openly criticised Ottoman politics in the daily newspaper *al-Fata al-ʿarabi* (*The Young Arab Man*) under the penname al-Fatat al-ʿarabiyya ('The Young Arab Woman').[147] In 1919, the first women's demonstration in modern Syria took place in Damascus where, fully veiled, women voiced their demand for an end to Western occupation.[148] In June of the same year, a group of 12 unnamed Muslim women including Nazik al-ʿAbid met the King–Crane delegation in Damascus which was investigating local opinions on the possibility of a mandated state. Andrew Patrick found that the group 'astonished the Commission members by lifting their veils while giving the interview, were "eloquent" and pleaded for "absolute independence" with "no help whatsoever" because they believed such help would "make their men lazy".'[149] The Commission heard from three more like-minded Catholic, Protestant and Muslim women's groups in Aleppo, Hums and Hamah.[150] Back in Beirut, ʿAdila Bayyhum headed a group of women who met the Commission in 1920, stressing their wish for the independence of the united Arab territories.[151]

After the French Mandate was established against the wishes of the local population, Syrian women joined nationalist demonstrations, at times in their hundreds. Shortly after she entered teachers' college in 1928 at the age of 16, Thurayya al-Hafiz set up a society called ʿAzraʾil to bring women together for this purpose.[152] According to Thurayya's own account of one particular incident, Fawziyya al-Rayyis – possibly related to Thurayya's husband-to-be Munir al-Rayyis – had informed Thurayya of the National Bloc's wish for a women's demonstration in support of the election of their candidates in 1928.[153] Thurayya agreed to her group taking part.[154] It appears that, ʿAdila Bayyhum, Jihan al-Musuli as well as a certain Alifa al-Idlibi and Munira al-Ghassin were also present at this demonstration.[155]

Unfortunately, detailed accounts of Syrian women's participation in political demonstrations are rare,[156] but these recollections raise two curious points. Firstly, the initiative for the involvement of the women's group seems to have lain with the male leaders of the National Bloc, and not with the women themselves. At a time when women were not yet allowed to vote, the leaders of the Bloc seem to have been particularly anxious for women to participate in this demonstration. This may have been due to a desire on the part of the Bloc to present an alternative to French mandatory rule that would appear modern by demonstrably including women, and yet to be genuinely Syrian. Secondly, Thurayya' recalled that the women picked up pullovers bearing an emblem of the Arab world on them especially for the demonstrations from the textile factory of ʿAbd Allah Salam al-Shihabi, who probably belonged to the Shihabi family into which Thurayya's mother had married after her father's death. Whilst shouting 'Down with Imperialism and the reactionaries' – without understanding the actual meaning of 'reactionaries' – the women met another member of the Rayyis family, Najib, and Fawzi al-Ghazzi, who warned them to leave immediately as French troops had opened fire on the demonstrators. Fawzi al-Ghazzi (1891–1929), a lawyer from a landowning and scholarly family, was one of the founders of the National Bloc.[157] As the demonstration came under fire, the group split into two, with the women taking refuge in the houses of Fawzi al-Ghazzi and Fakhri al-Barudi.[158] As mentioned earlier, Fakhri al-Barudi used to frequent both the Nadi al-adabi al-nisaʾi and the Rabitat al-thaqafa convened by Mari ʿAjami, and his own house is said to have been used for gatherings of students from schools and

university alike.[159] Based on the memories of Thurayya al-Hafiz, this account shows that these women were very well connected to leaders of the National Bloc, be it through salons such as Mari ʿAjami's or through family ties and friendships. These relationships were further strengthened by the societies' fundraising activities for the Bloc especially in the early 1930s, in which ʿAdila Bayyhum played a leading role.[160] She also led a group of 300 students from the Dawhat al-adab onto the streets to join a women's demonstration demanding the evacuation of French troops in early 1945.[161]

Prominent Syrian women did not simply join men's protests against the Mandate authority, however. They also demanded political rights for themselves. During King Faysal's short-lived rule, Mari ʿAjami submitted a petition to the Syrian Congress of 1920 requesting women's suffrage for the first time.[162] Although the proposal was discussed and had won support, amidst popular protests, it did not come to a vote; it was first postponed and then forgotten.[163] At the time of the petition, both Nazik al-ʿAbid and Mari ʿAjami supported women's suffrage in their respective magazines *Nur al-Fayha'* and *al-ʿArus*. However, they were not connected to an organised suffragette movement, which indeed never evolved.[164] Throughout the years of the French Mandate, women were not permitted to vote.[165] Elsewhere in the Arab world, proponents of women's right to vote published articles in magazines and newspapers pointing to women's support in the war and the role of famous, politically active women in early Islamic history. Nonetheless, a majority rejected such arguments, stressing the virtue of women's exclusion from politics, and even in Egypt, women were only granted the right to vote by the Free Officers' regime in 1956.[166] Either way, the issue failed to take root amongst Syrian women at large. In fact, Mari ʿAjami distanced herself from her own earlier request for women's suffrage during an Eastern Women's Conference in 1935,[167] and on the same occasion ʿAdila Bayyhum laid stress on the pivotal role of the nationalist struggle for independence, which she considered more important than women's political rights.[168] With none of these vocal female figures standing for a clear demand for women's votes, mass support for the issue was clearly not on the horizon.

The fierce controversies that surrounded the vexed questions of women's legal rights and of veiling further hampered women's progress in the political arena. In the Syrian territories, personal status laws were

brought into the spotlight in 1939, not by women themselves, but by the French who tried to enforce reforms in Islamic marriage law to allow a non-Muslim man to marry a Muslim woman. Groups of Muslim scholars petitioned against such 'an attack on the *shariʿa* and a violation of its statutes', and 'a substitution of God's law and an attack on the Muslims in their religion'.[169] In 1944, with the French departing, the Syrian Islamists' programme opposing the government of al-Quwatli claimed to defend public morality by introducing gender segregation in trams and schools, not allowing women's access to cinemas, and demanding that strict adherence to veiling be supervised by a morality police.[170] In this atmosphere, the prospect of unveiled Muslim women attending a charity ball held by the Nuqtat al-halib in the presence of men in May of the same year triggered outrage amongst members of a popular Islamist group called al-Ghurra (The Purest). As word spread in mosques, strikes were held, suqs closed, and fighting broke out in Damascus, Aleppo, Hums and Hamah. Crowds of men appalled by this unacceptable sign of immorality took to the streets in a furious attempt to pressurise the National Bloc into banning the event. In response, the Nuqtat al-halib, ʿAdila Bayyhum being amongst its members, stopped the distribution of free bottles of milk in poor neighbourhoods, but it was only after the government threatened to withhold grain rations that the riots came to an end.[171] With support for the National Bloc dwindling following the contentious and unsuccessful French–Syrian Treaty negotiations and the loss of Alexandretta in 1939, Prime Minister Jamil Mardam Bek thought it wise not to impose severe punishments, and even tried to ban women from cinemas. National Bloc member Lutfi al-Haffar had already forbidden his daughter from going to the cinema.[172] Although the National Bloc had called upon women to demonstrate for the election of both men in 1928, the lending of support to women's interests was a different matter entirely.

As for the question of veiling, the issue must have divided prominent women in Syria. Across the whole region, it had started to cause immense controversy when, in spring 1928, a young Druze Lebanese woman, Nazira Zayn al-Din, published a book entitled *al-Sufur wa'l-hijab* (*Unveiling and Veiling*). As the daughter of a judge, she was well versed in Islamic law and used her knowledge to argue against the necessity of veiling the face. From her point of view, the Qurʾanic verses cited in support of veiling had been misinterpreted. Instead of being

taken literally, they should have been appreciated for their spiritual meaning, which in her view did not make veiling obligatory for women. The very fact of this monograph being authored by a woman, let alone its content, caused considerable uproar and social divide.[173] Women who decided to be seen unveiled in the streets in Damascus, as in Beirut, risked attacks by men with acid, razors and iron prongs.[174] As for Syria's leading women benefactors, ʿAdila Bayyhum is said to have never agreed with proposals for women's unveiling as a sign of emancipation,[175] although she is often to be seen in photos with an almost transparent veil barely covering her hair. By contrast, Nazik al-ʿAbid chose to lift her veil during the King–Crane Commission meeting, and Jihan al-Musuli opted to unveil completely in the 1940s. As a public statement, Thurayya al-Hafiz, with a group of 100 women, unveiled in Marjaʿ square in Damascus in summer 1943, proclaiming that wearing the veil was not a Qurʾanic commandment.[176] As a Greek Orthodox, Mari ʿAjami barely shared such concerns at all. There seems to have been no coordinated effort by these women to present themselves as a unified group on this issue. However, any attempt by women to go beyond their traditionally assigned roles was sure to be fiercely attacked, potentially exposing them to danger.

In many respects, these concerns were shared not only by upper-class women in the Syrian territories, but elsewhere in the Arab world. In December 1944, only a few months after the Islamist crisis in Syria, the first Arab Women's conference was held in Cairo. Among other matters, it focused on women's political rights, reforms of the personal status law against the practices of arbitrary divorce and polygamy, and the improvement of healthcare and social services. It was on this occasion that ʿAdila Bayyhum again expressed her wish for Syrian women to have a limited right to vote, provided they enjoyed a certain level of education.[177] The resolutions of the conference were met with outrage by Islamist groups who claimed that, if granted, the 'rights demanded by women: divorce, suffrage, admission to state offices, abolition of polygamy, etc…[…] would lead to disastrous consequences for the Muslim Arab nation – corruption, loss of energy and of patriotic spirit – and will provoke a dire reaction in Syrian circles.'[178] In the face of such attacks, the women stressed that their first and foremost role was as patriotic mothers, but to little effect. Yet against all odds, ʿAdila Bayyhum persisted in her effort to gain for women the right to have a say

in elections. Three years after independence, the country entered on two damaging decades of frequent government changes. It was during the presidency of Husni al-Za'im (1897–1949) who came to power in 1949 in the first of many military coups, that 'Adila Bayyhum's plea was finally successful: despite the absence of a mass-based suffragette movement but due to her personal support for his presidency, women were finally granted the right to vote. In line with the 1944 conference, this was restricted to those who had completed primary education.[179] A new constitution in 1953 allowed women to put forward their candidature for elections as well, subject to the same limitation.[180]

The Formation of Women's Unions and the Rise of New Political Parties

It is likely that women's suffrage was the reason why, members of the political parties in Syria started to launch their own welfare initiatives for girls and women in the 1950s.[181] Only the right to vote and to run for elections rendered the political parties of direct interest to women, and vice versa. Only a decade earlier, the Syrian political landscape underwent a significant change with the advent of mass-based political parties. Although groups such as the National Bloc or the People's Party had emerged during the earlier years of the Mandate, they consisted of influential individuals of high standing who sought the large-scale mobilisation of public support only for specific events, such as elections or demonstrations against Mandate politics.[182] A broader, more regularly orchestrated form of popular movement appeared with fascist-style paramilitary groups during the 1930s throughout all the major cities.[183] Yet, at heart, both elite parties and populist groups were exclusively a matter for men. During the 1940s, the establishment of the Ba'th Party and the peasants' movement led by Ahram Hawrani in Hamah had the potential to draw upon mass fellowship for the first time, even if to a limited extent.[184] The Communist Party also aimed to attract the masses, as did the Muslim Brotherhood.[185]

Although the lack of documentation makes it difficult to assess the extent of women's participation in these parties, it does appear that university students were particularly attracted to the new opportunities they offered. According to one source, female students met at the University of Damascus in the early 1960s in order to discuss the best

ways in which they could make use of their votes. Most of them were members of the Baʿth, the Communists, the Syrian nationalists, and the Muslim Brotherhood.[186] Amongst the Communists, Maqbula al-Shallaq, alongside a certain Falak Tarazi, strongly advocated women's work outside the home, in addition to child-rearing and public engagement.[187] Grassroots parties such as these made possible the rise of new figures whose political commitment was to outweigh family status and wealth. Amongst women, though, the transition between what might be called the first and the second generation of prominent women was not abrupt, and would take several years to take root.

Yet it was not only the mass-based political parties that sought strength in numbers. As early as 1933, ʿAdila Bayyhum brought together the Jamʿiyyat yaqazat al-marʾa al-shamiyya she had set up with Nazik al-ʿAbid with two unnamed societies to found the Ittihad al-ʿarabi al-nisaʾi fi Dimashq (Arab Women's Union in Damascus).[188] With that, she created the second such union of women's societies in the region after Cairo (1923).[189] However, its impact as a Union appears to have remained limited, whilst ʿAdila Bayyhum would expand her personal role significantly over the years.

The assumption that personal influence and family networks – rather than the Union as an organisational unit – were still of major importance seems to be confirmed by the membership of a Syrian delegation sent to the Eastern Women's Conference for the Defence of Palestine organised by the Egyptian activist Huda Shaʿrawi, chairwoman of the Egyptian Women's Union, in October 1938.[190] As well as Syria and Egypt, it hosted delegations of women's unions from Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon and Iran.[191]

In essence, its resolutions envisaged raising international attention to the situation of Palestine by sending telegrams and by contacting women's societies throughout the world. It also requested the withdrawal of British troops and the release of prisoners.[192] More surprising than its resolutions is the composition of the Syrian delegation. It included:

Ms Marra Waghistani, Ms Suʿad and Furlan Mardam Bek, daughters of Hikmat Mardam Bek, Faʾiza Mardam Bek, daughter of Sami Mardam Bek, Mrs ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri, wife of Mukhtar al-Jazaʾiri, Ms Fatina ʿAzmah, daughter of Nabih Bek al-ʿAzmah,

Figure 1.3   Delegates at Huda Shaʿrawi's women's conference in Cairo, Egypt (1938)

> Ms Ruqiyya Quwatli, daughter of ʿArif Bek Quwatli, Mrs Asma Khuri, wife of Faris Bek al-Khuri, Mrs Thurayya al-Hafiz, wife of Munir al-Rayyis, Mrs Buhayra al-ʿAzmah, wife of Nabih Bek al-ʿAzmah, the wife of al-Amir Muhy al-Din Basha ʿAbd al-Qadir, and Mrs Sanih al-Ayyubi, wife of the deceased Wajih Bek.[193]

At first sight, it is striking that neither Mari ʿAjami, Nazik al-ʿAbid nor Jihan al-Musuli are listed. In part, though, the composition of the delegation can be explained by the recent restructuring of ʿAdila Bayyhum's Jamʿiyyat yaqazat al-marʾa al-shamiyya in 1938. In fact, Suʿad Mardam Bek became the chairwoman of the Jamʿiyyat yaqazat al-marʾa al-shamiyya that year, with ʿAdila Bayyhum acting as the deputy.[194] The Ayyubi clan was related to the family of ʿAdila Bayyhum's husband, the Jazaʾiris, by marriage through Amina Ayyubi al-Jazaʾiri.[195]

Moreover, about half the members of the delegation appear also to have been members of the women's branch of the Lajnat al-sayyidat liʾl-difaʿ ʿan al-falistin (Committee of the Defence for Palestine). In a letter dated 10 June 1938, Suʿad and Furlan Mardam Bek, Naʿima

Maghribi, Buhayra al-ʿAzmah and Ruqiyya al-Quwatli were amongst the signatories expressing their wish to establish this committee to support Palestine against the 'Zionist threat', with the intention of opening similar branches in other countries and cooperating with women's societies elsewhere.[196] In a letter written in the same month, Nabih Bek al-ʿAzmah, governor of Alexandretta and head of the men's Committee for the Defence of Palestine in Damascus, supported this request, asking the unknown addressee for permission to establish branches of the women's Committee in all Syrian territories in addition to the one in Damascus.[197] Since he headed the Committee's affairs, it is unsurprising to find that in September his wife Buhayra al-ʿAzmah was listed amongst the Syrian delegates to the conference as the chairwoman of the Committee's women's branch. The same letter stated that the Syrian delegates were also drawn from the Dawhat al-adab (founded by ʿAdila Bayyhum and, among others, Furlan Mardam Bek) and the Nadi al-adabi al-nisaʾi (founded by Mari ʿAjami, but apparently at the time

Figure 1.4   Syrian delegation to the women's conference in Cairo, Egypt (1938)

headed by Sara Mashaqa, although she did not attend the conference).[198] In addition, it seems likely that the inclusion of the daughter of Nabih Bek and Buhayra al-ʿAzmah was made on grounds of her parents' standing as no charitable efforts of hers have been documented. As for the inclusion of Mrs Asma Khuri, it might have been due to the fact that her husband, Faris Bek al-Khuri (1877–1962), was the speaker of parliament at the time of the conference.[199] By contrast, the reasons behind its being joined by Ms Marra Waghistani and Faʾiza Mardam Bek remain obscure.[200] However, the Arab Women's Union in Damascus is not mentioned in any of the sources related to the 1938 conference, which suggests that it was not yet perceived as a major and coherent organisation, and that the composition of the delegation owed more to personal relationships and individual societies than to the Union as such.

It was at this conference that it was decided to establish the transnational Arab Women's Union (al-Ittihad al-arabi al-nisaʾi) to improve cooperation between women's societies, especially in the Arab world.[201] After it held its first conference in Cairo in 1944, ʿAdila Bayyhum decided to change the name of her Syrian union from the Arab Women's Union in Damascus to the Union of Women's Societies in Damascus (Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya fi Dimashq), possibly to make its name more distinctive from the pan-Arab Union or to avoid the impression that her Syrian Union had sprung out of the transnational Arab Women's Union. Despite its apparent limited influence in the 1930s, the Union incorporated more women's societies throughout the 1940s and 1950s,[202] bundling together many of the welfare initiatives set up by Syrian women, with Jihan al-Musuli acting as the Union's general secretary for many years in support of ʿAdila Bayyhum.[203] Among the societies that the Union of Women's Societies came to include were Mari ʿAjami's Nadi al-adabi al-nisaʾi (Women's Literary Club), the Nuqtat al-halib (Drop of Milk), the Jamʿiyyat kharijat dur al-muʿallimat (Society of Graduates from the Women's Teachers' Colleges), ʿAdila Bayyhum's Dawhat al-adab (Tree of Social Graces), Jihan al-Musuli's al-Nadwa al-thaqafiyya al-nisaʾiyya (Women's Cultural Club), the Jamʿiyyat al-isʿaf al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (Society for Women's First Aid), the Jamʿiyyat al-mubarra al-khayriyya (Society for Charitable Benevolence), the Jamʿiyya al-thaqafiyya al-ijtimaʿiyya (Society for Culture and Social Affairs), the Jamʿiyya al-wataniyya liʾl-tamrid

(National Society for Nursing), and the Nahdat al-nisaʾiyya bi'l-Qunaytra (Society for Women's Awakening in Qunaytra).[204]

The extent to which the societies that constituted the Union actually worked together remains vague. Thompson remarks that Rafiqa al-Bukhari, wife of the Minister of Education and member of the Union, was actively campaigning against the veil in 1944, but given ʿAdila Bayyhum's position on the issue, this appears unlikely to have been a Union campaign.[205] The Union did petition for women's political rights under the presidencies of Hashim al-Atassi (1936–9) and Shukri al-Quwatli (1943–9), as well as in parliament.[206] Nonetheless, the sources attribute Syrian women's eventual right to vote to ʿAdila Bayyhum personally.[207] Although little detail is available on the composition of Syrian delegations to Arab Women's Union conferences in the following decades, they continued to have repercussions in the delegations' home countries. For example, the Lajna farʿiyya nisaʾiyya li'l-difaʾ al-madani (Women's Branch of the Committee for Civil Defence) was established in 1956 after ʿAdila Bayyhum had attended a meeting held at the

Figure 1.5   Portrait of ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri (1900–75)

Arab Women's Union's headquarters in Cairo to discuss this matter, and had then carried forward its proposals to the Syrian authorities.[208] Once again though, the Union shows no involvement in the issue.[209] Likewise, ʿAdila Bayyhum, not the Union, was centre stage the following year, when the fourth Arab Women's conference took place in Damascus. She was elected as its chairwoman, and the headquarters of the Arab Women's Union were moved to Damascus, where they remained until 1963.[210] ʿAdila Bayyhum was joined by Jihan al-Musuli once more, this time as a member of the executive office.[211]

From 1958 to 1961, when Syria was merged with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic (UAR), all political parties in Syria were dissolved. The Union, however, remained unaffected by these events. Its members worked on a petition for changes to the personal status law[212] and, through its member societies, it was active both in the cities and the countryside. In particular, the Union encouraged women's employment in handicrafts and agriculture with the support of the state via the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Agricultural Reform.[213] Indeed, ʿAdila Bayyhum, but also Thurayya al-Hafiz and Jihan al-Musuli, openly supported the Syria–Egypt merger under the presidency of Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir.[214] It was during that time that Syrian women first entered a National Assembly (Majlis al-umma): Jihan al-Musuli and a certain Widad al-Azhari from al-Ladhiqiyya were the only two women amongst 200 Syrians who took their place alongside 400 Egyptians.[215] Upon the break-up of the UAR, Jihan al-Musuli returned to Damascus, where Thurayya al-Hafiz led a women's demonstration past her house expressing their solidarity with the union, but Jihan refused to join: 'Everthing is over.'[216] The country was plunged into political instability yet again, until the first Baʿthist regime came to power in 1963.

Summary: Early Women's Societies before the Founding of the Union

Between the end of World War I and the coming to power of the Baʿth Party in March 1963, Syria developed from an administrative entity within the Ottoman Empire to a collection of interdependent territories under the French Mandate, and finally into an independent, albeit unstable state. During the Mandate years, the National Bloc

emerged as the main opposition force pushing for Syrian independence. Whilst the Mandate state and later independent governments sought to increase schooling and improve the provision of healthcare, progress in these fields remained limited. Partly, it appears that the persistence of significant regional differences in the provision of social services can be attributed to a lack of unified administration. On the whole, girls and women remained particularly disadvantaged. It is against this background that women's societies sought to fill the gaps that the state did not yet cover sufficiently. Their understanding of women's welfare focused on education as a condition for securing women's political rights. However, it also encompassed healthcare and poverty relief, thereby stressing women's nursing and nurturing role. By contrast, the idea of encouraging women's employment was not very prominent. These initiatives were complemented by societies that specifically sought to attract the elite of both sexes, for example through literary salons that were also frequented by nationalist politicians. Yet although members of the women's welfare societies were mobilised in their support, women's voices in quest of female suffrage remained unheard until 1949.

The women who founded these societies – Nazik al-ʿAbid, Mari al-ʿAjami, ʿAdila Bayyhum and Thurayya al-Hafiz as well as Jihan al-Musuli – came from the privileged elite themselves. Their family backgrounds, so far as it is known, were similar in that their fathers worked in prominent positions in the state administration. With the exception of Jihan al-Musuli, who received her first education in one of the *kuttab*, these women attended foreign schools at a time when girls' education was the exception rather than the rule. ʿAdila Bayyhum's father and Thurayya al-Hafiz's father and stepfather were all active in secret Arab nationalist societies before World War I, and all five of these women had close connections with Arab nationalist politics from the late 1920s onwards. More than that, the families of Nazik al-ʿAbid and ʿAdila Bayyhum were linked by marriage, as possibly were those of Nazik al-ʿAbid and Thurayya al-Hafiz. At times, the women came together to undertake joint initiatives, but all maintained their individual projects. From the 1950s onwards, welfare programmes run by the Communist Party or the Jamʿiyyat irshad al-fatat al-ʿarabiyya entered the scene; operating on a different scale, they reached out to the countryside to address the masses.

In what appears to have been an attempt to muster her forces, 'Adila Bayyhum pooled together a number of women societies in her Syrian Union of 1933. Perhaps owing to the fact that its constituent member societies continued to operate rather independently, it was 'Adila Bayyhum herself, rather than the Union, who emerged as the *sine qua non* of Syria's political womanhood in the years that followed. Involved in both the Nuqtat al-halib, a French initiative, and heading the Dawha, known for its nationalist outlook, with students joining anti-French demonstrations, she walked a thin line between maintaining links with, and fostering opposition against, the French. Rising to prominence even on the pan-Arab level, it was she who brought about the women's right to vote in the absence of a suffragette movement, by relying on her personal ambitions and contact with the president at the time. Likewise, Jihan al-Musuli had close personal contacts with Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir. It was the existence of such ties within the ruling elite that the Ba'th Party would seek to break by introducing a Soviet-style mass organisation for women that claimed to mark the beginning of a new era and give rise to a new generation of prominent women in Syrian history.

CHAPTER 2

MASS ORGANISATIONS IN BAʿTHIST STATE BUILDING AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNION

The establishment of the General Union of Syrian Women is to be seen in the context of the appearance of mass organisations in Syria after the first Baʿthist coup in 1963 more generally. Marking the transition to a totalitarian system, the way in which these bodies were set up signalled the move from a regulated but relatively independent array of smaller societies to a limited number of large, mass-based organisations. Tracing the origins of mass organisations in Syria is complicated by the fact that, with the Syrian regime still in place at the time of writing, it is impossible to gain access to the Syrian archives that could provide insight into internal proceedings regarding the naissance of local mass organisations, or of foreign support for them. Union sources present their own history as genuinely Syrian, at the same time remaining silent on sensitive questions of state building and the emergence of new institutions. It is possibly due to such difficulties that existing scholarship provides little insight into the emergence of mass organisations in Syria.[1]

Consequently I have had to adopt a different approach to determine the Union's origins. Against the backdrop of the Baʿth Party's ascent to power, this chapter shows how Baʿthist ideas on the introduction of mass organisations in Syria were formulated by Michel ʿAflaq and others at a

moment when internal struggles divided the Party, and there was little time to reform Syrian state institutions and modes of governance on socialist lines. Although the Baʿthists officially rejected Soviet state building, it compares their views on the role of mass organisations to Lenin and Stalin's writings on the subject. The setting up of the Soviet Communist League of Youth, possibly the very first mass organisation, is examined, along with the way in which mass organisations, especially those for women, emerged around the globe. With these developments in mind, the chapter goes on to describe the place the Baʿth envisaged for women in the country's political life, and how the Union was eventually established in 1967. Finally, Syria's foreign relations before 1966 are used to identify which foreign organisations may have served as its blueprint. However, since the Union is rooted not only in the history of mass organisations, but also in that of earlier women's societies in Syria, the personal contacts of their members with mass organisations for women in other countries are also taken into account.

The Baʿthist Ascent to Power

In a long series of coups, it was the military who prompted another shift of power in Syria on 8 March 1963. Under the aegis of Colonel Ziyad al-Hariri, power was vested in the newly created National Council of Revolutionary Command (NCRC) made up of military members, who in turn formed a cabinet that, for the first time, was half-Baʿthist in composition.[2] Although in Syria, the Party had been dissolved after the 1958 union with Egypt and emerged severely weakened from the shambles of 1961, a small group of 15 Syrian officers had secretly formed the Baʿth Military Committee following their deployment to Egypt.[3] Baʿth Party branches in other 'regions', as they were described, i.e. in Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq, continued to operate.[4] Hidden from the security forces under Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir's (Nasser), but also from the Baʿth National Command and surviving regional branches, the Syrian officers were able to build a military wing to the Party that would become a serious challenge to ʿAflaq's and Bitar's long-established standing. Keeping a low profile, committee members formed the backbone of the 1963 coup in Syria[5] and expanded their influence dramatically in the following months. Under the presidency of Amin al-Hafiz who had secured various ministerial

and military positions for himself, the NCRC was in effective control. Some NCRC and cabinet members took on the task of conducting tripartite union talks with Egypt and Iraq, negotiations that gave them time to oust Nasirist officers from the military two weeks after an agreement was reached on 17 April.[6] Most council members in fact favoured a union, but disagreement prevailed on all sides over the exact terms of distributing power.[7] Consequently, the agreement failed within days, provoking violent protests in Damascus and Aleppo that were put down heavy-handedly.[8] With all other political parties withdrawing from government, a Ba'th-only cabinet emerged just five weeks after the coup on 13 May.[9]

For the Ba'th Party, this ascent to power was quick and surprising. Its earlier history had been characterised by a struggle to widen its membership and vexed by internal disagreements. It had participated in parliamentary elections after independence, but so long as its membership remained limited to a few hundred, it was far from reaching a mass constituency. From its founding congress in 1947, Michel 'Aflaq and Salah al-Din Bitar had been most prominent in shaping its political thought during the 1940s and 1950s.[10] Elaborating in their writings on the Party's key principles of Arab unity, freedom from imperialist forces and a vague idea of socialism, 'Aflaq and Bitar passed on their ideas to their well-educated middle-class students. Still few in number, they were mostly drawn from Damascus, Hums, al-Ladhiqiyya, Aleppo, and Dayr al-Zur.[11] Neither paid much attention to the pragmatics of daily politics, focusing instead on their political writings. The opposite was true of another man, Ahram al-Hawrani, although he held similar convictions. Based in Hamah, al-Hawrani was known for coming to the defence of local peasants against feudal lords. The merger between his Arab Socialist Party and the Ba'th resulted in the creation of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party in 1953, thereby increasing the geographical base of the Ba'thists.[12] However, the decision taken by 'Aflaq and Bitar to dissolve the Party in favour of the union with Egypt led to a fall-out with Hawrani in 1962,[13] and since they failed to consult the regional, let alone the national, congresses and councils of the Party, it caused long-lasting damage. Although it soon became clear that under the UAR former Ba'thists represented a majority amongst the Syrian members of the UAR National Council and those holding cabinet positions, Nasir's firm grip on affairs ensured Egyptian predominance in

all fields.[14] At the same time, the notables who still dominated Syrian public and economic life conveniently blamed Nasir's policies such as the nationalisation of private enterprises and land redistribution on the Baʿthists.[15] Disillusioned, the Party's Third National Congress ordered all former Baʿthist UAR ministers to resign from their posts in December 1959.[16] Over the next two years, Party branches in other regions struggled to agree whether the Syrian agreement to dissolve the party had been legitimate, and criticism of ʿAflaq's and Bitar's tendency to take single-handed decisions were more loudly articulated. Within Syria, divisions deepened. Leading figures including Bitar and Hawrani signed a manifesto calling for an end to the UAR and the holding of free elections on 2 October 1961, a position that ʿAflaq and the Baʿth National Command opposed.[17] When Hawrani withdrew from the alliance altogether, in order to preserve his personal reputation, there was no doubt that the Baʿthist quest for pan-Arab unity had led to the disintegration of the Syrian Party and manoeuvred it to the verge of extinction.[18]

In the midst of its internal struggles, the Party leadership had at first been unaware of, and had later misjudged, the growing power of the military wing of the Party in Syria. Members of the Military Committee became active recruiters of a new generation of Party members: soldiers of various rank predominantly drawn from a poor and rural background. For them, the military academies represented the only chance of making a career while, from their perspective, the appeal of the Baʿth lay in its least well-formulated principle: Socialism. In fact, it has been suggested that Socialism was only adopted in the Party constitution because another group also operating under the name al-Baʿth al-ʿarabi in al-Ladhiqiyya had made it a condition for their joining the First Party Congress in 1947. Neither ʿAflaq nor Bitar had originally given much attention to the issue.[19] While ʿAflaq argued for a redistribution of wealth and opposed the exploitation of the masses, his ideas remained a rough sketch of economic equity and social justice.[20] What they lacked was a programme that set out specific policies. It was only during the Fourth National Congress in 1960 that the Party leadership realised the neglected potential that lay in the Party's third pillar. Here, it was acknowledged that a targeted recruitment of peasants and workers was a pre-condition for widening membership and increasing the representation of both groups in the

leadership positions that were overwhelmingly filled by white-collar professionals. To this end, the setting up of labour and peasant bureaus in Party offices was to be emphasised.[21]

In practice, there was large-scale failure to implement these plans.[22] This worked to the advantage of the military wing following the 1963 coup, when a fateful decision was taken to merge the regular civilian Party with the military organisation, opening the door for members of the Military Committee to expand their influence over the Party at large. By contrast, civilians were denied any say in the military wing's affairs.[23] Through strategic alliances, purges, de facto control of key positions in the Syrian military and intelligence, and a dramatic push for Party recruitment amongst the armed forces securing the military wing's support, Party elections led military Baʿthists and their select civilian allies to dominate the Syrian Regional Command by 1964.[24] Over the following years, leading members of the military wing successfully mobilised their support base in the armed forces – increasing Party membership fivefold before 1964 – to gain an upper hand in the Party leadership. However, each of them took care to guard their own position, and some were ambitious to expand their personal power.[25]

The reasons for their success are often seen in the overrepresentation of religious minorities amongst the military. Whilst the latter more or less coherently formed the country's lower classes, its despised urban elite, which the Baʿth sought to replace, was Sunni-dominated.[26] In this context, it has often been argued that the minorities were attracted to the Baʿth not only for its alleged striving for social justice, but also for its non-religious outlook. This argument stresses that, in contrast to other models of Arab nationalist thought dating back to the nineteenth century,[27] Islam was denied the opportunity to play a pivotal role in Baʿthist ideology. While ʿAflaq, in particular, recognised the contribution of Islam to the rise and development of the Middle East in the past, he considered it to be only one element among many within the region's Arab tradition.[28] Thus, instead of emphasising the role of Islam, the Baʿth declared the region's cultural, political and economic tradition as the uniting bond shared by all Arab states, with Islam constituting only one amongst many elements.[29] Practically, the regimes in 1963 and 1966 also harshly diminished the role of Islam in public life by confining preaching to mosques, appointing clerics, allowing state intervention in the management of *waqf* (pl. *awqaf*,

religious foundations), the main source of religious income, and introducing a secular civil code (1965).[30]

However, it is often overlooked that certain theological key concepts, derived from both Christianity and Islam – albeit given new meaning – are actually essential to 'Aflaq's writings. In fact, their familiarity may have been significant in making Ba'thist ideology accessible to many despite its allegedly intellectual character.[31] In a detailed analysis of various Ba'th sources, Werner Schmucker demonstrates how 'Aflaq read history as an eternal Arab revelation (*risala 'arabiyya khalida*), the meaning of which had been lost over time.[32] According to 'Aflaq, it comprises both belief (*iman*) in, and adherence to, a certain political ideology (*'aqida*).[33] It is vested in the times of the prophet Muhammad, whose mission for humankind and uniting force amongst the Arabs led to a new world order. This state, according to 'Aflaq, can be revitalised through resurrection, eventually resulting in a renaissance (*nahda*).[34] It is the task of the Ba'th to call people onto its path (*da'wa*) to achieve not heavenly revelation, but moral, political and societal revival.[35] Based on his analysis of Ba'thist ideology, Schmucker concluded that the Ba'th selectively adapted ideas of religious and national reform that had been advocated by pioneering scholars such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani since the late nineteenth century. Yet seeing their practical failure, 'Aflaq added to it from other sources, especially Western and Russian philosophy, and also various models of social justice, as he saw fit.[36] This process, it might be noted, was not unique to the Ba'th, as Gelvin has pointed to such intertwining of religious and nationalist discourses as early as the 1920s.[37] Following Schmucker and Gevlin, it might therefore be considered that the presentation of a political programme that included theological terminology, but largely stripped of its divine dimension and traits specific to only one religion, enhanced the Party's appeal amongst what may have been moderately religious segments of the population.[38]

Taken together, a combination of political appeal, ethnic ties, personal ambitions and a clear hierarchical structure in the armed forces is likely to have contributed to the increase in Ba'th membership and to the shift of the Party's constituency in favour of the military wing.[39] As the latter consolidated their position, civilian factions such as the 'old guard', including 'Aflaq and Bitar, and Marxist and socialist unionist currents were systematically sidelined.[40] When, in 1964, a provisional

constitution provided for a five-man presidential council to form the country's highest executive committee, the military wing came to dominate it within weeks.[41] The Syrian military wing did not have a majority in the National Party Congress though, which in April 1965 decided to re-subordinate the Syrian military command to the Party command, trying to avoid a stand-off with the old guard.[42] However, the forces on the ground could not be withstood, and the officers who had formed the core of the Baʿthist military committee in Egypt fought for power. On 23 February 1966, Salah Jadid, until then chief of the armed forces, overthrew the regime of Amin al-Hafiz in the second Baʿthist coup.[43] In the neo-Baʿth, so dubbed for its sweeping leftist economic reforms, cooperation with civilian regionalists continued; however, with the expulsion of both its founding members ʿAflaq and Bitar, the era of the old guard came to an end.[44] Officially under the presidency of Nur al-Din al-Atassi, but factually led by Salah Jadid, the new regime opted for closer relations with the Soviet Union, receiving considerable economic aid and diplomatic support.[45] Indeed, between 1955 and 1967, Soviet aid represented by far the largest share of total aid to Syria, a clear indication of the Soviet Union's predominance in Syrian foreign relations.[46] Opposed to Jadid's radical left-wing policies, a more moderate group that formed around the figure of Hafiz al-Asad, the commander of the air force, stressed the risks of inter-Arab isolation and pushed for a rapprochement with Jordan and Iraq, especially after the disastrous 1967 Arab–Israeli Six Day War.[47] Accusing Jadid and his supporters of having betrayed Syrian patriotism with their toleration of the Syrian Communist Party and heavy reliance on the Soviet Union, Asad eventually staged another inner-Baʿthist coup, leading him to become president in 1970.[48]

Ever since coming to power, it was crucial for the military wing to not only widen its support base in the Party, but also to win the acceptance, if not compliance, of the population as a whole. Its economic policies therefore served as the carrot for the majority, and as the stick for an influential few. In 1963, the country was still divided between a small urban political elite, consisting of absentee large landholders and a commercial–industrial elite, and the vast majority of poor peasants living in the countryside.[49] In order to stabilise their rule, it was vital for the post-1963 Baʿthist regimes to replace the traditional elites.[50] To this end, the regime continued with the programmes of agrarian reform and

nationalisation of Syrian industries first introduced by the UAR.[51] Banks, petroleum companies and various other businesses were nationalised in 1963.[52] In the early stages, these measures led to a decline in investment and the flight of capital, paralysing the Syrian economy. Land reform was announced, but its implementation shied away from so as not to provoke resistance from powerful landlords and tribal sheikhs, prior to December 1964.[53] In the following months, nationalisation was extended to key energy industries, the cotton trade and the import–export trade.[54] In 1964 and 1965, rising unemployment, coupled with a drive to reduce the influence of religious institutions and a crackdown on competing political groups, led to fierce demonstrations and strikes throughout the country among various sections of society. Associations of lawyers, engineers, doctors, academics, and other professionals demanded democratic reform, the release of political prisoners and an end to the rising domination of the state by the minority sect of the ʿAlawi.[55] Especially in the cities, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, drawn from the traditional Sunni sheikhs, represented another oppositional force that was closely tied to the Sunni mercantile class. As in Egypt, where the Muslim Brotherhood had first emerged in 1928, its Syrian members belonged to the families of men of religion. Yet because of their low incomes, these men often worked as tradesmen or in the handicraft business.[56] It was this additional factor of income that connected the men of religion with the urban mercantile class while making them independent of the state.[57] Hence their participation in the strikes of the 1960s came about through a combination of economic and religious considerations, opposing the rise of a regime that they considered godless.[58] The protests were, however, crushed by force, whilst behind the scenes internal struggles continued.[59]

Economic reforms introduced during the first stage of Baʿth rule were radically strengthened under the neo-Baʿthist regime. While the repossession of land weakened the power of the large landholders, its redistribution among peasants served to enhance the regime's rural support. The introduction of agricultural credit by national banks and the creation of agricultural cooperatives were meant to further attach the rural population to the state.[60] At the same time, the regime placed new stress on its solidarity with the Palestinians and its anti-imperialist convictions, heightening tensions with Israel throughout 1966 and 1967 and eventually culminating in the Six Day War that began on

5 June 1967.[61] Although the war shifted attention away from internal difficulties, the Baʿth was still under severe strain to establish firm roots amongst the population at large in order to stabilise its rule in the long run. Mass organisations served precisely this purpose.[62]

The Creation of Mass Organisations: Ideological Considerations

Contrary to what ʿAflaq had envisaged, the Baʿth did not acquire power by re-educating the masses in the spirit of the Party, leading eventually to social and economic reform, but through a military coup. As a result, it faced the challenge of implementing effective institutional reform without completely discrediting its ideological outlook. To some extent, the Baʿth could rely on concepts of governance that had evolved only a few years earlier. At the time, Baʿthist writers such as ʿAbdallah al-Daʿim, Jamal al-Atassi, Ilyas Murqus, ʿAbd al-Karim Zuhur and Yasin al-Hafiz harshly criticised parliamentary democracy as a political framework that blocked revolutionary change. From their perspective, this model, which had originated in the West, disguised suppression of the masses by the old elites. Still in control of large parts of the economy and the media, these elites could manipulate public opinion to their will, preventing genuine popular representation.[63] At least some of them, however, were equally opposed to military rule before this new reality came to pass.[64]

Some Theoretical Propositions was issued by the Sixth National Congress in October 1963, half a year after the coup and with a Baʿthist government now in place.[65] This publication was decisive because it laid the foundations for a Baʿthist-conceived process of state formation. It proposed for the very first time the systematic grouping of large sections of the population into mass organisations, albeit without using this term explicitly in the socialist organisational sense. Based on some of the arguments of the authors mentioned above, it stated that the Party had come to reject parliamentary democracy, which in 'its bourgeois liberal sense cannot be an instrument of radical social transformation' because 'it is a merely formal façade to conceal the influence of feudalism and the higher bourgeoisie'.[66] Having tried to achieve change within this framework before deciding to dismiss it, *Some Theoretical Propositions* acknowledged that the Party 'almost became absorbed in the field of

parliamentary action and almost forgot the basic issue – the issue of mass organisation.'[67] According to the Party's new understanding, however, 'organising the masses' was pivotal for the desired alternative to parliamentary democracy: popular democracy. Within this system, elections to popular councils would be held at the village, town and district level, in each governorate, and at the regional as well as at the national level.[68] This way, councils and consulting conferences were to be built from the bottom up.[69] But as a precondition for this to materialise, the masses, i.e. the people, needed to be made politically conscious – and become 'firmly organized':[70]

> To ensure that the popular masses exercise the democratic rights in a conscious, disciplined and responsible manner they must be mobilized within organizational frameworks which enable them to exercise power and raise the level of their political and social consciousness. These frameworks are workers' and peasants' unions, students' federations, youth organisations, employees' and staff organisations, women's federations etc.[71]

Strikingly, *Some Theoretical Propositions* does not yet use the socialist term of *mass organisation* in the institutional sense, or *munazzamat shaʿbiyya*. Nonetheless, the Baʿth leadership clearly saw the need to systematically link the Party to the people in order for the regime to take root. The Baʿth did not aspire to become a mass party; rather, it considered itself a 'vanguard'. As the 'motor' of society, the Baʿth 'leads the organisations and the popular councils and crystallises their aspirations by its profound and penetrating view of the intellectual state of the masses, thus ensuring that the practice of democracy is both revolutionary and popular'.[72] Thus, the relationship between the Party and the masses was portrayed as being constructive. According to *Some Theoretical Propositions*, a difference between the fascist concept of 'élite' and the socialist idea of the 'vanguard' lay in the socialist recognition of the potential of the masses as opposed to their fascist portrayal as being passive and negative.[73] This was explained by the fact that

> [t]he revolutionary vanguard organisation, which always maintains profound living links with the masses, which it is both at the head of and always attached to, which teaches them and

learns from them, living with them in links of interaction, not of tutelage – only such an organisation can ensure that popular democratic government is centralized and democratic.[74]

Hence by combining the vanguard organisations with political institutions such as popular councils, the relationship between the Party and the masses would be rendered meaningful and graspable, avoiding the situation that 'the masses become a nebulous entity, powerless, unconscious and devoid of conscious and responsible discipline'.[75]

Whilst the Ba'th was determined to introduce 'socialist democracy' in Syria, it was very careful to distance itself from both the SCP and Stalinism.[76] Instead, it claimed to have been the first regime to adopt a policy of what it termed 'positive neutralism' as a 'rejection of both Western democracy and its reformist Socialism and the Stalinist application of Socialism which the Soviet Union may have been compelled to adopt by the force of circumstances.'[77] Stressing the importance of nationalisms throughout Africa and Asia in their countries' struggle against colonialism,[78] it insisted that 'socialism can only be truly applied on the basis of the due observance of national characteristics'.[79] In a similar vein, 'Aflaq had declared in the 1930s: 'If I am asked for a definition of socialism, I shall not look for it in the works of Marx and Lenin.'[80] Indeed, up until the late 1950s, Rami Ginat considered the Ba'th 'ideologically closer to Nehru, Nasser and Tito than to the Soviet Union'.[81] However, a comparison of Ba'thist rhetoric in *Some Theoretical Propositions* of 1963 with much earlier Soviet, especially Stalinist, ideas on revolutionary change, organisation of the masses and the role of the Party reveals some striking similarities. In early twentieth-century Russia, concepts of mass organisation were mainly developed by Stalin, who retrospectively attributed their origin to Lenin's view of the trade unions and soviets, i.e. the elected workers and soldiers' councils. Against the backdrop of Marx's envisaged dictatorship of the proletariat, the October Revolution of 1917 confronted the Bolsheviks with the same challenge the Ba'th faced in 1963: theory needed to become practice, and urgently so. Once in power and for years to come, open controversy raged over the question of how to organise the masses, the Party and the state in relation to each other. Two fundamental issues to resolve were how politically to design the new

order during what was considered a transition period of Socialism, and how to structure the economy to achieve the ultimate state of communism. Within the Party leadership, but also amongst other influential groups such as the military group, the workers' opposition, the Supreme Council of the National Economy (*Vesenkha*), and the trade unions, opinions were deeply divided. Most agreed, though, that it was premature for the proletariat to exercise 'genuine communism' in the sense of participatory democracy.[82] Seemingly supporting the latter argument, Lenin was amongst those who propagated the soviets as the basis of the new system shortly after the revolution.[83] While some argued for a gradual development towards communism through education, incentives and coercion, others advocated radical centralisation and extensive state control.[84] Yet confronted with the harsh reality of civil war and a rapidly declining economy, pragmatic solutions needed to be weighed with political convictions, and led Party leaders to adapt to circumstances over time.[85] By 1918, Lenin had revised his earlier position, now supporting a strong centralised state with the Central Committee at the heart of its administration.[86] More than that, he even drew back from condemning the bourgeoisie, acknowledging instead that their technical expertise was much needed to avoid the complete collapse of the economy.[87] However, he did not go as far as Trotsky who pushed for a comprehensive, radical statisation by 'shock measures'.[88] The conflict between both positions culminated in the Trade Union Debate that broke out in spring 1920 and built the core for the question of mass organisation. Having statised two transport trade unions in his own interest, Trotsky tried to force a full incorporation of trade unions into the state, arguing that it would ensure the most efficient level of productivity.[89] From his point of view, the dictatorship of the proletariat rendered their independence superfluous, as the state itself would represent and protect the rights of workers. On a practical level, however, Lenin seems to have realised that such a radical position would provoke a strong reaction from the trade unions, and possibly put the whole revolution at risk.[90] In an attempt to ensure their cooperation, he opted for what appears to have been a compromise. In late December 1920, he explained that the dictatorship of the proletariat could not yet be exercised by the working masses themselves due to their lack of political consciousness and unity. Placed between a vanguard exercising the country's leadership for as long as the transition from a capitalist to a

Communist state remained incomplete on the one hand, and the working masses on the other, trade unions were to function as 'transition belts' between both entities. As such, they would work towards the political education of the masses, whilst at the same time representing a pool for further leadership recruitment.[91] Thus he argued that 'in this key question of the trade unions' role, from the standpoint of transition from capitalism to communism [. . .] the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised by a mass proletarian organisation. It cannot work without a number of "transmission belts" running from the vanguard to the mass of the advanced class, and from the latter to the mass of the working people.'[92] Eventually, Lenin's position emerged as the strongest, allowing for the trade unions to be granted relative autonomy in the following years.

It was this concept of transition belts developed by Lenin with respect to the trade unions that Stalin opened up in 1926 to include other types of mass organisations. In *Problems of Leninism*, he describes the role of mass organisations and their relationship with the Party as follows:

> The levers or transmission belts are those very mass organizations of the proletariat without whose aid the dictatorship cannot be realized. The directing force is the advanced detachment of the proletariat, its vanguard, which is the main guiding force of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletariat needs these transmission belts, these levers, and this directing force, because without them, in its struggle for victory, it would be a weaponless army in the face of organized and armed capital. The proletariat needs these organizations because without them it would suffer inevitable defeat in its fight for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, in its fight for the consolidation of its own power, in its fight for the building of socialism. The systematic help of these organizations and the directing force of the vanguard are indispensible because without them a dictatorship of the proletariat to any extent durable and firm is impossible.[93]

Paul Harper argues that, unlike Lenin, who counted the trade unions as the only mass organisations, Stalin was the first to include the soviets, cooperatives, and the Communist Youth League (*Komsomol*).[94] Stalin classified all four types of mass organisations as non-Party organisations,

although he conceded that the Youth League was 'associated with the Party'. Lastly, in his view, the Party itself also constituted a mass organisation.[95] Nonetheless, he agreed with Lenin on the dictatorship of the proletariat being exercised through the vanguard rather than through the working masses themselves. Importantly, he details the role of mass organisations, saying:

> The dictatorship of the proletariat consists of the guiding directions by the Party plus the carrying out of these directions by the mass organizations of the proletariat, plus their fulfilment by the population as a whole. Here, as you see, we have to deal with a whole series of transmissions and intermediary steps which are by no means unimportant elements of the dictatorship. Hence, between the guiding directions of the Party and their fulfilment there lie the will and actions of those who are led, the will and actions of the class, its willingness (or unwillingness) to carry out these directions, its ability (or inability) to carry them out in strict accordance with the demands of the situation. It need hardly be proved that the Party, in assuming the leadership, cannot but reckon with the will, the condition, the level of consciousness of those who are being led, cannot leave out of account the will, the condition, and the level of consciousness of its class. Therefore, whoever identifies the leading role of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat substitutes the directions given by the Party for the will and actions of the class.[96]

In other words, Stalin pointed to the possibility that the notion of a dictatorship would not exclude a mutual and potentially constructive relationship between rulers and ruled. In essence, he stated that his envisaged system of governance would necessitate that the ruling vanguard remained in touch with the needs and wants of the masses if it were to survive. Thus, the Party 'must not only teach the masses, but also learn from them'.[97] It would, however, guide but not supersede the mass organisations.[98] For all its rejection of other elements of Soviet Socialism, it is precisely this concept that the Baʿth put forward in 1963. However, what exactly did a mass organisation look like, and what other countries had established a mass organisation especially for women prior to 1966 that might have served as an inspiration for the Union?

Mass Organisations around the Globe prior to 1966

Long before the concept reached Syria, mass organisations were set up around the globe, with leftist and fascist regimes alike taking an interest in their function of bundling together certain sections of the population. In 1963, as in 1966, the Ba'thist regimes were short of time and under considerable pressure to reinvent the country's governance after coups that sought to uproot Syria's traditional elites, introduce drastic economic reform, sideline political competitors, and quieten popular unrest. Proven measures, while sure to have been reviewed critically, must have proved helpful in considering how to implement a socialist mode of governance. Tracing the origins of mass organisations leads us back to the beginning of the twentieth century, or the early years of the Soviet Union. Here, one of the first, if not the very first, mass organisation was Komsomol. Lenin had recognised the importance of appealing to youth in order to increase the influence of the Party as early as 1902.[99] However, only in 1918 did existing youth groups form an all-Russian Congress to debate the creation of a country-wide organisation. Communists, social democratic internationalists, left socialist revolutionaries, anarcho-socialists and non-Party members discussed its future name and the nature of its relationship with the Party. The chosen name, Komsomol, derived from the first syllables of Kommunistichekii soiuz molodezhi, or the Communist League of Youth, and it was agreed that it should be subordinate to, but not part of, the Party.[100] Notwithstanding such rhetoric, this rather loose formulation was given specificity one year later by the Komsomol and Party Central Committees when it was decided to create parallel chains of command for Komsomol groups and Party groups at every level from the local to the top in a shape resembling two pyramids. Party members younger than 20 would automatically be Komsomol members, and Party members would function as advisors to the Komsomol. Although officially 'autonomous', the Party's control of Komsomol had therewith been established.[101] Its primary task was to train a new generation of Party members, but it also set out to provide military training against the backdrop of the on-going civil war, as well as protecting and representing the rights of young workers. In this way, through the indoctrination and education of youth, it was expected to win the support of peasants in the countryside and to recruit soldiers from rural

areas.[102] Unlike the Party, which saw itself as the vanguard of the Russian revolution, Komsomol was meant to attract mass fellowship; by 1925, it counted 1,708,000 members between the ages of 14 and 23, about five per cent of the Soviet population.[103] Its parallel structure between mass organisation and Party institutions became a model for all subsequent mass organisations.[104]

Although the underrepresentation of women in the Komsomol was perceived as problematic,[105] the Soviet leadership, strikingly, did not consider the establishment of a mass organisation especially for women. Nor did it consider Zhenotdel (Women's Committee), established in 1919, to be a mass organisation. Zhenotdel, which had emerged from the All-Russian Congress of Women held the year before and was only retrospectively acknowledged by the Party, never acquired the standing of a mass organisation.[106] Formed on the initiative of a few mainly upper-class women,[107] it triggered disagreements within the Party leadership from its inception. Some disapproved of a separate section for women on the grounds that it appeared to violate the Communist principle that men and women were to be treated equally. Others, Lenin amongst them, thought the need to bring the politically uneducated masses of women into the Party legitimised the committee's existence.[108] Further opposition, though, was stirred up by the trade unions, fearing women's competition in the labour market.[109] Despite such obstacles, Zhenotdel was active in various fields such as orphan care, hygiene, education, and food distribution.[110] Officially, its purpose was to educate working-class and peasant women, drawing them into the Party, trade unions, soviets and cooperatives, and foster the opening of childcare facilities and public dining rooms.[111] Unable to overcome difficulties such as the shortage of funds and the challenge of mobilising grass roots support for its work away from the centre,[112] it was dissolved in 1930.[113]

The role of Zhenotdel reflects the Soviet regime's attitude towards women, which sought to improve their legal standing without providing full emancipation and equality. Following the 1917 revolution, women obtained equal voting rights, inheritance and married property rights, the right to divorce and to seek legal abortion.[114] However, the atmosphere of 'free love' that prevailed in the cities and the ease with which divorce now became available, made women insecure and they often resented these new frameworks more

than they welcomed them.[115] Yet Lenin and Stalin assumed that women's economic independence and integration into the labour force would eventually lead to equality of the sexes, while conceding that women's responsibilities for child-rearing and housework would need to be organised collectively and sponsored through public funding.[116] However, several scholars argue that a real change in traditional role models was not considered desirable.[117] Neither Lenin nor Stalin showed particular dedication to the issue in theory,[118] while in practice the state lacked the resources to fulfil its plans of providing childcare for working mothers.[119] After Stalin's accession to power, and at a time when women were virtually absent from influential political positions, he declared the women's question resolved.[120] Subsequently, only the Soviet Women's Committee founded by Stalin was active in propagating the advancement that communism would bring women internationally through the eradication of Fascism.[121] Women's paid work was no longer destined to provide for their liberation but to strengthen the Soviet economy. Meanwhile the family unit and the woman's role as wife and mother underwent fresh appraisal, particularly after the losses of World War II.[122] Backlashes against women's rights followed, but some of the pre-Stalin legislation was recovered under the premiership of Khrushchev (1958–64), who headed the Soviet Union at the time when the Syrian Baʿth rose to power.[123]

Thus the Soviet Union never established a mass organisation for women, but other regimes around the world recognised mass organisations as a useful tool for channelling large parts of local populations into any activities they saw fit.[124] The first mass organisation specifically for women came into being not in a socialist but in a fascist setting. In Mussolini's Italy, the first female fascist group was formed in 1920 independently of the National Fascist Party. However, it led to the establishment of the Fasci Femminili (Women's Fascist Sections), which was formally placed under the Party's direction six years later.[125] In Nazi Germany, the Deutsches Frauenwerk (German Women's Association) was established in 1933.[126] Whilst the Italian mass organisations served as a model for the Germans, the Germans gave inspiration to the Japanese, especially with respect to the creation of a women's mass organisation, the Greater Japan Women's Association, in February 1942.[127]

These fascist mass organisations for women shared the trait of incorporating, or threatening to dissolve, existing women's societies.[128]

They set out to run nurseries and kindergartens, support the male labour force, provide first aid and give advice on household management and diet.[129] In line with the views of their respective regimes, these organisations clearly saw and encouraged the role of women as that of housewives and mothers. However, only Nazi Germany went so far as to launch a campaign against employed women to end double incomes. Supported by marriage loans, the task of women was to produce 'racially pure offspring, each child reared to unswerving love for the Nazi state'.[130] The Frauenwerk even organised maids to help with housework in families with high numbers of children,[131] but this campaign was ended at the beginning of World War II, when women became a necessary part of the labour force.[132] At the same time, in Italy for example, issues such as women's pledge for suffrage and better education as pursued by earlier societies, disappeared.[133]

By contrast, socialist mass organisations for women tended to pursue a different agenda. For example, the Anti-Fascist Front of Women of Yugoslavia was instituted by Tito in 1942.[134] Five years later, and emerging from the shambles of war, East Germany saw the establishment of the Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands (Democratic Federation of Women, DFW), which had evolved into a Party-led mass organisation by 1950.[135] Outside Europe, the Chinese Communist Party set up the All-Chinese Women's Federation in 1949,[136] whilst the Federation of Cuban Women was brought to life under Fidel Castro in 1960.[137] Like the fascists, these leftist regimes also sought to eradicate the influence of competing groups.[138] However, they differed in their programmes. Established in relatively poorer countries, they organised neighborhood-support schemes, launched literacy campaigns, offered vocational training and sought to create long-term employment opportunities for women. They opened day-care centres for children of working mothers and strove for women's equality in line with the state's overall ideology.[139] Whether they were aligned with fascist or leftist regimes, the durability of and success in recruiting membership of these mass organisations for women differed vastly.[140] However, before the concept reached Syria in 1966, mass organisations for women around the globe shared a strong focus on welfare activities and typically relied on volunteers to implement a Party-directed vision of the state's new order, be it of right or left. As the Baʿth tried to implement its ideas, what place did it envisage for women?

Women with the Baʿth in Power

After the 1963 coup, it would take another four years for a Syrian mass organisation for women to come into being. During this time, however, at least officially, the understanding of the role envisaged for women in society changed. With its pan-Arab, secular and socialist outlook proclaimed under the banner of Unity, Freedom and Socialism, the Baʿth took some interest in women's concerns from its inception. Accordingly, the consideration of women's federations – at the time used in the plural – in *Some Theoretical Propositions* seems a logical result of the Baʿth Party's earlier statements. In its constitution as promulgated in 1947, article 12 provided that '[t]he Arab woman enjoys all the rights of citizenship. The Party struggles to raise [a] woman's level in order to make her fit to exercise these rights.'[141] *Some Theoretical Propositions* detailed:

> The exercise of popular democracy will remain incomplete as long as women are excluded from the public life of society. Therefore the emancipation of Arab women is a democratic as well as a human necessity. Regarding [a] woman as an inferior is an integral part of the ideology of the tribal-feudal society. Therefore the emancipation of women is one of the first tasks to be performed by the nationalist–socialist revolution, for a liberated modern democracy cannot be completely and soundly constructed unless the problem of the emancipation of women is faced up to courageously, comprehensively and as a matter of principle.[142]

The Baʿth appeared determined to prove its intentions. The new constitution provided for the creation of a National Assembly with legislative powers and appointed members. In its first composition of September 1965, eight out of 95 seats were reserved for female candidates.[143] The idea of the Assembly being to include various political and societal groups and organisations,[144] the inclusion of women was, in retrospect, explained by the fact that

> Syrian women took part in unleashing the revolution of 8 March. Hence the revolution, which believes in popular democracy, owed it to them to promptly grant them their full political and social

rights to prove their aptitude to this responsibility and to connect their struggle to that of the men.[145]

Although it had not been convened, the Assembly was enlarged in February 1966 to include 134 members, including four more women.[146] Of those women who had previously been prominent in charitable and political work, the Ba'thist Su'ad al-'Abd Allah was amongst the first to be appointed, while 'Adila Bayyhum was added to the later list.[147]

Taken together, both assemblies only lasted for a period of about six months and little information is available about the majority of the female members appointed to them. However, the known careers of four of their number – 'Adila Bayyhum, Su'ad al-'Abd Allah, Najah Sa'ati and Luris 'Azar – does suggest that an effort was made to incorporate both members of families of high standing and those whose Party membership, rather than family background alone, singled them out for a public role.[148] Su'ad al-'Abd Allah had joined the Ba'th Party while attending the University of Damascus (see previous chapter). Continuing her studies in Egypt from 1956 onwards, she acquired a high political profile as the leader of the Syrian student movement and was prominent in political debates under Nasir, participating in the first Arab students' conference in Cairo in 1958.[149] On graduating two years later, she started work for the Syrian Ministry of Media, where she ran her own radio programme. Still a committed member of the Ba'th, she was sent to the Algerian Asian–African conference in 1964 as the representative of the Party. This helped her to widen her political connections. Her appointment to the 1965 Assembly marked her transition into professional politics, where she endeavoured to stand for equality, justice and women's rights.[150]

Najah Sa'ati was living with her husband in exile in Moscow when, like Khalid Bakdash, the exiled General Secretary of the SCP, she was visited by the Syrian ambassador to Moscow in 1963 and asked to join the Syrian People's Assembly.[151] Despite their different educational backgrounds, Najah Sa'ati's professional independence, social engagement and political activism resemble those of of Su'ad al-'Abd Allah. By contrast, Luris 'Azar's appointment was not an openly political one. Born in Aleppo in 1929[152] to an Aramaic Christian family, Luris and her siblings grew up with their father Iliyas 'Azar following her mother's untimely death from an incurable illness. While her sister got

married and her brothers went to live and study abroad to become lawyers, engineers and doctors, Luris attended a Franciscan school where she became very active in the Girl Scout movement.[153] From being on the school Scout committee, she was soon made chairwoman of the city Girl Scouts before rising quickly through the movement at national, Arab and international level.[154] Luris ʿAzar joined the Jamʿiyyat mukafahat al-sill (Society against Tuberculosis), becoming a voluntary administrative worker for the society in 1954. Together with ʿAtifa al-Jabiri, Jamila Ibrahim and others, she was active in the Jamʿiyyat al-khayriyya al-nisaʾiyya (Society of Women's Charity) in Aleppo.[155] Her engagement with the International Red Crescent in Aleppo took her on several trips to Europe in the 1950s, and she was also active for the Nuqtat al-halib (Drop of Milk).[156] From 1960 onwards, she had been in touch with ʿAdila Bayyhum's Union of Women's Societies in Damascus.[157] Like her, she was appointed to the Assembly in the second round of nominations. She was later honoured by the Roman Catholic bishop of Aleppo for her charitable works, receiving the papal recognition medal in 1969.[158]

There is no mention of her political convictions at the time of her appointment, and with her charitable activities, Luris ʿAzar's background prior to 1965 resembles that of ʿAdila Bayyhum and the first founders of Syrian women's societies. However, while carrying on with her social engagement, she also made a political career for herself as the only woman in the council of the governorate of Aleppo (majlis al-muhafaza) for 23 years.[159] The choice of these four women illustrates that, despite their alleged radicalism, the neo-Baʿthist regime did include members of the old elites in their list. At the same time, however, they gave rise to a new generation of politically active women.

Theory Becoming Practice: The Establishment of the Union

In line with *Some Theoretical Propositions*, the Baʿth proceeded to give shape to its ideas of reaching out to women at large. The Syrian Party's Third Regional Congress confirmed in late 1966 the decision to set up not women's federations, but *one single* Syrian mass organisation for women.[160] With that, it took the step to a socialist model in which only one body was responsible for bringing together a particular share of the

population. The first woman to be charged with organising the task was none other than Su'ad al-'Abd Allah. According to her own accounts, she was aware that amongst her male fellow Ba'thists, political and economic considerations clearly superseded social matters, especially with regard to women and the family. Yet she was determined to make space for women's concerns, a process in which she believed the revolution was only the first step.[161]

The idea of establishing a women's mass organisation must have made this appear more feasible than ever before. As we have seen, 'Adila Bayyhum's Union of Women's Societies in Damascus had united some of the country's women's societies, yet it had not interfered substantially with their individual concerns, funds, or day-to-day work. However, the Ba'th argued that this model was incapable of achieving a coherent and wide-reaching advancement of women at large.[162] While Union publications tend to not elaborate on earlier women's societies in any detail, Nabila al-Razzaz points out that

the societies spent their utmost efforts in serving the people in various respects, which was done with a passion that cannot be denied; however, these societies could in no way cover all the needs of the female population throughout the country, ranging from consciousness in education and the eradication of illiteracy to that in politics, social matters or vocation. They were small, scattered and possessed only little income based on donations and assistance by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The advancement of women in this country, which has suffered from many forms of backwardness inherited from colonialisation, is not a simple issue; therefore, it is vital to keep the whole country in sight, study its needs, set priorities, and ensure access to women even in the remotest and tiniest villages. This would not be feasible for any given society on its own regardless of its efforts, and belief in the necessity of its work. Likewise, even within a union of these societies, this is difficult since it requires central planning proceeded by detailed studies. It needs to be spread amongst the whole of the people, in each village, city and locality. Therefore, it was imperative for the women's organisation [i.e. the Union, EM] to branch out into the whole country so that every woman could participate in building the Arab socialist society in our country.[163]

Hence, from a Baʿthist point of view, only one single women's union would guarantee a unified approach towards women's advancement. At the same time, the establishment of mass organisations also represented a tool for exercising greater political control, especially against the background of weak popular support and internal struggles.[164] In the case of a women's organisation, it would draw sections of society into a Party-led organisation that would otherwise remain remote from the ideological influence propagated by the Baʿth, while their inclusion opened up an avenue for direct contact.

Such considerations led to the setting up of a central preparatory council (*lajna tahdariyya*) as the first step towards establishing the Syrian Women's Union. Headed by Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah in recognition of her previous engagement, it came under the remit of the chairman of the Office for Popular Organisations in the Baʿth Party's Regional Command.[165] Once inaugurated, the Union as a whole was overseen by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as it still is.[166] The

Figure 2.1   Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah heading the Union's central preparatory council (1966)

central preparatory council was tasked with holding meetings with women throughout the country, in particular those who had previously been active in charitable work, to gather ideas about how to form such an organisation. All the members of the council were women and, like Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah, were Baʿthists, although their names are unknown.[167]

In a second step, preparatory councils were also set up throughout the governorates.[168] They enlisted women who were considered capable of taking a leading role in establishing the Union by running offices, winning new members, organising activities, and spreading the message. Also, according to Union sources, these councils were to lead discussions about the drawing up of internal regulations (*nizam dakhili*) for the Union. A media campaign, backed by a television programme, would ensure that the ideas of the greatest possible number of women were collected.[169] Unlike the central preparatory council, those at governorate level included both Baʿthist and independent women.[170] A detailed written account of the Union's beginnings in the Aleppo governorate outlines how, after 1963, women who identified with the aims of the revolution got in touch with each other. Over the phone and through house visits, they arranged small meetings, including many in a well-known local primary school and the teachers' college.[171] On 7 August 1967, they are reported to have announced the establishment of a local preparatory council of the Union with Georgette Fuʿad as chairwoman, Jamila Jaza as her deputy, Daʿd Siris as secretary, and Rijaʾ Kurdi as treasurer.[172] However, women who were amongst the founding members in Aleppo also remembered that before this, Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah had gone to see the mayor ʿAbd al-Ghani al-Saʿdawi and his wife to enquire about the wives of Party members and others experienced in social work. The women whose names had been mentioned were then invited to a meeting where the idea of the General Union of Syrian Women was explained to them, along with its future tasks, and the role that the women present could choose to take up. Seven women were appointed to the governorate's preparatory council:[173] Yuman al-ʿAsar, Hind Khamash, Rijaʾ Kurdi, Georgette Maʿtar, Georgette Fuʿad, Jamila Jaza, and Thurayya Muhy al-Din.[174] Amongst these, most were teachers or in paid employment. Like Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah, Yuman al-ʿAsar, the daughter of a translator, came from Banyas and attended secondary school in al-Ladhiqiyya before studying philosophy and education in

Damascus, where both women had become friends. At the time of her appointment, she was the head of the Teachers' College in Aleppo, where she had moved after her marriage. Hind Khamash was an employee at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and Rija' Kurdi worked in social insurance. Georgette Maʿtar was head of the Madrasat al-muhabba (School of Affection), and was also originally from al-Ladhiqiyya.[175] Georgette Fu'ad was the wife of a high-ranking military officer and headteacher of a school, as was Jamila Jaza.[176] All these women started their engagement with the Union on a purely voluntary basis, and headed to their meetings in the afternoons in addition to their regular working hours.[177]

Since it proved impossible to set up the Union everywhere at the same time, it became active earlier in some places than in others. In Damascus, two months before the Aleppo branch was set up, the new women's organisation underwent its baptism of fire when Syria was attacked by Israeli forces during the Six Day War (5–10 June 1967).[178] On the second day, the Union's provisional central and administrative councils there received requests from the Central Committee for Civil Defence, the military hospital and the Harasta hospital in Damascus to provide any help available. Women were called upon to collect donations of blankets, sheets and clothes, and the office of the central preparatory council became a sewing room making surgical dressings and bandages for the wounded. Other Union members gave first aid in local hospitals, or worked as voluntary relief workers with the Ministry of the Interior. More than 750,000 refugees had fled the governorate of Qunaytra and the southern border villages of Damascus. Most had been given temporary accommodation in schools or private homes, but they still needed to be provided with basic bedding, clothing and food, which those affiliated to the rising Union helped supply.[179] Although no mention is made of support being given by other women's societies, those who were active assumed the role undertaken by individual women and other women's societies previously, and it seems more than likely that the latter were also involved in these voluntary activities.

The war ended for Syria with the loss to Israel of the Golan Heights in Qunaytra. A few weeks later, on 26 August 1967, the General Union of Syrian Women was established by legal decree no. 121 under the Baʿthist government of Nur al-Atassi.[180] At this date, the preparatory councils officially ceased to exist. In their place, the Union's executive

office was set up in the Malki district of Damascus, and administrative offices began to be founded in each governorate.[181] The first to open was the Damascus administrative office (23 October 1967),[182] followed by Dira'a (10 November 1967) and then Hums, al-Ladhiqiyya, Tartous, and al-Suwayda' to the south and the west (20 November 1967).[183] One month later administrative offices were set up in Aleppo, Dayr al-Zur, al-Hasaka and al-Raqqa in the north and the east of the country (9 December 1967).[184] It appears that the administrative office in Idlib was opened in the same year, although no exact date is available.[185] Hamah seems to have founded its administrative office in either 1967 or 1968, and the process was completed with administrative offices in Qunaytra (1968) and Damascus countryside (1969).[186]

These administrative offices were to oversee the further establishment of smaller offices over the coming years, a process that was still ongoing just before the outbreak of the current war, more than four decades later. From the very beginning, the Union had a hierarchical structure. Based on the country's administrative structure, four different types of offices were to be founded: the smallest entity of a unit (*wahda*, pl. *wahadat*) were the Union's offices at the rural or urban neighbourhood
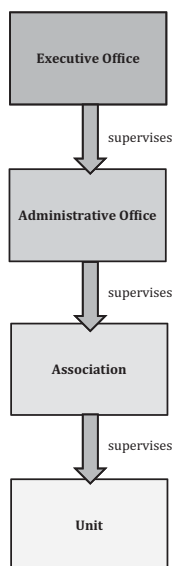

Figure 2.2   Hierarchy of offices

level; above them were the associations (*rabita*, pl. *rawabit*), slightly bigger offices that supervised the work of at least three units in a whole village or an urban suburb; then came the administrative offices (*maktab idari*, pl. *makatib idariyya*), one of which supervised the work of all the units and associations within each of the Syrian governorates; and, finally, the executive office at the national level (*al-maktab al-tanfidhi*), as shown on the previous page (Figure 2.2).

While the Union was overseen by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for administrative purposes, all its decision-making processes were supervised by the Party through parallel entities at each level. In the Party hierarchy, a Union association reported to the Party's section (*shuʿba*, pl. *shuʿab*), a Union branch was under the responsibility of the Party's branch (*firqa*, pl. *firaq*), and the executive office was supervised by the office for mass organisations in the Regional Command (*al-qiyada al-quturiyya*).[187] Based on this administrative framework, according to one of the earliest accounts published one year after the official establishment date, the Union sought to expand its membership and office structure. It began to provide military training (*al-tadrib ʿala haml al-silah*), classes on first aid and nursing, literacy classes, classes for sewing and vocational and technical training, and it also established nurseries and kindergartens.[188]

Thus, with the establishment of the General Union of Syrian Women, a rich tradition of individual women's efforts and societies in various parts of the country seems to have been channeled into a single women's organisation that was organised hierarchically and linked closely to the Party. While earlier societies had remained largely independent and carried out their projects on an individual basis, even when operating within the framework of ʿAdila Bayyhum's Union, the Baʿthist model spelled the benefits of a single, unified and centralised body aimed at fostering the development of women through projects similar to those that had existed earlier. As has been shown, in Syria the institution of a mass organisation was not unique to women. But where did this idea come from originally?

Tracing the Origins: Syria's Foreign Relations prior to 1966

We have seen that various state-led mass organisations for women had been set up in other countries prior to the establishment of the Union,

but how exactly had the idea reached Syria? In his research examining the example of the Revolutionary Youth Federation as a Syrian mass organisation, Raymond Hinnebusch suggested that its structure and patterns of recruitment followed the Leninist ideal.[189] Likewise, Gregory Kasza points to the Soviet Union when it comes to the origins of Syrian mass organisations.[190] However, as I have already indicated, unlike other socialist states, the Soviet Union never established a mass organisation especially for women. Therefore, did the Soviet model serve as the blueprint for the structure of Syrian mass organisations, and was later extended to a mass organisation for women, or did the idea of a mass organisation for women emerge from Syria's foreign relations with states other than the Soviet Union? As a third option, is it possible that it was primarily the contact of earlier Syrian women's societies with foreign women's organisations that led to the creation of the Union as a mass organisation? Considering the Baʿthist socialist outlook, an analysis of Syria's foreign policy relations under the Baʿth during the period in question, i.e. roughly between the first coup of 1963 and the creation of mass organisations including the Union up to 1967, suggests three potential sources of inspiration for Baʿthist state-building: the Soviet Union and its satellite states; the GDR and Yugoslavia in particular; and China.[191]

Indeed, the Syrian regime of 1963 maintained those same relations with the Soviet Union that had evolved under several previous governments in the form of military and technical aid as well as educational and cultural relations.[192] From the Soviet perspective, the standing of the SCP had always been a prevailing factor, but the new regime's refusal to grant it legal status put relations between the two countries under serious strain, especially when seen against the situation in neighbouring Baʿthist Iraq where the bloody persecution of Communists prompted the Soviet Union to withdraw 1,500 advisors.[193] However, by the end of 1964, the Soviet Union had agreed a new arms deal with Syria, and relations became smoother despite the regime's unaltered stance on the SCP.[194] Although the Soviet Union praised Baʿthist nationalisation policies in 1965, the SCP's continued refusal to acknowledge the socialist credentials of the Baʿth meant that it remained banned.[195] One year later, however, the Soviet CP established Party relations with the Baʿth.[196] Indeed, meetings between Party officials reportedly served to share the Soviet 'experience

in Party construction and the work of Party and public organisations in Moscow and Leningrad'.[197]

Despite their treatment of the SCP, the Baʿthist regime was successful in establishing relations with China even more quickly than with Soviet Russia.[198] Only a few years earlier, Nasir's crackdown on the SCP provoked a vocal response from the SCP leader Khalid Bakdash who, during a speech hosted by China, condemned the UAR as 'a dictatorship of terror resorting to Fascist tactics against all patriotic and democratic forces'.[199] Back then, conflict around the SCP resulted in a diplomatic row between the Soviet Union, supporting the UAR, and China. Now, the troublesome situation of the SCP, even with an allegedly socialist regime in place, did not prevent China from continuing the official contacts it had maintained with Syria since the late 1950s.[200] However, China remained wary of Soviet influence on Syria, and its own role after 1963 appears to have remained rather limited: although delegations were exchanged,[201] an aid agreement reached in 1963 was still not implemented two years later.[202] Following this, the Cultural Revolution resulted in China's withdrawal from the scene by 1966–7.[203]

By contrast, the Soviet Union intensified its involvement in Syria, especially after the 1966 coup. The new regime, being internationally isolated and lacking popular anchorage,[204] welcomed Soviet support, albeit on its own terms.[205] The Soviet Union, seeking an ally against US influence in the region and fearing a counter-coup,[206] acknowledged the new regime but, as has been shown, also backed the SCP, pushing for the creation of a Progressive Front between 1966 and 1970. Nonetheless, the neo-Baʿth continued to insist on its single-party rule.[207] Although Khalid Bakdash was allowed to return to Syria from exile, the appointment of members of the Communist Party to official positions was officially attributed to their personal merits rather than recognised as Party representation.[208] Accordingly, the Communist Party remained illegal, although it became tolerated.[209] Still, Soviet aid contributed considerably to the Syrian budget.[210] As well as the regular exchange of delegations and experts between the second Baʿth regime and the Soviet Union, the rapprochement between both sides opened the door to exchanges with other Eastern bloc states. These included the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.[211]

Syria's contacts with the GDR were initially restricted by West Germany's Hallstein doctrine, which insisted that it would break off

relations with any state that recognised GDR. However, although West Germany was an attractive partner in terms of trade and aid, its recognition of Israel in 1965 prompted the first Baʿthist regime to change course, and in the following years GDR emerged as a crucial force in Syria.[212] It was mainly after 1965 that the GDR granted credit to Syria, and its advisors helped to restructure the country's finance system.[213] Indeed, GDR advisors in Syria were consulted on questions of state-building as well: in August 1966, Syrian Baʿthists were noted to have raised questions as to how the GDR's Socialist Unity Party led its own mass organisations.[214] Although the archival material available does not reveal when cooperation was first established, by 1971 discussions had taken place regarding the maintenance of bilateral relations between the mass organisations of both states.[215]

Despite the lack of detail, it is clear that the GDR was strongly involved in Baʿthist state formation and development. However, Syria's foreign relations with Tito's Yugoslavia between 1963 and 1966 remain mostly in the dark. Prior to this, Baʿth political theorists, including ʿAflaq, are known to have had close contact with the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia in the late 1950s – that is, after Tito's breakaway from the Soviet Union in 1948.[216] This was in line with the critical attitude the Baʿth officially maintained towards the Soviet Union. After this period, however, the connection is lost. Indirect contact may have been maintained through the non-alignment movement, which by 1961 had as its leading triumvirate Presidents Tito of Yugoslavia, Nehru of India and Nasir of the UAR.[217] Within this movement, ever since the first Afro–Asian conference in Brussels in 1927, a growing number of representatives from Asian and African countries had made a concerted effort to provide for a 'third way' whilst seeing themselves united in their determination to struggle against the forces of colonialism, past and present.[218] Syria had sent governmental delegates, who were recognised as 'progressive', to the second Afro–Asian conference in Delhi in 1949, which was attended by representatives from 15 states. This is remarkable as it predates Syria's official endorsement of Socialism, whilst most other countries' representatives were drawn from oppositional groups.[219] In fact, Syria was considered one of the most active members of the Afro–Asian Solidarity movement's group at the United Nations.[220] Albeit considered leftist during its early years, the movement subscribed to the policy of non-alignment, especially after

the Bandung Conference of 1955.[221] In its third conference in December 1957, the Afro–Asian Solidarity movement took the decisive step of establishing its first permanent secretariat in Cairo.[222] Before this, Nehru had played a key role in coordinating the movement's activities, but his retreat paved the way for Nasir to take charge. For him, allowing Egypt to play a pivotal role in the movement increased the opportunities for assuming an influential position in the region at large.[223] In theory, this opened the door for (officially non-Party) Syrian Baʿthists to maintain contacts with Yugoslavia; in practice, the Baʿth had withdrawn all its delegates from Syrian UAR positions by 1959 and it remained officially dissolved. Thus, it was unlikely that the rump of the Party continued to maintain the good relations with Yugoslavia it had enjoyed before. Between 1963 and 1966, Syria officially continued to pursue its doctrine of positive neutralism, but, as shown, it in fact strengthened its relations with Soviet bloc states, particularly after 1966.[224] Considering Tito's break with the Soviet Union, it appears likely that this rapprochement occurred at the expense of Yugoslav–Syrian relations.

In sum, from a foreign policy angle, evidence about the involvement of other states in the Baʿth Party's self-organisation, state-building and structuring of mass organisations remains rather sketchy. Although consultations with foreign governmental contacts and advisors, especially those from the Soviet Union and the GDR, will have played a role in these processes, another alternative to consider is the first-hand experiences of Syrians living or visiting abroad. Indeed, according to one Syrian source, it was during a trip by ʿAdila Bayyhum to the Soviet Union in 1956 that the idea of holding a Women's Conference within the framework of the Afro–Asian Solidarity movement was born. At the time, ʿAdila Bayyhum was heading a Syrian women's delegation on behalf of her union to a UN educational seminar in Moscow. After meeting Asian and African women, the delegation suggested holding an Afro-Asian women's conference.[225] In support of the Arab states, it was decided it should take place in an Arab country, whereupon ʿAdila Bayyhum approached the Egyptian ambassador to Damascus requesting that Cairo be chosen as the location. This was agreed, but the idea took another few years to materialise.[226] It is notable that no women had been present at the Bandung Conference, although a few female activists did join the 1957 Afro–Asian Solidarity movement conference in Cairo; but the idea of a conference for women only was new.[227] By 1958,

and coinciding with Syria's merger with Egypt in the UAR, the movement had not only opened its secretariat in Cairo but seven suborganisations as well, amongst them an Afro-Asian Federation for Women.[228] Two years later, ʿAdila Bayyhum joined the women's conference's preparatory council, and it was she who then headed the Syrian delegation to the conference in 1961.[229] Like ʿAdila Bayyhum, many of the delegates who had come to Egypt's capital for the Eastern Women's Conference for the Defence of Palestine in 1938 returned on the occasion.[230] Jihan al-Musuli, who had not been present earlier, joined ʿAdila Bayyhum this time.[231]

As very little research has so far been conducted into the Women's Federation, insight into its internal structure and day-to-day activities is lacking. However, the conference will have served as a forum for participants to meet and discuss how women's issues were being addressed in other countries, and how best to coordinate their efforts. Bearing in mind the development of mass organisations for women elsewhere, it is noteworthy that both China and the Soviet Union sent delegates to the conference. In fact, ʿAdila Bayyhum had maintained relations between her union and the All-Chinese Women's Federation since at least 1960, when she led another delegation to China.[232] While Syrian women had been attending international women's conferences all the while, their activities within the Arab Women's Union were unlikely to have created contacts with other women with experience of a mass organisation for women; amongst the socialist Arab states, Nasir failed to initiate an Egyptian mass organisation for women. By contrast, Algeria's National Liberation Front did establish the Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes in 1962, but from the documents available, it does not appear that any of the leading women in Syria's charitable or political work were in contact with them.[233] However, through individual links strengthened by the Afro–Asian Solidarity movement, ʿAdila Bayyhum, and others with her, were in direct contact with a women's mass organisation even before 1963, and it is striking that the structure of the later General Union of Syrian Women mirrored that of the All-Chinese Women's Federation, replicating the Soviet model for mass organisations as such.[234] While on the one hand ʿAdila Bayyhum is said to have played no part in setting up the Union after 1966, due to her age, on the other hand she was offered, and accepted, the role of honorary chair of the Union in 1970. This is remarkable considering her personal

background, which would appear to be at odds with official Baʿthist doctrine towards members of the old elite. It is also likely to hint at ʿAdila Bayyhum's having given personal advice to Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah and others, allowing them to build on decades of experience of women's engagement dating back to Ottoman times.

The history of women's unions in Syria, and ʿAdila Bayyhum's involvement in other unions since the 1930s, illustrates that the pattern of bundling the efforts of individual societies had been well under way long before the Baʿth discussed the concept of mass organisation. Consciously or not, the Baʿthists will have been aware of these tendencies towards union-building through reports in the press or personal contacts, especially as some of these unions attracted significant attention through their demands for better standards of social service in their home countries, the improvement of women's legal rights and, earlier, the right to vote. Thus when, once in power, the Baʿth started to consider the issue of organising the masses, it actually built onto a tradition that had evolved much earlier within civil society. Yet unlike previous initiatives, the Baʿth Party eventually transformed these processes into new institutions at the level of the revolutionary state. In line with its project of mobilising the masses to achieve total reform, it expanded the boundaries of the sphere of the state at the expense of civil society through incorporating its structures, ideas, and beneficiaries.[235]

Summary: A Syrian Mass Organisation for Women

When the Baʿth assumed power in March 1963, it urgently needed to turn its political vision into the everyday practice of governance. Amidst internal rivalries that resulted in a second coup three years later, the Party came to be dominated by its military wing, eventually leading to the expulsion of its founders. Whilst initiating radical economic reform based on dispossession, land redistribution and nationalisation, both regimes struggled to overcome economic crisis and disempower the old elites at the same time. The Party also lacked mass-based popular support. *Some Theoretical Propositions* elaborated on the issue of organising the masses for the first time in autumn 1963, bringing together the political writings of an array of Baʿthist thinkers. It proposed to group together sections of society in large organisations to be led by the

vanguard Party, thereby acting as transmission belts for its ideas and policies. This was the same concept of mass organisation that had emerged in the Soviet Union, especially during the trade union debate of the 1920s. Limited at first to the soviets, Komsomol and the trade unions, it had later been extended by Stalin to include other sections of society. Despite Michel ʿAflaq's earlier rejection of Marxist–Leninist ideas, the difficulties the Baʿth Party faced in implementing its policies and stabilising its rule seem to have led other Baʿthist thinkers to adopt a much more pragmatic stance towards the Soviet model.

Some Theoretical Propositions did not yet propose the establishment of one single mass organisation for women, but rather a federation. However, the very concept of setting up separate bodies for women reflected the Baʿth Party's declared intention of providing space for women in their new vision of the Syrian state and society. For the first time, women were nominated to the national assemblies of 1965 and 1966. Amongst them were both relative newcomers driven by political ambitions, such as Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah and Najah Saʿati, and long-standing activists in charitable work, such as ʿAdila Bayyhum, Jihan al-Musuli and Luris ʿAzar. By 1966, the Party had decided to channel all women's charitable work into a single mass organisation, rather than a federation. Baʿthist women headed by Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah liaised with local authorities to identify women judged capable of helping in the establishment of the Union, most of whom had enjoyed an exceptionally high level of education. Women were needed who were willing to commit to the cause, who were politically loyal and who could ideally draw upon earlier experience in the field. Based on this approach, the Union was officially established in 1967, and branches were opened throughout all the governorates in the following two years to oversee the opening of smaller offices. The Union's hierarchic structure was responsible to corresponding Baʿth Party units at all levels.

In the meantime, the doctrine of positive neutralism pursued by both the Baʿthist and the neo-Baʿthist regimes had given way to a de facto alignment with the Soviet Union. Here, it is striking that the Union's history is rooted in the global emergence of mass organisations in general, and socialist modes of governance in particular, rather than being linked to 'the Arab world'. Seeking to escape international isolation, the Baʿth sought rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc states, inviting foreign advisors to Syria to gain a better

understanding of socialist state building. As had happened in other states before them, mass organisations such as the Women's Union became one of the pillars of the politics of consolidation. While it has been shown that the general concept emerged with the Komsomol in the Soviet Union around 1918, mass organisations designed especially for women first appeared in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and wartime Japan. They later appeared in the Eastern bloc states, including Yugoslavia and the GDR, as well as China and Cuba. Fascist and socialist states shared the trait of using such organisations to eradicate alternative groups and ease their exercise of control over the population. One difference was that fascist regimes, established in countries with relatively high levels of overall literacy and living standards, used mass organisations primarily to reinforce women's traditional roles as mothers and wives while the leftist regimes that had emerged in more disadvantaged settings used them to promote women's literacy and integration into the workforce. Against the background of these traditions, a study of its foreign policy relations suggests that GDR and Soviet advisors were chiefly involved in the setting up of Syria's mass organisations. Thus, the Union's structure, as it emerged in 1967, resembles the Soviet blueprint of the Komsomol, but this was also the structure of the All-Chinese Women's Federation with which ʿAdila Bayyhum's union had been in touch even before the Baʿth came to power. It seems likely, therefore, that the shape the Union eventually took resulted from the interplay of official governmental relations as much as from the private contacts established by members of the old elite, possibly strengthened through their involvement in the Afro–Asian Women's Federation. The fact that these contacts were established at a time when socialist policies were not yet adopted in Syria, and by a member of the very elite that the Baʿth had officially rejected, suggests that the transition from one regime to the next was much less abrupt than revolutionary history seems to portray.

Linked to the emergence of political parties, the initial period of the Union's establishment shortly after the failure to establish a People's Assembly indicates a change of leading personalities. In earlier decades, women's societies had been headed by individuals of high social standing such as Nazik al-ʿAbid, Mari al-ʿAjami, ʿAdila Bayyhum, Thurayya al-Hafiz and Jihan al-Musuli, but the backgrounds of younger activists like Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah and Najah al-Saʿati were markedly different. Rather than coming from Damascus, Aleppo, Beirut or Istanbul, they were born

in Banyas and Hums. Both their families struggled to give them access to higher education, and they were forced to study away from home. Both women chose political activism, one with the Baʿth Party and the other with Communist Party, as their path forward. Najah's early career was clearly political rather than societal, as indicated by her co-founding of the Society for the Guidance of the Arab Girl just one year before she left the country. Najah al-Saʿati, on the other hand, based her efforts both on her personal achievements as a pharmacist as well as her co-founding of the Hums branch of Communist Rabita. In fact, her husband's political activism even forced the couple to flee the country until her sudden appointment to the unconvened People's Assembly. Neither of the women's families appears to have had a history in Mandate politics and the immediate struggle for Syrian independence. The latter is a trait that seems to have been shared by Luris ʿAzar as well. These three women also differ from the earlier generation in that their engagement, political or societal, was not based on their families' fortunes, but built on to non-private structures, be it the church in the case of Luris ʿAzar's involvement with the Scout movement, or the Baʿth and the Communist political parties. Despite such differences, both the appointments of women candidates to the 1965 and 1966 assemblies and the Union's early reliance on women with prior experience of Syrian charitable work demonstrate that the transition between these two types of social and political female activists was a gradual process.

With the rise of the new generation, the old order came to an end. Nazik al-ʿAbid, who had fled to Lebanon in 1927, continued her charitable activities there until she passed away in 1959.[236] Likewise, Mari ʿAjami died in 1965 before the General Union of Syrian Women came into being. In accordance with the Baʿthist decree, ʿAdila Bayyhum's union was dissolved in 1967. Although she was elected honorary president of the General Union of Syrian Women three years later,[237] she does not seem to have been involved in its activities. Despite her age, ʿAdila Bayyhum resumed her personal charitable activities during the 1973 War, visiting hospitals to take care of the wounded as she had many times before. When she died in 1975, her daughter Amal continued her work.[238] Thurayya al-Hafiz, who had started her charitable work at a very young age, lived until 2000. Her husband, who had been a major supporter of Syria's union with Egypt, became a harsh critic of Syria's new regime after the split. Thurayya was

invited to visit President Nasir in Alexandria for Egypt's July celebrations in 1963. It was here that news reached her of her husband's arrest, with search warrants issued for her and one of her sons. The three of them obtained political asylum in Egypt, but returned to Syria in 1970. Her husband Munir al-Rayyis supported the Baʿthist 1963 coup, yet his newspaper *Barada* was shut down.[239] Thurayya never joined any political party.[240] After her return to Syria, Munir supported her in reopening the literary salon she had founded, which had been closed in 1963.[241] During her last years, supported by her stepdaughter, Thurayya al-Hafiz opted to lead a secluded life grieving the deaths of her husband and her son Bashar, who died in an accident.[242] As for Jihan al-Musuli, she refrained from any political activities after Syria's secession from the UAR, to the National Council of which she had been appointed. Yet for the first time, she took up her profession as a lawyer, at which point she also resumed her activities in the Nadwa al-thaqafiyya al-nisaʾiyya (Women's Cultural Club).[243] She celebrated the society's fiftieth anniversary in 1992, still serving as its chairwoman, showing that the Nadwa, too, remained independent. Even after illness forced her withdrawal, she continued to follow the Nadwa's work until her death in 1996. Thus, with the exception of ʿAdila Bayyhum, none of the leading women whose private benevolent societies made a crucial contribution to public welfare for girls and women in Syria prior to 1963 agreed to become active in the Union – an organisation claiming to be constituted by, and led for, the masses.

CHAPTER 3

UNION MEMBERSHIP AND MOBILISATION (1967–2008)

As we have seen, the idea of mass organisations was to draw in large sections of particular groups of society. Like Lenin and Stalin, the authors of *Some Theoretical Points* viewed mass organisations as transmission belts between the vanguard Party on the one hand and the masses on the other. According to Juan C. Linz and Peter Kenez, it will be remembered, this mechanism can be viewed as one of the key elements of totalitarianism. Mass organisations are used as a tool to gather and mobilise the masses, to prevent them from withdrawing into apathy or immersing themselves in oppositional activities, and to make them active members of the system. Yet how many members constitute the 'mass' drawn into the organisation, and what groups did the General Union of Syrian Women target for recruitment?

In other parts of the world, subscription to mass organisations was officially supposed to be voluntary, but members were indirectly forced to sign up in order to access goods and services that otherwise remained inaccessible. For example, health facilities for workers in the Soviet Union were only available to the 98 per cent of workers who joined trade unions. In Nazi Germany, refusal to join the German Labour Front cost workers their jobs.[1] These mechanisms were enhanced by the eradication of alternative organisations offering similar services. Therefore, anyone deciding not to join might suffer significant disadvantages and more restricted social rights in comparison to those that did. Nonetheless, membership in mass organisations in these cases does not fall into the

sphere of political society in the Gramscian sense. Only in highly exceptional cases did citizens face prosecution for not signing up; thus although membership might be factually necessary, it is not based on coercion, but falls into the realms of hegemony and consent.

In order to highlight this point, this chapter sets out to analyse the Syrian Union's techniques for membership recruitment as well as its planning policies and actual recruitment performance as indicators of consent, here primarlily understood as consent to joining a mass organisation associated with the government and becoming active in its name. The next two chapters discuss Union services and internal procedures in the same light. Officially, in the case of the women's Union, too, membership was not a legal obligation, but women wishing to enrol in courses offered by the Union would automatically become members.[2] The question is: does the composition of Union membership indicate that certain groups were under particular pressure to join, or was Union membership voluntary? Based on the quantitative analysis of Union membership across all governorates, two factors would suggest that Union membership was not voluntary, but a necessity for certain groups: a) evidence of a quota, i.e. the finding that a fixed percentage of women were recruited into the Union in every governorate, or b) a homogeneous composition of membership, i.e. the finding that women with a certain level of education or occupation were recruited proportionately in every part of the country. By contrast, significant regional differences will indicate that Union membership was voluntary, reflecting local conditions. This hypothesis will be tested by comparing the proportion of women from similar educational and occupational backgrounds in each governorate. Lastly, it will be asked to what extent Union membership was linked to membership of the Ba'th Party, which might have served as an additional incentive, or barrier, to joining the organisation.

General Membership Development

After the official establishment of the Union on 26 August 1967, the first of its members set out to win other women to their cause. At this time the majority of the population could not read the newspaper, had no television and only rare access to the radio, so the only way to spread the word about the Union was on foot. Several founding members of the

administrative office in Aleppo remembered these early days vividly. There were only seven of them at the very beginning, and they divided the quarters of the city of Aleppo among themselves, making house visits in every neighbourhood to register the number of adults and children in a given household, together with the literacy status of its occupants. In introducing the Union they not only offered membership but also access to literacy classes. However, ignorance about the Union meant they were often met with suspicion, if not outright rejection. One member recalled:

> At the time, nobody had ever heard about a thing called 'the Women's Union'. [They would say:] 'I've never heard of that. Women are at home, bringing up the children. . .' If you explained the idea to them, they would say: 'No'. We often observed that men thought we wanted to take their place. But on the contrary: We explained that we wanted to educate women so they could bring up their children better and be better at their housework. But we faced so many problems and got so tired of the countless times people would shut their doors in our faces. Nobody ever let us in at the time. But despite that happening on the first and second visits, we carried on until we had made a complete survey of all the residential areas. We had everybody registered, for instance so-and-so has four or five children, some of them going to school and some of them to the kindergarten, and some not attending school at all.[3]

Likewise, members of the newly established Union also visited women in tobacco factories and public bath-houses. They attended parents' days in schools, nurseries and kindergartens to talk to mothers, and went into the countryside to speak to women working in the fields.[4] Here, it proved important to liaise with a well-respected local woman, who would then help to convince others to join. In one member's account:

> We also reached out to the women peasants. We reached them by going into the countryside and picking an outstanding woman from a village, a woman everybody liked and who had a good reputation [. . .]. We made the women we saw working in the fields and threshing the wheat aware [of our classes]. We asked them to

sit down with us so that we could talk to them. We talked to each of them, one by one, and told them: 'We are from the Women's Union, come and learn how to sew, come and learn how to read and write.' We told them: 'Look, if your son is in the military, is it better for you to ask your neighbour to read out his letters to you and write yours to him, or is it better if you know how to do it yourself? Also, if your children go to school and they have to study and to do their homework, is it not better if you are better educated yourself?'[5]

Indeed, the question of female education went to the very heart of the Union's concerns. It was founded with the declared aim of enabling women to engage actively and fully side by side with men in the formation of Syrian society in the spirit of the Party and the revolution. Therefore, the role of the Union was to encourage, channel and bring together women's activities, and to raise women's standards socially, culturally, politically and economically.[6] In Unionist discourse, women's engagement on all four of these levels was intrinsically linked. Since women constituted half of society, their status was considered vital for the advancement of society as a whole. The state of backwardness, ignorance, and widespread poverty that the revolution aimed to overcome was blamed on the country's colonial past. It was argued that in past centuries, the people as a whole had been deprived of education and prosperity so that their rulers could control their destiny more easily. Women's previous exclusion from the country's workforce was considered a crucial contributory factor to its poor economic state[7] and accordingly women's 'economic liberation' was a key concept in the Union's philosophy during its early years, and with it women's education and training. The revolution needed to rest on a sound economic and material basis, and the low number of employed women was seen as a waste of valuable resources.[8] In the Union's view, until now half of Syrian society had not been allowed to contribute to its production and growth. Now, all citizens, men and women alike, were required to work towards this end.[9]

In its attempts to widen its membership base to spread its message, the Union had to recognise that the degree of acceptance given to the education of women, and their economic, political and social engagement, differed widely across the regions. Its main challenge was

to integrate women who had previously had no part in any form of social engagement into its activities. These were mainly of two kinds. Firstly, there were those whom the Union identified as belonging to the middle class, whom it accused of aspiring to the withdrawn life of 'bourgeois women'. In the Union's view, they needed to be convinced that their engagement with society, whose deplorable state would be illustrated through scientific study, was indispensable. The majority of women whom the Union aimed to reach, however, were those of the 'toiling class'. They were seen as the Union's main constituency, and were considered to suffer most from social injustice.[10] Some of them maintained an active role through working in the fields with their husbands and taking care of the stock. Others were prevented from even leaving the house, which according to social and religious traditions was their true natural environment. Here, the Union saw its members' task as stressing the importance of women's work in contributing to the family's financial means as well as to the national income as a whole.[11] In this way, women's economic liberation would go hand in hand with bringing about the desired change in social norms and people's minds.[12]

In aiming to encompass all sections of society, the Union also based its argument for women's liberation and full participation in society on an abstract notion of equality, at least when speaking to women: it saw its mission as a humane duty as well as a political necessity. In her opening speech to the Union's 1976 conference, the Union deputy chairwoman Salma Najib described the Baʿthist revolution as a 'white revolution'. She stressed how, irrespective of sex, colour or belief (*ʿaqida*), it treated people as a source of power. In an attempt to create a humane society, women would support men, and based on their particular knowledge, experience and capabilities, exercise their role on behalf of popular democracy,[13] echoing earlier arguments by Baʿthist writers in *Some Theoretical Propositions*.[14] In this light, the Union had the additional task of familiarising women with pan-Arab socialist awareness (*al-waʿi al-qawmi al-ishtiraki*).[15]

As time went on, recruitment strategies changed. During the 1980s, the Union continued to bring women together in private houses, workplaces and at parents' councils, but new propaganda channels were also used to spread the word: sermons preached in churches and mosques, television and radio programmes, now much more widely available, and wall posters.[16] In this way, active Union members continued to recruit

women either to become active members themselves or to take part in Union activities. These included a wide range of social services such as literacy classes, vocational training, medical training and health services.

General Membership Development, Countrywide

Using these methods, the Union widened its membership base from 19,126 women in 1973 to 395,316 in 2008.[17] The Union's planning polices set annual targets for membership growth based on planning policies. These are listed in Union reports alongside official membership increases per year and per term, as well as total membership figures at the end of each term. However, problems arise when relating the Union's total membership figures at the end of each term to the Union's data on membership growth per year/term, the statistics for which are kept separately. In fact, the sum of all increases in annual/term membership leads to a significantly higher overall result than total membership figures in 2008 (460,845 members vs 395,316).[18] Hence the Union cannot have used the annual/term increase figures to calculate its overall membership.

In order to establish the actual growth in membership, I subtracted the total end of term membership figures for 2004 from those of 2008. The result is called the *real* term increase between 2004 and 2008. I then repeated the procedure for all terms back to 1973−6.[19] The results show that real membership increases always remained below official membership increases, with the exception of 1980−3 when the figures were presented as exactly even, and 1999−2003 when real increase exceeded official increase.[20] The term 1984−8 even revealed a dramatic loss of members in real figures that the official figures concealed.
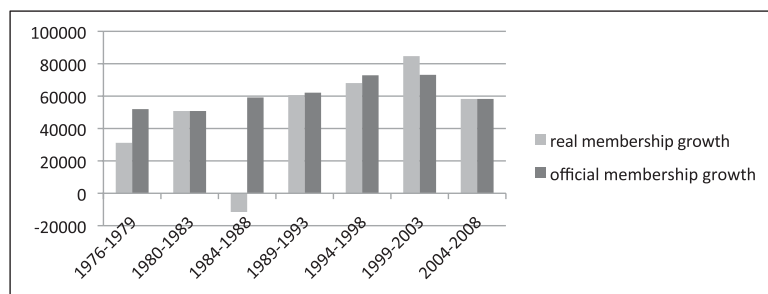
Figure 3.1   Real membership vs official membership (1976−2008)

Nonetheless, the results of these calculations led straight back to the first official total membership figures in 1973 (19,126 members). Consequently, I deduced that the subtraction result for each term represents the real increase in membership, and that it is these figures that the Union used to calculate its total membership figures, although they were never listed in their reports. However, this does not mean that the official membership figures are fictional, in particular since all statistics regarding the educational or professional background of members are based on these figures. Rather, it is assumed that these members were indeed recruited, but that at the end of each given term, some other members left the organisation through resignation, expulsion, or death.[21]

In principle, the Union's expansion in membership was achieved through its policy of setting annual targets.[22] Planned membership growth per term decreased from 84.1 per cent in 1976 to 16.8 per cent in 2004–8, while real membership growth declined from 65.6 per cent to 16.9 per cent over the same period.[23] This means that, although the Union had lowered both its expectations for growth and its actual success in winning additional members over time, membership had still expanded by about a fifth by 2004–8. Judging from the countrywide average, initial recruitment was mostly able to meet planned targets.[24] In terms of maintaining membership throughout each term based on countrywide averages, this did not prove possible in the late 1970s and 1980s, but targets turned out to be more realistic afterwards.[25]

Differences in General Membership, by Governorate

Against the backdrop of these general developments, the Union's performance in individual governorates provides a more detailed insight into the dynamics of its constituent membership. Indeed, the comparison of planned, official and real membership growth per governorate points to considerable regional variety. While planned membership decreased in all governorates by and large, the timing of planned peaks and lows in recruitment differed and set targets were much higher in some governorates than in others. For example, between 1976 and 2008, the Union in Damascus was expected to increase its membership by an average 64.4 per cent, while the increase was set at only 30.6 per cent in al-Raqqa.[26] In addition, it becomes clear that countrywide averages also conceal differences in initial recruitment and the Union's ability to maintain membership in individual governorates.

For example, Damascus recruited almost 50 per cent more members than expected in 1976–9, while recruitment in al-Hasaka remained below target. However, on average across all terms, all governorates were able to recruit slightly more members than expected.[27] Yet, in the long run, maintaining membership posed a much more serious challenge to the Union in most, but not all, governorates. From 1976 to 2008, the Union in al-Suwayda', Hums and al-Ladhiqiyya was able to keep up membership increase in line with targets, while all other governorates remained below planned increase on average.[28] In other words, newly recruited members in these three governorates were more likely to stay in the organisation in the long term. For all other governorates, the results show that although countrywide averages per term suggest a successful attempt at maintaining membership increase from the 1990s onwards, the performance of the Union in most governorates considered individually across time is in fact slightly negative. With exceptions, this is mainly due to significantly lower results in the earlier years.

This data demonstrates that the Union applied individual planning policies in each governorate, but also that it met with different in local outcomes. While this is an immediate indicator of the voluntary nature of Union membership, members did not always resign from the Union as a matter of choice but could be expelled. For example, the low point in membership recruitment that occurred during the term of 1984–8 affected individual governorates to a vastly different extent. Total figures show that Damascus experienced the most dramatic fall, losing two-thirds of its membership. Declines also occurred in Qunaytra, Hums, Hamah, Aleppo, Dayr al-Zur, and al-Hasaka, but figures remained positive in the Damascus countryside, Dira'a, al-Suwayda', al-Raqqa, Tartous and al-Ladhiqiyya, while Idlib even increased its membership by almost 30 per cent.[29] Although the sources make no mention of this event, one interviewee pointed out that membership declined sharply in the early 1980s when the Union underwent a purge caused by the struggle for power between Hafiz al-Asad and his brother Rifa'at.[30] In 1983, Hafiz al-Asad fell ill with heart problems and exhaustion. Forced to withdraw from the political stage for several months, he gave instructions for his temporary replacement by a six-man committee nominated by him personally. According to Patrick Seale, high army and Party officials, fearing the President was about to die, rallied behind Rifa'at, head of Syria's defence companies, although he had not been included in the

committee. Rifaʿat had for several years criticised some of his brother's policies, despite supporting him loyally. The decision was taken to replace the six-man committee with 18 of their number, contrary to the President's explicit orders. Hafiz, who recovered within a few months, was angry that his instructions had been ignored at the highest level, but Rifaʿat did not stand down. By March 1984, Rifaʿat's men and tanks, representing a third of the country's land forces, occupied strategic positions throughout Damascus, with no effective counter-forces in the city. The crisis was finally solved, not by a violent clash, but by a heated confrontation between the two brothers, and Rifaʿat decided to give in.[31]

During these months, as Seale observed, people were forced to take sides. By May, a deal had been brokered for Rifaʿat to leave the country, officially as a delegate to Moscow. In fact, he had been banned from the country, together with 150 of his closest supporters. He remained in exile for another seven years, before being allowed to return home for his mother's funeral. As Seale observes, in the weeks after Rifaʿat's departure, significant numbers of the army and Party members loyal to him were removed from their positions.[32] The same was true of the Union's deputy chairwoman at the time, who was Rifaʿat's daughter.[33] The Union data here supports the interviewee's memory of events, showing clearly that the same measures were taken in the Women's Union. This makes it likely that other mass organisations were affected as well.[34] The drastic extent of these measures illustrates how seriously the danger of internal unrest was taken. At the same time, it also confirms what Seale says of Syria as a whole: the incident was clothed in silence.

Leaving aside this crisis, which led to a forced dismissal of members, it is possible that the differing degrees of success the individual governorates encountered in sustaining Union growth owed more to accessibility than to the voluntary nature of membership. Despite the Union's attempt to recruit members in the fields and in factories, it could be argued that urban environments provided a better infrastructure to expand numbers and to make it possible for members to attend Union events. In order to test this argument, governorates were grouped according to their share of urban/rural populations, based on the average data of the national censuses of 1970, 1981, 1994 and 2004.[35] For the purpose of this analysis, in line with the censuses, the administrative centres of each governorate were considered urban, as well as the centres of administrative districts

(*manatiq*), and every agglomeration of more than 20,000 inhabitants.[36] The governorates with the highest urban populations were in group 1, those with the lowest in group 4.

Surprisingly, the analysis of planned and real membership figures per governorate demonstrates that the urban/rural environment had no impact. For example, Damascus (group 1) was expected to achieve a similar increase in membership as Idlib (group 4). At the same time, the Union performed differently in governorates of similar type. For example, al-Suwayda' (group 3) was one of three governorates to surpass planned targets over the long term, while al-Hasaka (also group 3) was one of the governorates that struggled most to maintain its membership. In this, it was joined by al-Ladhiqiyya (group 2), which is surprising because, as the home governorate of the al-Asad clan, it is often regarded as the regime's stronghold. However, in the case of the Union, it actually showed most difficulties in fulfilling its goals.[37] Thus, both the Union's success or failure in achieving planned recruitment targets and in maintaining membership were irrespective of the urban/rural characteristics of a given region, meaning that other factors must have been more decisive.

GUSW share in female population over 14	1970 [1973]	1994 [1993]	2004 [2003]	average	group
Damascus	0.9	3.6	6.6	3.7	1
Damascus countryside	1.3	4.3	4.7	3.4	2
Qunaytra	26.6	84.3	82.9	64.6	4
Dira'a	1.2	8.1	10.1	6.5	4
al-Suwayda	2.1	17.5	25.1	14.9	3
Hums	1.1	4.8	6.8	4.2	2
Hamah	2.0	4.6	6.3	4.3	3
Aleppo	0.3	2.2	2.5	1.7	1
Idlib	1.2	6.3	6.6	4.7	4
al-Raqqa	2.2	8.6	8.5	6.4	2
Dayr al-Zur	2.6	5.7	6.4	4.9	3
al-Hasaka	1.0	4.2	4.1	3.1	3
Tartous	1.9	8.9	11.0	7.3	4
al-Ladhiqiyya	1.5	4.8	6.3	4.2	2
Average	3.3	12.0	13.4	n/a	n/a

Figure 3.2 Share of Union members amongst females aged 14+ per governorate

Union Members in the Population as a Whole

Based on these general trends, how strong was the Union's representation in different parts of the country, and does the composition of its membership suggest it was a necessity for certain groups? The following table provides an overview of Union membership in the female population per governorate.[38]

At first sight, the countrywide distribution of Union membership seems to deny the possibility of its being factually compulsory. On average, Union membership increased from 3.3 per cent by 1973 to 13.4 per cent by 2004. As a result of differences in planning policies and recruitment, the share of Union members among the female population in individual governorates varies widely: for example, only 0.3 per cent of women in Aleppo were Union members by 1973, with most other governorates ranging between one and two per cent. Yet in Qunaytra, more than one woman in five was a member at that time. By 2004, these figures had risen to 2.5 per cent in Aleppo and to more than 80 per cent in Qunaytra. Hence we can conclude that the Union did not have a quota in place. However, was membership homogeneous in that certain groups of women were recruited proportionately in every part of the country?

Composition of the Membership

In principle, it is possible that the differences in planning and recruitment that led to these results were due not to the presumed voluntary character of Union membership but to the Union's targeting of particular groups of women only, who were represented to varying degrees in the individual governorates. For example, the Union may have targeted illiterate women, who constituted a much bigger group in some governorates than in others. Alternatively, since the only data the Union gathered about new recruits concerned education and occupation, certain groups of educated and working women may have been of particular interest to the Union. If this were the case, women of similar backgrounds would be drawn into the Union to similar extents, indicating that membership of these groups was considered crucial. They might also have been offered benefits that were not otherwise available. If so, a homogenous composition of Union membership would support the idea that it was subject to pressure.

Educational Background of Members

Union statistics on education break members down into illiterates (*ummiyat*), semi-literates (*muta'allimat*) and those who have received elementary schooling (*ibtida'iyya*), preparatory schooling (*i'dadiyya*), secondary schooling (*thanawiyya*), vocational training (*ahliyyat al-ta'lim*), training in the intermediate institutes (*ma'had mutawasit*), bachelor degrees (*ijaza*), diplomas (*diblum*), MAs (*majistayr*) and doctorates (*dukturah*). This data is provided for new members joining the Union each term (official membership figures), and for the total Union membership at the end of each term. However, only the data for new recruits will be studied in this section as it proved impossible to verify how regularly the records on educational and professional background in the total membership were updated. Unfortunately, no data is available on the educational background of members before 1980.

Education of Women in General vs Union Members, Countrywide

A countrywide overview based on average levels of education among new members across all terms[39] identifies several trends.

To begin with, it is striking that after 1984 illiterate women never constituted the majority, nor even a significant share of Union recruits. Over time, their intake decreased, with a slight increase again during the term for 2004–8. By and large, the share of women with no or partial literacy skills and full primary education decreased in favour of those
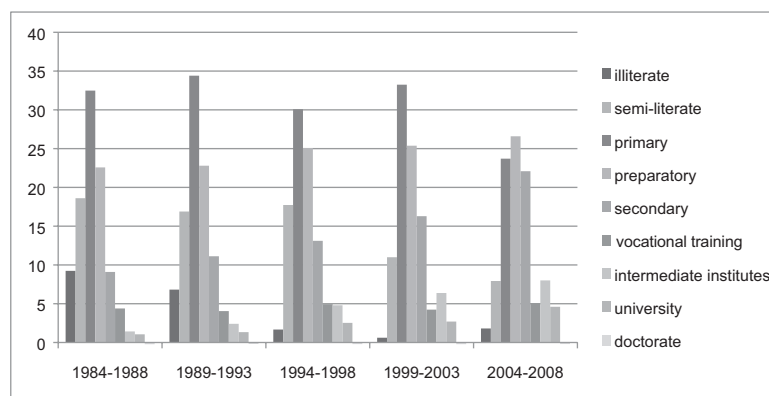
Figure 3.3 Educational background amongst new recruits per term countrywide, 1984–2008

Level of education	% females (1981 census)	% Union recruits (1980–3)	% males (1981 census)
Illiterate	54.5	15.3	21.9
semi-literate	20.2	14.9	31.5
primary	15.2	33.0	26.4
intermediate	5.5	23.2	9.3
secondary	2.9	8.5	6.6
vocational	1.1	3.8	1.6
university	0.6	0.4	2.5
doctorate	0.0	1.0	0.1
not stated	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100	100	100
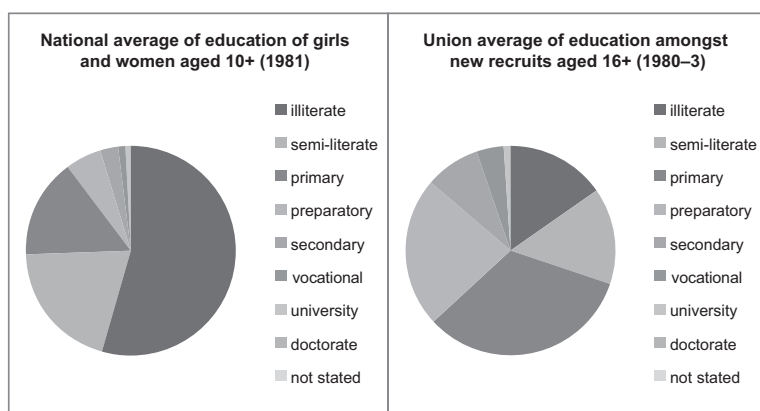
Figure 3.4   National average of education of women vs education of new Union members, 1981

who had attended preparatory and secondary schools, the intermediate institutes, or even graduated from university. In addition, new recruits tended to have obtained a higher level of education as time went on. Do these trends coincide with the degree to which these levels of education were represented amongst women in the population at large? The comparison of data on the education of Union members with that of women in the whole population in 1981 and 2004 shows that this was not the case.[40] In the 1981 census, 54.5 per cent of all girls and women were registered as illiterate, while only 15.3 per cent of new Union recruits between 1980 and 1983 were unable to read and write. At all other levels, new Union members proved to have been more highly

Level of education	% females (2004 census)	% Union recruits (1999–2003)	% males (2004 census)
Illiterate	25.8	0.6	12.3
semi-literate	29.8	11.0	33.3
primary	16.6	33.2	20.2
intermediate	12.9	25.4	15.1
secondary	8.0	16.3	9.9
vocational	4.2	4.2	4.0
university	2.2	6.4	4.5
doctorate	0.0	2.7	0.1
not stated	0.5	0.0	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
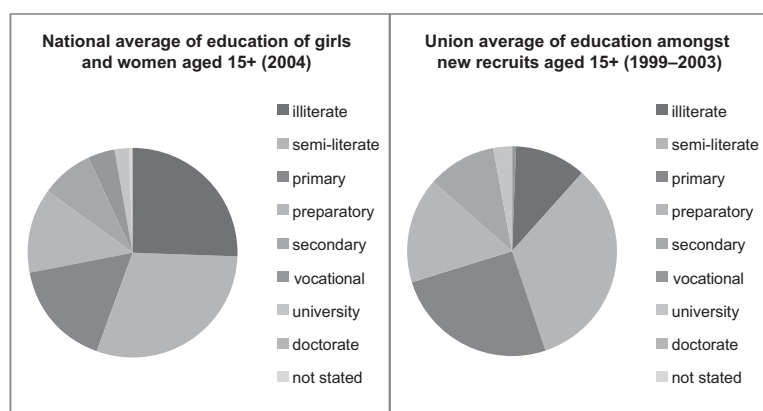
Figure 3.5   National average of education of women vs education of new Union members, 2004

educated than the national average.[41] Remarkably, at some educational levels, the concentration of Union members was even higher than the national average of the male population in the respective age groups. In total, 70 per cent of Union members had completed formal education, but only 46.5 per cent of men.[42]

By 2004, the same tendency still prevailed. Although 25.8 per cent of girls and women over 15 were illiterate, this was true for only 0.6 per cent of new Union recruits. The share of women with primary, intermediate or secondary education and university education was twice as high amongst new Union recruits as amongst women as a whole. Again, Union recruits often showed a higher average educational level than the male population in the same age groups (88.3 per cent of new

Union recruits had completed formal schooling, but only 54.5 per cent of men).[43]

It can be concluded, therefore, that although the Union explicitly declared its openness to women from all sections of society, in terms of education, it was primarily composed of women who had benefited from different levels of formal schooling. While this cannot be established with certainty for the period before 1980 due to the lack of data, it is so strong a trend in the early 1980s that it appears very unlikely to have been significantly different in earlier years.

Education of Members per Governorate vs Women in General

As for the question whether Union membership was homogeneous with respect to education across all the governorates, Union data reveals that this was not the case. For example, in Dayr al-Zur around 16 out of 100 women were illiterate upon entering the Union, but only about 1 out of 100 were in Aleppo, al-Ladhiqiyya and Tartous.[44] The same disparity, which is more strongly pronounced when comparing individual terms, is also found at all other levels of education but does not simply reflect the prevalence of particular levels of education in a given governorate. It is true that new recruits in primarily urban governorates (groups 1 and 2) had reached higher levels of education than those coming from mainly rural governorates (groups 3 and 4).[45] This possibly reflects regional differences in the provision of schooling and school attendance that emerged under the Mandate, when some members would have graduated, especially if they had entered the Union at an advanced age or in its early years. However, a case study for all governorates in the year 2004 reveals wide variations in the gap between Union recruits and women in the population as a whole who had been educated to a particular level.[46] For example, the difference of the share of new recruits and women in general with primary education was only about two per cent in al-Hasaka, but 26 per cent in Damascus countryside. Again, this gap persists persisted at all levels, although the differences are were less pronounced above from preparatory level. Accordingly, the Union did not attract, or seek to attract, only women with a particular standard of education, or lack of it.

Occupational Background of Members

Although the Union never expressed its intention of targeting women from an educated background, it did specifically seek to recruit women

workers, or those from the 'toiling classes'. When detailing the occupation of new recruits, Union statistics distinguish between employees, students, teachers, housewives, workers, peasants, tailors and hairdressers, nurses, doctors, university lecturers, engineers, lawyers and judges, and pharmacists.[47] As before, the data used here concerns newly recruited members only, covering the period from 1984 to 2008. Again, I will first outline the occupation of women in general compared with that of Union members countrywide and then ask whether the representation of groups identified is similar across all the governorates, which would indicate that these groups were under more pressure to join than others.

Occupation of Women in General vs Union Members, Countrywide

A comparison of countrywide averages makes it clear that, in fact, housewives rather than economically active women made up by far the largest share of new recruits. The next biggest group were students.[48]

Indeed, the Union withdrew from its original intentions early on: by 1976, it had become aware of the 'low' membership share of housewives, compared to other groups. Hence it was decided to address them specifically to prevent them taking a passive role without contributing to the advancement of society.[49] In line with the Ba'thist concept of total reform, housewives were not supposed to withdraw into the private
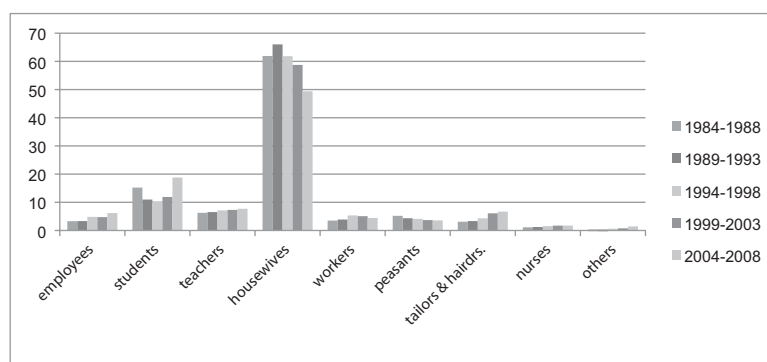
Figure 3.6 Occupational background amongst new recruits per term countrywide, 1984–2008

realm. By becoming involved in building the new order, they were to be brought in touch with the regime. Accordingly, the recruitment focus shifted from the toiling classes to housewives.[50]

Across the years, worker and peasant recruits tended to be few in number. The same is true of women holding university degrees, other than teachers, as is apparent from the very small share of 'others' – a category that includes doctors, university lecturers, engineers, lawyers and judges, and pharmacists.[51] As for changes over time, it can be seen that the proportion of housewives and peasants fell, while all other occupations, except students, became more strongly represented.[52] To what extent did these developments reflect occupational patterns amongst the female population as a whole?

Providing an answer to this question is complicated by the fact that the occupational categories used in Union statistics do not correspond to those in the national censuses. In its occupational statistics, the Central Bureau for Statistics distinguishes between the economically active and the economically inactive population. Housewives, together with students and 'others', are counted among the economically inactive, while the economically active are subdivided between those working at home and those working outside the home.[53] In order to allow for comparison, and to gain a better understanding of the Union's composition in this regard, this section focuses on the categories of housewives and students (the economically inactive) as opposed to everyone else (the economically active, here comprising employees, workers, teachers, tailors and hairdressers, and nurses).

Paralleling the data on education, the censuses of 1981 and 2004 were chosen as reference points.[54] In 1981, we find that 93.6 per cent of the female population was economically inactive, of whom 69.8 per cent were housewives, 19.2 per cent students, and 4.6 per cent any other category. Only 6.4 per cent of all females were considered economically active.[55] In comparison, in the Union we find that, between 1984 and 1988, some 61.9 per cent of newly recruited members were housewives, while 15.2 per cent were students. Consequently, taking together employees, teachers, workers, peasants, hairdressers and tailors, nurses, and others, 22.9 per cent of new Union recruits were economically active, almost four times above the national average.[56]

By 2004, the situation at national level had changed only slightly. The share of economically inactive women had decreased to

Occupation	% women (1981 census)	% Union recruits (1984–8)
students	19.2	15.2
housewives	69.8	61.9
economically active	6.4	22.5
others	4.6	0.4
total	100	100
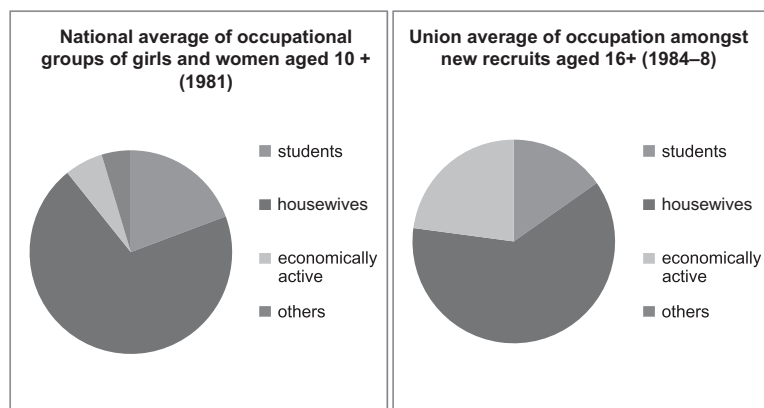
Figure 3.7   National average of occupation of women vs occupation of new Union members, 1981

85.3 per cent, 68.9 per cent of whom were housewives and 10 per cent students, with 6.4 per cent counted as other. However, 14.7 per cent of women were regarded as economically active,[57] a more than doubling of the share of economically active women in 1981, while the number of female students had halved. Despite these shifts, the disparity with the distribution of professional groups amongst new Union recruits persisted, albeit less strongly so: between 1999 and 2003, only 58.7 per cent were housewives, compared to 11.9 per cent students and 24.6 per cent who were economically active – still almost twice as many as in the national average.[58]

Thus, although the Union aimed primarily to address housewives, it is obvious that it failed to recruit all housewives. At the same time, the concentration of economically active women amongst its new members is much higher than amongst the female population in general. Was the Union's make-up in terms of the occupation of recruits similar everywhere?

Occupation	% women (2004 census)	% Union recruits (1999–2003)
students	10	15.2
housewives	68.9	61.9
economically active	14.7	22.5
others	6.4	0.4
total	100	100
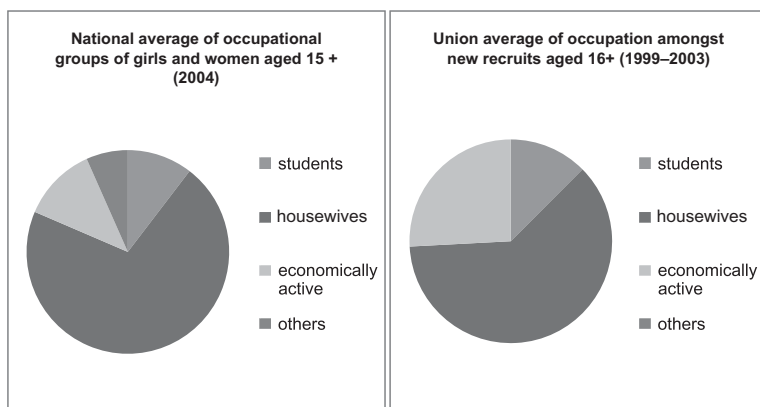
Figure 3.8   National average of occupation of women vs occupation of new Union members, 2004

Occupation of Members per Governorate vs Women in General

Although the data for individual governorates confirms the countrywide distribution of occupational groups amongst new recruits, the figures do show striking exceptions. For example, housewives accounted on average for two-thirds of new recruits in Idlib, Damascus and Tartous, but only 38.1 per cent of new recruits in al-Raqqa and less than half in Dayr al-Zur and al-Ladhiqiyya. At the same time, workers and peasants were more heavily represented in al-Raqqa and Dayr al-Zur than elsewhere (24.6 per cent and 19.7 per cent).[59] Does the general distribution of women's occupations in individual governorates explain these variations?

As before, the case study for 2004 was used to examine this question. However, because no data existed for women's occupations as a whole in the individual governorates that matched the Union categories, it was possible to compare only the share of women who were economically inactive (housewives and students) to those who were economically active in each governorate. From this we learn that, in individual governorates, the share of economically active women amongst new

Union recruits did not match that of women in general. In al-Hasaka, for example, about 50 per cent of new recruits were working women, although less than 12 per cent of women in the governorate were economically active. In al-Suwayda', however, the share of working women amongst Union recruits was almost as high as in the female population as a whole. The urban/rural environment had no impact: a housewife in a remote rural area was neither more nor less likely to join the Union than her counterpart in the capital.[60]

Summary: Education and Occupation of New Recruits

From the data as a whole, it can be concluded that the Union attracted women from different educational and occupational backgrounds. However, a comparison of Union membership in individual governorates makes it clear that women with similar backgrounds were drawn into the Union to differing extents. No planning policies were put in place to target educated women of any level. Although the Union did set out to attract housewives, the extent to which it was successful varied in individual governorates, with no correlation to the actual share of housewives amongst the local population, leading to wide regional disparities in the composition of Union membership. With respect to education and occupation, Union membership was thus heterogeneous, indicating that it was actually voluntary. In what ways is Union membership related to Ba'th party membership?

Ba'th Party Membership of Union Members

Although the Union refrained from implementing detailed planning policies with regard to membership recruitment in terms of education and occupation, it did seek to regulate the Union's share of Ba'th Party members. Like the other mass organisations, the Union was closely linked from its inception to the Ba'th Party as its vanguard. The 1967 legal decree for its establishment stated that '[t]he forces of the toiling people have now linked their revolutionary path to the leadership of the revolution's vanguard Party, and for their sake it was secured a successful weapon for victory: the mass organisations.'[61] Amongst them was the Union. However, the internal regulations make no other mention of the Ba'th Party, and Party membership was never an explicit condition for Union membership. Rather than being portrayed as an organisation of

the Party, the Union was always subject to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and only vaguely subscribed to working towards the aims of 'the revolution.'[62] Likewise, members were expected to express their agreement with the revolution and only in 1986 were the conditions for membership changed in that new members had to declare that they 'believed in the aims of revolution *and the Party*'.[63] In all other respects the relationship between the Party and the Union remained almost invisible on paper, although strong in practice. Even the parallel structure between Party offices and those of the Union was not mentioned in the internal regulations. However, many Union members stressed the Party's support for the Union's work both morally and financially, as do all its reports. From early on, high-ranking Party officials were present at the Union's regular conferences.[64] In April 2010, I attended a public debate organised by the Union that was broadcast on state television and illustrated the close links between Party and Union: accompanied by the national anthem, participants rose from their seats when high-up Union and Party officials walked onto the stage, and the Union representative sent greetings to the Party before the start of the event. The debate, on the recent controversial ban on smoking in public and its effects on health, and the at times heated discussion that followed, were thus shaped by the presence of the Party, albeit otherwise not explicitly related to it. However, to what extent were Union members in fact Party members, and was their share the same everywhere?

Baʿth Party Membership in the Union, Countrywide

As with general membership figures, Union sources record internal Baʿth Party membership in two ways. Firstly, reports list the absolute number of Party members, both planned and actual, in the Union per year and term between 1980 and 2008, distinguishing between full Party members (*hizbiyyat*) and affiliated members (*sadiqat*).[65] Secondly, reports also provide the total number of full Party members and independent members (*mustaqillat*) at the end of each term, although only since 1989. From 2004 onwards, they also list the number of those who were a member of other parties of the National Progressive Front; however, their share was below one per cent.[66]

The number of full Baʿth Party members in the Union reportedly rose from 26,145 in 1988 to 123,459 20 years later.[67] However, it becomes clear that, as with general Party membership figures, the official annual/

term increases do not add up to the total figures but lead to a significantly higher result of 132,307 full members by 2008.[68] Real Party membership has been calculated using the same procedure as for general membership figures.[69] Comparison of the official and real figures shows that full Party membership in the Union was reported lower than it actually was in 1989 but higher in 1994–8 and 2004–8, while the figures for both were identical in 1999–2003.[70] Again, it could be argued that official figures reflect the number of recruits with full Party membership but do not take into account the number of members who had left the Union altogether or resigned from their full Party membership. However, the reasons behind the anomaly for 1989–93 remain unknown.[71]

In terms of planned increases, the share of full Party members among Union recruits should have increased from 21.9 per cent (1989–93) to 34.7 per cent (2004–8), with a peak in the preceding term.[72] In reality, though, full Party membership among new recruits decreased from 48.4 per cent (1989–93) to 28.5 per cent (2004–8).[73] Although the motivations behind the planned increase are not explained, they clearly represent a conscious move. Perhaps full Party membership recruitment within the Union as a mass organisation had proven easier than in other institutions, and had come to replace other recruitment strategies. It is also possible that the political streamlining of members was considered increasingly necessary. At the same time, it appears that the amendments in the 1986 internal regulations that required agreement with the Party's aims did not lead to a shift in planned recruitment policies as such. In comparison to general planning policies, the intended increase in Party membership recruitment proved unattainable as, with the exception of the term 2004–8, it remained below target by as much as 40 per cent.[74] This finding contrasts with the success of planned membership recruitment in general, which, as we saw earlier, did prove attainable. Similarly, the attempt to keep full members within the Union in the long term could not be implemented as expected.[75] In other words, Party recruitment proved very difficult to predict and, even if members were drawn into the Party as full members, it appears that they often changed their mind unexpectedly. They might have changed their full membership status, or been excluded from it. In some cases, they may have left the Union altogether.

Differences in Baʿth Party Membership in the Union,
by Governorate

It becomes clear that individual governorates had vastly different expectations for the planned recruitment of full Party members.[76] For example, the Union in Damascus was expected to more than double the number of full Party members per term on average, but in al-Suwaydaʾ the planned increases were only by about a third. Based on such planning policies, the data both for initial recruitment and for long-term membership show a highly uneven development.[77] This confirms a high unpredictability of Party recruitment at the local level that is independent of the urban/rural environment.[78] Despite such difficulties, the share of full Party members was increased significantly over the years, with overall losses occurring only rarely.[79]

As a result, the proportion of full Party members to Union members varied widely between individual governorates and over different terms.[80] From 1984–2008, Party membership averaged about 18 per cent in Damascus, rising to more than 30 per cent in al-Ladhiqiyya and Hamah, with other governorates lying in between. Thus, despite the Party's role as a vanguard organisation, the Union did not maintain a uniform quota of full Party members throughout the governorates. Surprisingly, however, it also becomes clear that all Union members who, according to official figures, were not full Party members were actually affiliated with the Party.[81] Consequently, there is no doubt that contrary to official statements, membership of the Baʿth Party *was* in fact a requirement for Union membership. If it were expected that the Party would act as a vanguard inside the Union as a mass organisation, then this would be the role that full members assumed. Nonetheless, if the Union was wholly comprised of Party members, it would be seen as a vanguard among the non-Party female population of Syria in general.

This finding has far-reaching consequences. It demonstrates that every woman who wished to become involved in the Union's work had also to join the Party. In other words, the decision to enrol in the Union was based not only on the wish to access the Union's services, take part in its philanthropic activities or, in a very few cases, advance a career, but it also involved a political decision. Equally, it could also show that for many, the act of joining the Party was secondary to other factors and not necessarily made out of genuine conviction. Indeed, the overall high fluctuation in full Party membership figures confirms this assumption.[82]

Party Membership of Union Members vs Party Membership at large
Although the recruitment of full Party members proved very difficult to
plan and implement, the very fact that planning policies were in place
suggests they must have followed a certain rationale. We have just seen
that this was not to achieve a specific proportion of full Baʿth members in
the Union as such, so is it possible instead that the Union contributed a
fixed share of Party members in each governorate? A quick thumbnail
sketch of the period from 1984 to 1988 disproves this hypothesis.[83] At
that time, Union Party members constituted less than two per cent of
total Baʿth Party membership in Damascus and Aleppo, but 11 per cent
in Tartous. In the majority of governorates, the figure was below five
per cent. Thus, planning policies did not serve to channel a preordained
share of full Party members to the Baʿth.

Did Party membership amongst Union members therefore simply
reflect the Party's popularity in a given governorate? Again, for the mid-
1980s the answer is negative.[84] Although the Party was almost as strong
among the general population in al-Suwayda' as it was in al-Ladhiqiyya,
the share of full Party members within the Union was twice as high in
the former than the latter. Most strikingly, Party membership was
moderate amongst the population in Hamah, but more than half of all
Union members there were also full Party members.

A third option is that the Union may have been seen as a tool to
increase the number of *female* Party members; however, as no figures for
women's Party membership per governorate are available, this premise
cannot be verified. Generally, female Party membership has been noted
to be very low: for example, in 1992, more than 75 per cent of Baʿth
Party members were men.[85] Thus, further data would be needed to
clarify this point. Therefore, on the basis of the data available before the
Syrian uprising, the rationale behind differences in full Party
membership within the Union remains unclear.

Summary: Party Membership in the Union

To sum up, whilst no data is available to evaluate full Baʿth Party
membership before 1988, its share among Union members rose from
about 22 per cent to 35 per cent of Union members thereafter. This
increase occurred despite full Party membership proving extremely
difficult to predict and maintain. The Union's laws and regulations did
not single out Baʿth membership as a requirement for signing up with

the Union, but new recruits had effectively to become at least affiliated members of the Party. Although the rationale behind the Union's planning policies remains unclear, there is no doubt that a woman's decision to join the Union at least after 1989, if not earlier, was inseparable from political affiliation. On the one hand, this indicates that the Union's social services were not available unconditionally but only to those who aligned themselves with the ruling Party. On the other hand, the high fluctuation in the numbers of full Party members within the Union underscores the fact that this commitment was secondary to other concerns and did not represent a strong bond based on political conviction. Affiliated membership did not incur responsibilities such as voting, and may have been perceived as being less problematic.

Summary: Membership Development and the Question of Consent

Four major conclusions can be drawn from the above findings. Firstly, the heterogeneity of Union membership between governorates shows that subscription was spontaneous and largely based on consent. Women joined the Union because they wished to rather than being pressured into membership, directly or indirectly, due to their (lack of) education or their occupation. This finding is in line with the Union's recruitment strategies that addressed women from a wide range of backgrounds. However, the voluntary nature of Union membership represents an exception to the findings for other mass organisations. It could be argued that this was due to the fact that housewives were its main constituency; remaining in the private sphere and dependent on their male relatives, they were outside the reach of the state. It might have proved difficult to force them into membership by withholding services because they either had no need for them or could access them through other family members. Economically active women were more likely to face the same pressures as men with regard to mass organisations. Although they could have joined a relevant professional association or mass organisation such as the Teachers' Union, Workers' Union, Peasants' Union or Students' Union, it is possible that some women preferred to sign up to the Women's Union because it was a women's only organisation. They may have also chosen to do so to avoid societal constraints. While housewives, in particular, may have

joined the Union because they wished to, for the economically active it may have been an alternative to being compelled to join other organisations.

Secondly, it becomes apparent that the Union was much more strongly represented in some parts of the country than in others. If this was not due to the Union targeting specific groups, the main motivation for women to join will have been to access the social services it offered. In making their decision, women will also have taken into consideration the amount of time at their disposal, their acceptance (or lack of) of the Union's association with the regime, or the attitudes of their families to their plans. However, it proved difficult to determine these factors as the questionnaires distributed for this purpose could not be filled in under the desired conditions.[86] Accordingly, the role of such factors can only be guessed at. The very high share of Union members in Qunaytra, for example, may have been due to its geographical position bordering onto Israel, Lebanon and Jordan. As we have seen, the Union in Qunaytra was particularly active during and after the 1967 war, which proved to be a baptism of fire and may have led to high recruitment levels, especially as the Union offered first aid and civil defence courses. However, this does not explain the prominent role of the Union in al-Suwayda', especially as al-Dira'a, located between these two strongly represented governorates, does not show a similarly high share of Union members. Another factor that might have played a role is that al-Suwayda' has the country's highest Druze population.[87] In principle, it is possible that the women of al-Suwayda' were more open to joining the Union due to the more relaxed gender roles held by the Druze. However, further research would be needed to elaborate on these points with certainty.

Thirdly, to some extent the Union's voluntary character was impaired by the obligation placed on recruits to join the Ba'th. While some women might not have minded doing so, even if only temporarily, it might have led others to stay away from the Union altogether. Apparently, however, the regime considered this requirement necessary even at the expense of losing potential recruits. Factually, the Union was not only a mass organisation but also a Party organisation. This condition worked as a channel for membership recruitment that, even if largely based on consent, still required women to pay lip-service to the Party. At the same time, these difficulties demonstrate that, although mass organisations were meant to serve as the Party's vanguard, and existed to establish the

regime's hegemony in a sphere that had previously been occupied by civil society groups, they were themselves sites of struggles for hegemony. Winning women to sign up for the Union was one issue; turning them into committed and fully active Party members was another. Yet without any means of forcing the majority of women into joining or staying in the organisation, and with the additional condition of Party membership, only the provision of services that were of significance to women could encourage subscription.

Fourthly, although the Union was a mass organisation, its membership in most governorates was relatively low. Although it comprised 13.4 per cent of eligible women countrywide by 2004, this figure is pushed up by the high subscription rates in al-Suwaydaʾ and Qunaytra (25 per cent and 83 per cent). It remained under seven per cent in most governorates and reached 11 per cent only in Diraʿa, al-Raqqa and Tartous. However, in comparison to mass organisations elsewhere, these figures are not unusual. In fact, numbers differ. For example, Italy's Fasci Femminili included around six per cent of the female population over the age of 20 in 1939, as did the German Frauenwerk; yet in Cuba, about 80 per cent of eligible women were members of the Federation of Cuban Women.[88] These differences could be due to the fact that fascist organisations proved less popular, that women had a greater choice of joining other state organisations in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany than they did in Cuba, or that membership was a precondition for accessing more vital goods or services in Cuba then elsewhere.[89]

In the case of Syria, only a comprehensive overview of women's membership in all mass organisations and professional associations would reveal how many Syrians were indeed bound to at least one of these organisations. However, for those 13 per cent who did sign up with the Union, membership was voluntary. For them, it must have been the meeting of needs by Union services that was the main point of attraction. So what did the Union actually have to offer?

CHAPTER 4

REACHING OUT TO EVERY WOMAN

Before the establishment of the Union on 26 August 1967, the idea of women's welfare in Syria had largely been shaped by privately-led women's organisations. Within a few years of coming to power, the Ba'thist regime had to decide whether to offer similar services to women as the earlier societies or whether to pursue a different approach. In order to persuade women to join it would be necessary to offer services that were attractive to women, but as one of its mass organisations, the Union had to be designed in a way that would also suit the regime's own purposes. To see how the concept of women's welfare shifted under the Ba'th, this chapter will outline the projects implemented by different sections of the Union between 1967 and 2008, as well as women's responses to them, so far as that is possible. In the light of its findings, we will revisit the premise introduced at the start: that, based on Gramsci, we can identify a form of hegemony that fosters need-receptive consent even in the case of totalitarian governance.

Literacy Classes and Spreading the Word

If earlier societies had identified literacy as crucial to increasing women's role in society, then this was no less the case with the Union. It was believed that only through literacy could women fully exercise their rights and duties, be liberated socially and economically, and support their children's education.[1] Some 70 per cent of Syrian women were

unable to read or write in 1970, and so members of the Union set out to visit households in all the governorates to encourage housewives to sign up for literacy classes. They also visited bath-houses, which served as public meeting places for women, went out into the fields to speak to peasant women and visited workplaces such as the tobacco factories in Aleppo that employed female workers. The Baʿth put pressure on employers to let women attend classes held on their premises during working hours since it was clear that women's additional household chores would make it hard for them to attend classes in their own time.[2] Moreover, Union members attended monthly school parents' days to identify illiterate mothers and raise awareness of their classes.[3] In the 1980s, the Union began systematically checking numbers per household against school attendance records to identify children who had been taken out of school before the end of compulsory primary schooling.[4] Thus, the Union provided beginners' and/or advanced literacy classes for adult women, as well as targeting school dropouts by offering preparatory classes to bring them back into state schooling. The Union courses enabled women to acquire reading and writing skills in six months, at the end of which they could obtain regular school certificates. As one active member pointed out, this way grandmothers could be proud of gaining the same certificates as their grandchildren.[5]

The Union received support from several institutions not only for its recruitment campaigns but also to develop suitable teaching materials and to train teachers. Within Syria, it cooperated with the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as other mass organisations such as the Revolutionary Youth Federation, the Workers' Union, the Peasants' Union, the Teachers' Union, and the Baʿth Party itself. Externally, it was supported by various UN organisations and exchange programmes with other Arab states.[6] However, the Union was dogged by problems such as the perennial shortage of teachers and transport, particularly in the countryside, social prejudice against women attending classes and lack of awareness of its activities.[7] High drop-out rates during the harvesting seasons hindered regular class attendance.[8] To make it easier for women to attend, literacy classes were free of charge, as were teaching materials.[9] Teachers took on additional classes in the afternoons after their regular morning shifts without being paid, at least during the early years.[10]

From time to time individual governorates ran selected projects, such as a pilot study targeting illiteracy amongst boys in Damascus and Qunaytra, free nursery time for the children of mothers attending literacy classes in al-Hasaka, and the setting up of special literacy classes for non-native speakers in Hamah.[11]

How successful were these initiatives over the years? Syria has rightly been praised for its tremendous efforts in increasing overall literacy, especially with regard to the female population: the number of women unable to read and write fell from 2.25 million in 1970 to 1.35 million in 2004, a remarkable achievement at a time of high population growth. The Union made a substantial contribution to this success: in the period between 1973 and 2003,[12] a total of almost 400,000 girls and women attended its literacy classes, representing almost half of all women who became literate during this period. In relative terms, illiteracy amongst women fell from 73.2 per cent to 25.8 per cent in 2004.[13] Only Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan and Kuwait in the Arab world achieved higher overall literacy rates than the Syrian average of 81.4 per cent (for men and women) by 2004 (Arab world average: 62 per cent). In terms of literacy, Syria lay midway between the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia on the one hand, and North America, Western, Eastern and Central Europe, and Latin America on the other.[14] In view of the significant differences in literacy levels existing between individual governorates in Syria, it would be of great interest to know to what extent the Union was active in different regions; however, this is not possible on the basis of the data available.[15]

Vocational Training

Judging from the available sources, vocational training (or vocational education and training, VET) did not figure prominently in the concerns of Syria's earlier women's societies. This changed dramatically under the Union. Courses offered ranged from home economics and child-rearing to sewing, knitting, typing, embroidery, hairdressing, carpet making, ceramics, copper beating and wood carving. There were classes on upholstery, silk, glass and mirror painting, flower arranging, pottery and candle making, often featuring traditional regional products.[16] IT classes were taught from the 1990s onwards.[17] During the first few decades, the programme of Union VET classes depended on the skills and interests of

Figure 4.1   Display of goods in Union exhibition, Aleppo Cultural Centre (28 March 2010)

individual teachers; in 1997, classes were standardised through the introduction of a single training plan applied countrywide.[18]

As with literacy classes, the recruitment and training of personnel was arranged in collaboration with other institutions.[19] However, the Union also established its own VET centres, craft workshops and hairdressing salons.[20] The aim behind the workshops was to create employment opportunities for women to generate their own income and help improve their families' standard of living, while at the same time producing affordable garments and other goods for workers. In this way, they were contributing to the Union's financial resources and conserving traditional handicraft skills. Products were displayed in local and international exhibitions, but also sold in factory shops and later in suqs, cooperatives (*munazzamat al-ta'awuniyya al-istihlakiyya*) and military bases.[21] Although problems such as shortages of technical equipment and materials, funds and qualified teachers persisted, the section for vocational training in fact generated profits.[22] This was mainly due to public sector contracts concluded, for example, with Syrian Airways, Syrian Railways and other state facilities (*dawa'ir al-dawla*), for which the Union workshops provided mainly sewn garments.[23]

The shift of focus to women's VET reflected the Ba'th Party's commitment to this field. Originally, VET was provided as a distinct path in industrial, commercial and agricultural training at preparatory and secondary level.[24] After that, programmes for women and for religious studies were added, and VET became a secondary or post-secondary track lasting for two to three years.[25] In the late 1980s, it was

planned to channel 70 per cent of students at secondary level into VET, or 50 per cent by 2000.[26] Yet only 11 per cent of students pursued VET in 1970, with the share rising only slightly to 15 per cent by 2004.[27] In 1970, this compared to 8.8 per cent of students enrolled in VET in the Middle East but 64.1 per cent in Eastern Europe, suggesting an attempted alignment with the Soviet model.[28] Union classes represented an alternative to regular VETs, offering life-long learning options that had previously been missing.[29] Although Union VET was not free of charge, costs were adjusted to local average incomes and costs of living. For example, in 2010, a hairdressing course cost 2,200 Syrian pounds in Aleppo city, but only 1,200 Syrian pounds in Aleppo countryside.[30] Furthermore, women who were already enrolled in literacy classes could sign up for VET free of charge.[31] This way, the Union tried to make its courses affordable and sought to keep registered members by offering them an additional incentive to gain new skills.

In total, more than 484,000 girls and women attended Union VET courses between 1976 and 2008.[32] How many of those later took up paid work, be it as home pieceworkers in factories or elsewhere, can only be estimated. The Union report for the 1994–8 term, for example, stressed that out of 111,311 VET participants, 30,796 had entered employment.[33] If this figure is representative, then the Union would have made a strong contribution indeed to increasing female participation in the workforce. Total employment amongst women, however, stood at 11.9 per cent by 2004, with women constituting just 15 per cent of the total workforce.[34] This compares to an Arab world average of 25.7 per cent in 2005, illustrating that women's employment in Syria remained relatively low despite the efforts to raise it.[35]

Statistics and Planning

All Union activities including literacy and VET operated within the bounds set by the section responsible for statistics and planning.[36] Compared to previous initiatives, this encompassed both new opportunities and limitations. Affiliated to the state and operating on a countrywide scale, this section evaluated planned projects and assessed past activities.[37] For example, detailed studies carried out in cooperation with the Ministry for Statistics identified the number of working mothers in a given area before deciding whether the Union should invest

in nurseries.[38] If approved, committees including engineers, doctors and nursery school teachers would then proceed to discuss the location, size and equipment of the new building, ensuring its compliance with the necessary health standards.[39] In addition, this section oversaw the organisation's ongoing work by monitoring statistics on membership figures, course enrolment, or the number of cars and minibuses maintained. It also dealt with complaints arising, for example, from the failure to secure building plots or conclude sales contracts.[40] With these responsibilities, this section stood at the heart of all the Union projects embedded in the overall framework of the state's five-year plans and budgets. Sometimes, the implementation of planned projects proved unfeasible, and old plans had to be amended and carried into the following term.[41] Other projects, such as the establishment of a female cadre training centre that had been planned to include a hotel and a restaurant, were eventually abandoned completely.[42]

Nurseries and Kindergartens

Since the Baʿth sought to raise the number of educated and employed women in general to improve the Syrian economy, nurseries and kindergartens were needed to support working women. This was another major field of Union activity, unlike earlier societies. In 1960, women made up only 7.1 per cent of the total workforce, which could suggest a lack of demand for these services.[43] However, a study conducted in Syria at that time found that childcare was one of the major reasons, along with the size of extended families and long hours spent on housework on top of their jobs that caused women to leave the workplace. As a result, it was argued, only about 6 per cent of married women were economically active, as opposed to 15 per cent of those who were single or divorced.[44] One impediment to women's employment after marriage were the social attitudes that held the husband, legally and morally, to be the sole provider for his family. But childcare facilities would increase women's employment, not to make them economically independent but to enable them to contribute to their families' income.[45] At the same time, future generations would be brought up 'in the spirit of the Party and the revolution'.[46]

To widen the network of nurseries and kindergartens in the country, the Union set about providing its own facilities. These were the Union's

most costly projects, necessitating the procurement of suitable buildings, often building them from scratch, and involving long hours of planning and construction as well as incurring high costs of long-term maintenance. Based on labour law No 91 §139, dating from 1959, state institutions and mass organisations were to maintain nurseries and kindergartens in every workplace employing more than 100 female workers – ideally open to all.[47] Accordingly, about a third of all 142 Union nurseries and kindergartens set up by 1984 were connected to workshops and factories, while others were opened in hospitals and ministries.[48]

In the early years especially, non-familial daycare for babies, toddlers and young children was not yet well developed in Syria.[49] In order to obtain qualified staff, women were sent abroad on training courses run by the former Soviet Union bloc states, or by UNICEF. Likewise, they also donated toys and the buses that collected children and took them home again in the afternoon.[50] From 1983 onwards, the teachers' colleges provided specialist training programmes, and after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1989, all staff training was organised internally,[51] albeit with support from external institutions such as UNICEF, the Aga Khan Foundation or the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JAICA).[52] As with other of the Union's activities, this section too maintained close contact with relevant ministries and mass organisations. The Union worked with UNHCR, for example in the 1990s when it opened its nurseries and kindergartens to the children of Somali, Iraqi, Afghan and Palestinian refugees.[53] Another aspect of its work was to arrange additional childcare time for working mothers to bridge school holidays.[54]

The overall impact of Union initiatives on childcare and women's employment can only be estimated. While the share of women in the workforce rose to 14.7 per cent by 2004, the 2004 census does not give information on *married* women in the female workforce, making it impossible to guess at the number of working mothers.[55] Institutions other than the Union also offered childcare facilities. For example, a UNESCO study conducted in 2004 noted that there were 224 Union kindergartens, compared to 330 maintained by the Teachers' Union, 97 government kindergartens, and 825 privately run institutions.[56] Thus, the Union maintained a third of all government(-affiliated) kindergartens, but the main facility provider was in fact the private sector. In total,

only 11 per cent of children between the age of three and six countrywide attended kindergartens at all by 2005.[57] In comparison, figures for Saudi Arabia and Morocco remained around the same mark, while nine other Arab countries showed lower pre-primary education enrolment. At the other end of the scale, the rate was well above 60 per cent in states such as the UAE, Kuwait or Lebanon.[58] Yet in Syria, the family clearly remained the focus of early childcare. Despite very low fees, criticisms regarding the lack of skilled personnel, the quality of programmes offered, or a lack of co-ordination between working hours and childcare provision may have rendered pre-school childcare unattractive to parents.[59] Although similar concerns were raised in Lebanon, they did not show a similar impact: female employment rates resembled the figures for Syria, but kindergarten enrolment was much higher. It is possible that the concentration of childcare facilities in urban areas, or the role of extended families in the countryside in caring for young children, help to explain such differences.[60] Other factors likely to play a role in determining the take up of childcare facilities included family income and the cost of childcare, the nature of the parents', and especially the mother's, work (i.e. fixed or temporary/seasonal, government or private employment), the parents' education and political attitudes. In short, despite the Ba'th's declared aim of significantly raising the number of women in employment, this proved unattainable. Also, support measures such as the provision of childcare facilities maintained by the Union remained of limited impact.

Healthcare and Civil Defence

Like literacy projects, women's engagement in healthcare and civil defence was firmly rooted in the tradition of earlier societies; yet, here too, the Union took it to unprecedented levels, and assumed new roles. Both fields of activity remained intertwined, as the Union offered classes in first aid and civil defence, including shooting (*tadrib 'ala al-silah*) and parachuting.[61] It also provided relief work; for example, during the influx of Palestinian refugees from Jordan in the aftermath of Black September 1970, it collected donations of woollen clothes for Palestinian fighters (*fida'iyin*), and visited the families of fallen soldiers, distributing gifts on mothers' and children's day. Unlike earlier women's initiatives, though, the Union took part in parades during national commemorations.[62]

During the war with Israel, the Baʿth used the Union to draw women into military training.[63] It did the same with other mass organisations, thus pursuing a strategy similar to that adopted by the Civil Defence Organisation in the Soviet Union.[64]

The Union took part in public health campaigns by organising seminars, health weeks and exhibitions on a wide variety of topics, ranging from the dangers of insecticides and the risks of multiple pregnancies to the benefits of breast-feeding and prevention of infectious diseases such as cholera, smallpox, leishmaniasis and bilharziasis. It handed out vaccinations, raised awareness of cancer and AIDS, and gave advice on hygiene and a healthy diet.[65] In some governorates, it distributed food and medicines to women in prison.[66] This was reminiscent of the society launched in Dayr al-Zur in 1959 for that purpose. However, although earlier societies had advised women on similar issues as the Union, they had kept their distance from the state.

One pressing concern that earlier women's organisations had not touched on was family planning. The Syrian population increased from 4.2 million in 1960 to 6.3 million ten years later, and projections suggested this number would double within another 20 years, putting the Syrian economy under severe strain. Although it has been suggested that Syria did not take any measures to lower birth rates before the 1980s, and even encouraged large families,[67] the Union did campaign for smaller families from early on, especially in the countryside, addressing both women and men because, in the words of one member:

> [a]t the time we saw that women had no say in the number of children they would have. None at all. It would all be the man's decision. Women came and said: 'I can't convince my husband.' So what did the Union do? We offered classes in factories for men and women together. We gathered the workers, men and women, and told them: Have four children who are healthy and good and good for society rather than ten ... these don't help society, it won't develop. But that's what we want, development for our society and our country. At the beginning, nothing happened, but then ... things changed.[68]

These changes were sought for the good of children and mothers alike. Reflecting on Union activities in the 1990s and early 2000s, another

member recalls how religious arguments were called upon to stress the risks of repeated pregnancies over a short period of time. From her point of view, and being a Sunni Muslim herself, the importance of family planning could be best explained

> by using religion [*'an tariq al-din*]. Islam, or even Christianity, that's the same really…religion tells us that there should be a period of rest between pregnancies. Islam says that a woman's pregnancy lasts for three years. For two years, a woman breast feeds the baby, and one year passes before the next birth, that makes three years. So according to religion, it [pregnancy] lasts for three years. But she acts against her religion if she falls pregnant *every* year. And it harms her health. And it harms the children, each child will be weaker than the preceding one; it will harm its nutrition and development. Advising women regarding mothers' healthcare is one of our most important tasks, in particular in regions which health services don't reach. In cities, they might have access to [health] services. Yet in the countryside, in particular the far countryside, we can reach women […] everywhere in Syria.[69]

This example is remarkable for coming from a mass organisation under the aegis of the Ba'th Party, which in its early years in power had been denounced for its secular tendencies. However, the turn to more religious public Ba'thist discourse had already been made at that time, and members resorted to any argument, religious or otherwise, that they thought would best achieve their goal of improving women's health. Drawing on simple examples and personal anecdotes, they also called on support from religious leaders, local doctors, judges and lawyers to bring about a change in attitudes.[70] Such an approach was inevitably highly time-consuming and could only be expected to bear fruit in the long term.

To improve its work in the field of healthcare, the Union operated a limited number of ambulances and mobile health units and fitted some of its rural offices with basic medical equipment.[71] Medical care in general became more accessible over the years: in 1946, Syria had fewer than five hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants, a figure that had risen to 15 beds by 2003.[72] However, there were significant regional disparities.

Although medical care, if available, was free of charge, competition from private institutions and the failure of a countrywide social insurance system created great inequalities by regulating access. In particular, the provision of adequate healthcare for women was hindered by the lack of well-trained midwives and continuing prejudice against their receiving medical treatment.[73] The section of the Union concerned with healthcare not only worked closely with the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, the Environment, Trade, Labour and Social Affairs, but also with the Revolutionary Youth Federation and the Commission for Family Planning.[74] It further contributed to the UN World Food Programme against childhood malnutrition by handing out food rations.[75]

The lack of reliable statistics makes it difficult to estimate the number of women the Union trained in healthcare and civil defence over the years, let alone those who were visited in their homes, in factories or in the fields, those who attended seminars or film screenings, and those who sought medical care. Assuming the numbers of women enrolled in first aid and civil defence between 1980–3 to be representative, then about 340,000 women would have attended Union classes in health and civil defence between 1967 and 2008.[76]

Foreign Relations

The section for foreign relations was responsible for building bridges between the Union and other women's organisations and political decision-makers on an international level. In so doing, it presented itself to the outside world as the single representative body for women's welfare in Syria, a position taken by no previous organisation. The section arranged for members to attend training courses and conferences abroad, served as a point of contact for women's organisations elsewhere and welcomed foreign delegations. It also distributed donations and scholarships. The Union was a member of the Arab Women's Union and the International Women's Democrat Union but, in line with its anti-Zionist and anti-Western stance, it steered clear of cooperation with non-socialist non-Arab women's organisations, especially before 1989.[77] Whilst Syria's support for Iran in the Iran–Iraq war (1980–8) increasingly isolated if from other Arab states during the 1980s, the collapse of the Soviet Union worsened the situation. Subsequently, the activities of the Union's foreign relations section appeared much less

consistent and comprehensive than before, mainly listing delegations sent abroad and welcomed to Syria, as well as visits by, for example, foreign diplomats attending Union-led events.[78]

Legal Affairs

The Union's section for legal affairs was only established in 1993, thereby venturing into a field not covered by earlier societies. From 1994 onwards, the section offered legal advice to individual women in some of its offices once or twice a week.[79] Recognising that women were often unaware of their rights, even when guaranteed by law, the section launched public events and visited households to educate and inform women of legal amendments affecting their rights.[80] To the same end, it published a series of booklets entitled *Know your Rights*, giving information on a range of topics such as inheritance, marriage and child labour.[81] Moreover, it supported the implementation of national legislation on a practical basis, for example by setting up family centres, where divorced parents could meet on neutral ground and exercise their right to see their children on a regular basis.[82]

These measures demonstrate the section's clear support for existing legislation. Although the Union sought to improve women's legal rights from the very beginning, for example in respect of family allowance or maternity leave for working women, a term explicitly *not* used in this context was the elimination of discrimination against women, or the campaign for equal rights.[83] Since many inequalities were based in Islamic law, they represented a sensitive area of discussion. The Union was only drawn into such debates after the government launched a separate governmental body, the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs, in 2003 to identify laws that discriminated against women and to work towards their amendment.[84] The Commission was instituted shortly after Syria had ratified the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in September 2002, resulting in a wave of new legislation. For example, the rights of working women are anchored in the Employment Act No 91 (1959), with provisions protecting women from physically demanding, morally damaging or health-endangering work, as well as prohibiting work at night.[85] Legislative Decree No 35 (2002) extended paid maternity leave to 120 days for the first child, with shorter periods for subsequent

children. Generally, women's legal rights with respect to labour laws were considered to include only 'positive' discrimination, and not to disadvantage women.[86] Another amendment, Legislative Decree No 18 (2003), raised the age of a mother's legal custody of her children to 13 years for boys and 15 years for girls.[87] Women's rights were enhanced significantly in 2003 when Syrian women for the first time were allowed to leave the country without having to prove they had their husbands' permission.[88]

The role of the Union in these matters is difficult to gauge immediately. On the one hand, all women parliamentarians are Union members.[89] In principle, this seems to suggest an opportunity to influence legislation. On the other hand, the People's Assembly can only confirm laws submitted to them by the president; they are not entitled to draft bills themselves, and have practically never rejected any presidential proposal.[90] Thus, the Union could only have contributed to such amendments indirectly. Indeed, it is suggested here that it did so, to a significant extent, by creating forums to evaluate public opinion on highly controversial issues and feeding it back to the ruling elites.

Although Syria ratified CEDAW, the clauses of which were made widely known through events held by the Union and the Communist Rabita,[91] it did so with reservations marked against a number of paragraphs that were considered to contradict Syrian legislation, and more precisely the requirements of Islamic law. Although the Syrian constitution of 1973 declared women and men equal before the law (Part IV §§25, 26, 27 and 45), the first two reservations concerned Articles 2 and 9 of the Convention, stipulating the elimination of legal discrimination against women in all fields of law (article 2) and equal rights for women with respect to holding nationality and passing it on to their children (article 9).[92] On the one hand, both the constitution and civil law granting women equality in legal proceedings, economic transactions, employment and election rights support compliance with these articles. But on the other hand, the Personal Status Law, regulating matters of marriage, divorce, custody or inheritance, ascribes men and women different rights.[93] Moreover, article 9 stands in conflict with Legislative Decree No 276 (1969), which states that only Syrian men have the right to pass on their nationality to their children.[94]

Furthermore, Article 15 §4 of the Convention guarantees equal rights to women to move freely, thereby contravening §148 of the Personal

Status Law, which does not allow a woman to travel with her children without their father's consent, 'travel' in this context referring to both travel within the country and the crossing of national borders. A woman and her children are only permitted to leave the town where she resides or works if one of her own family members resides in the place of destination.[95] Similar clashes between the Personal Status Law and CEDAW occur with respect to marriage; according to §18 of the Personal Status Law, the legal age of marriage can be as low as 13 years for girls and 15 years for boys if a judge is convinced that both parties' genuinely wish it. The judge should also be convinced that both are physically mature, and that their guardians approve of the marriage. Therefore, this provision legalises child marriage.[96] In so doing, it collides with article 16 §1 (c), (f) and (g) and §2 of the Convention that allow wives, like husbands, to choose their name, profession and occupation and forbids child marriage (§1) and demands equal rights for women in marriage and divorce as well as with respect to guardianship and adoption (§2).[97]

In order to lift the reservations against these articles, the Commission, the Communist Rabita and the Union submitted memoranda to the Prime Minister as well as to the People's Assembly. They also conducted legal investigations to assess the difficulties arising from discriminatory law for women.[98] The Commission established a social forum, in which women were invited to explain their concerns, widely reported by the media in June 2004, with similar events being held by the Union and the Rabita, along with other initiatives.[99] Workshops set up by the Commission brought together members of the People's Assembly with jurists in Islamic law to discuss the compatibility of the articles in question with Islamic law. With respect to articles 2 and 9, §148 and article 16 §§1 (g) and 2, it was finally agreed that the reservations could be lifted, whilst the reservations against §1 (c) and (f) were upheld.[100]

Yet, despite all these efforts, by 2014, the year of the most recent CEDAW report, all the above reservations were still in place, and the agreement reached had not prompted any formal legal amendments,[101] even though, with respect to the question of nationality, the People's Assembly had agreed by majority to remove both reservations and had forwarded their decision to the government.[102] A leading Union member attributed this deadlock not to religious, but political, considerations, suggesting that an amendment of this law would allow Syrian women who were married to Palestinians to pass on their

nationality to their husband and their children, thereby rendering their eventual return to Palestine unlikely.[103] However, considering that Palestinians accounted for only about 0.8 per cent of the Syrian population (by 2004, more than 300,000 Palestinians officially lived in Syria, about half of them men[104]) it appears doubtful that a change of legislation would have represented a major challenge to the Syrian economic and social system.

Paradoxically, progress was made in an area that had not been included in the CEDAW reservations: the criminalisation of 'crimes of honour' for both sexes. Prior to the presidential Legislative Decree No 37 (2009), article 548 of the Syrian Penal Code provided for men to be exempted from punishment if they injured or killed a wife, daughter or female relative when discovering them having extramarital sex or engaged in a 'doubtful situation'. Allegedly due to an increase in domestic violence, this provision was altered, making 'crimes of honour' punishable by up to two years in prison.[105] Concerns remain, though, since there are differing penalties with regard to adultery: men are prohibited from having extramarital sex only inside the marital home, while for women it remains a crime regardless of the location. Lastly, it is still the case that a rapist who later marries his victim is exempt from legal prosecution and punishment.[106]

The debate surrounding Syria's CEDAW reservations makes it clear that, despite the president's far-reaching powers, legal amendments are not undertaken solely by virtue of an authoritative presidential decision; otherwise, there would have been no hindrance to lifting the reservations for which consensus had been reached. Instead, there is a sense in which the wider public must be involved, because, as a Union member said,

> [Y]ou can't take the issue and directly present it to parliament. You can't. First, you need to gather local people around you. You need the men of religion, or men of civil society at times [*al-mujtima' al-madani*], sometimes even those with radical views because they want these issues to remain in their hands [. . .] You need to make them understand that this [suggested amendment] is not about their wives. It might be about their daughters. It might be better for their daughters. Their sisters might benefit from it. They always think in terms of wives, and as husbands. But maybe a problem concerns their sister, who has a problem with her husband. And

maybe it would solve her problems. Or those of their daughter. And that's why first of all, we want support in the local community.[107]

In this sense, it can be argued that, while media coverage of the debates held by the Commission allowed suggestions to disseminate widely, smaller seminars such as those held by the Union for the general public provided a means whereby those belonging to Ba'thist leading circles could evaluate opinions on the matters under discussion. It has to be said that attendance at Union seminars is not always voluntary: in one instance, when the author attended the panel discussion on the ban on smoking in public, it turned out that most of the women present were Union nursery and kindergarten staff who had been told that this was a compulsory meeting. Instead, they found themselves attending a broadcast that was being shown on Syrian state television. This initially upset some who were annoyed that they had been misinformed, especially as they had been up since early morning to take their children to school and had spent a long working day on their feet. However, the panel discussion, involving a dentist, a lecturer from Aleppo University and a Party member, a lawyer, and the mufti of Aleppo, soon raised genuine interest. In particular, the mufti's comment that the choice of topic was inappropriate and that in view of the rise in poverty and unemployment in Aleppo he felt there were far more pressing issues to discuss, led to a heated debate. Thus, regardless of whether or not attendance is voluntary, debates like these can have an impact on the audience and will invite responses. In respect to sensitive topics such as the role and legal status of women, it is argued here that this procedure is able to prevent clashes with local values, and can be used to assess the likely degree of resistance to proposed new measures. This way, government(-affiliated) bodies such as the Commission or the Union serve as intermediaries to test the boundaries of acceptance. Yet it can also be seen that the costs of this approach are borne by women, who continue to suffer from the very slow progress made towards ending their legal discrimination. In 2007, several organisations issued the CEDAW Shadow Report that critically reviewed this lack of progress, albeit to no avail.[108] In fact, when a new Personal Status Law was drafted in 2009, it was met by fierce opposition from many women's groups, including the Union. This was because, rather than offer any improvements, it was considered to worsen women's legal status.[109]

Sections for Research, Publications, Media, Political Culture and Propaganda

The sections for research, publications, media and political culture supported other sections such as legal affairs by publicising Union events. These sections operated separately at times, and were merged together at others.[110] From the Union's inception research was carried out into the social, economic and legal situation of women in the country, while books and booklets were produced to spread awareness of the envisaged role of the economically active, socially responsible and politically conscious woman.[111] The Union's monthly magazine *al-Mar'a al-ʿarabiyya* (The Arab Woman) helped to spread this message, calling upon writers and intellectuals as well as 'young open-minded women' to write for it. It carried articles on fashion and cooking along with social, legal, health-related and educational issues, reports on Union activities, and portrayed the life of women in other socialist countries. The magazine was available both in Syria and in other Arab countries. The selection of some of its title pages between 1968 and 1970 below illustrates that it was designed to appeal to a wide audience; covers depict women in the traditional handicrafts, as believers and fighters, and as mothers and working women.

Figure 4.2   Title pages of *al-mar'a al-ʿarabiyya*, 1968–70 (selection)

The section for culture, media and research also broadcast a Union radio programme called *al-Usra* (The Family) for 30 minutes each day. It covered the same topics as the magazine, but also included interviews and group discussions with experts on family issues, and was complemented by a Union TV programme with the same name and similar content.[112] In this way, the Union was able to reach women who were literate or had access to the radio or television, in addition to its activities at grassroots level.[113] According to the Union reports, the section also published hundreds of other publications over the years, many of which appear to have been lost as they were not systematically collected. The section for political culture[114] and propaganda was split off from media and publications and made a separate entity only in 1989. It remained separate until 2004 before re-emerging as the section for media and political culture. This section aimed at spreading unity among women in pan-Arab and socialist thought against the threat of 'reactionary forces' (*al-quwa al-rajiʿiyya*), i.e. the Israeli threat.[115] It did so by holding seminars for the wider public,[116] while after 1989, and coinciding with the collapse of the Soviet Union, other events such as literature nights, trips and exhibitions or a cinema club were also offered, but these were reserved for members only.[117] Lastly, between 2004 and 2008 the Union restructured its activities by renaming old and introducing new sections, but without making substantial changes to existing projects.[118]

Summary: Towards a New Understanding of Women's Welfare

This assessment of the Union's activities within the framework of the regime's five-year plans shows a mixed approach towards women's welfare services: some projects first implemented by earlier women's societies were pursued further, new ones were added, and some of the old ones dropped. Of all the earlier societies on which information is available, the Union's projects resemble most closely the objectives and services provided by the Communist Rabita and and the Jamʿiyyat al-marʾa al-ʿarabiyya (Society for the Arab Woman) before the Union's establishment. The campaign to increase literacy amongst girls and women remained the cornerstone of the Union's work. Moreover, its efforts in the fields of healthcare and civil defence clearly continued a

tradition of providing welfare that had been established several decades earlier. However, the Union's emphasis on vocational training and the establishment of nurseries and kindergartens was unprecedented. This new edge to women's welfare reflected the Baʿthist attempt to foster the growth of a broad-based economy that had been of limited interest to the privileged first-generation of women activists in Syria. Likewise, the Union's reliance on its own factories and workshops to generate income in addition to its state funding contrasts with the dependence of earlier women's societies on the personal fortunes of their members. More importantly, it shows that the Union was intended to support Baʿthist policies that had been implemented on a wider level. Rather than just meeting women's needs, the Union actually contributed to creating these needs by stressing the importance of women's employment. This meant that the Union to some extent challenged traditional gender roles: women were expected to be educated and to work outside the house, and they could be trained in shooting. However, the skills offered by VET classes were clearly 'feminine' activities such as sewing and embroidery. Indeed, women's military training was the least popular activity within healthcare and civil defence. Both VET classes and courses in healthcare and civil defence offered women new opportunities, and were in the interest of the regime.

Not only in terms of membership recruitment, but also in providing services, the Union as a mass organisation represents a means of hegemony in the Gramscian sense. It allowed the ruling elites to disseminate Baʿthist ideas among the wider population while to some extent remaining sensitive to local opinion. The Union made great efforts in order to explore beforehand the need for its initiatives among women locally, and to assess their response afterwards. This way, it could be seen whether Union services proved successful in attracting women into the Union. Owing to its sheer size and closeness to the ruling elites, the Union benefited from its links with government ministries, other mass organisations and international agencies, be it through access to training, funding, publicity or expert advice. Such cooperation was the responsibility of the sections for statistics and planning and foreign relations. At the same time, Union activities were widely publicised both internally and externally through the sections for media and foreign relations. The planning of Union activities was in many ways reminiscent of Soviet aspirations for its mass organisations, although the

latter did not necessarily target women. The close relations between Soviet states and the Union largely ended in 1989, and it was at this point that the Union launched its political culture and propaganda section, tasked with organising special events for members only, possibly in order to strengthen internal cohesion.

Such an approach would not have been entirely alien to the earlier women's societies. Although their political agenda depended on their founders' inclinations rather than the government, which they actually opposed at least until 1946, they too met in enclosed circles – in their case, in the literary salons where they discussed ideas and strengthened their networks. Despite some similarities between Union projects and earlier initiatives, however, it did not continue with other welfare activities, such as the support of orphans and the elderly. It appears that the Union felt there was no need to carry on these tasks, perhaps because they were left to other institutions. Indeed, Heike Roggenthin has pointed out that in Damascus, eight women's organisations are licensed by the state to carry out charitable work among the poor, of which four are state-led, two are private and two belong to the church. However, Roggenthin also stresses that hundreds of such groups operated as social networks in Damascus alone, many of them linked to church communities, while Thomas Pierret and Kjetil Selvik have also observed a growth of Muslim charities since the 1990s.[119] However, although leaving this role to other groups, the Union was drawn into other 'new' projects, such as national health campaigns, including family planning, which would have been taboo in the first half of the last century. Here, too, the Union implemented public policy, as it did with regard to rights legislation. However, while it gave legal advice to individual women within the existing framework of legislation, raising awareness of their rights, it did not openly challenge the legal inequality of women as some of the founders of the early societies did, for example by proclaiming the right of women to vote. Instead, the Union assumed a mediating role between the masses and the elite by opening up debates on the sensitive legal amendments concerning CEDAW. It did so to test the waters to see how far they would be accepted by the population. Realising that popular consent was lacking, no further steps were undertaken to implement them. Indeed, the regime continued to back away from upholding the equality of the sexes by law.

These Union projects show that the regime was careful to tailor the provision of welfare services for women in a way that suited its socialist ambitions, but ensured that it remained attractive to women who otherwise would not have signed up for membership. In so doing, the Union successfully recruited about 400,000 girls and women into Union literacy classes, whilst about 480,000 benefited from its VET, and an estimated 340,000 were trained in first aid and civil defence. In addition to active participation, the Union reached an unknown number of women through its booklets, radio and television programmes, and magazine. It also reached them through house visits and encounters in the fields and factories, through lectures and seminars, or through other immediate services such as legal advice, childcare, vaccinations, or medical treatment. It is impossible to assess the quality or impact of such activities on women in general – some may have had only superficial contact with the Union, or been disappointed by it. For others, it could have made a life-changing difference. A woman who could neither read nor write was given a chance to learn these skills regardless of age; a woman with no education or vocational training could learn how to sew. With some luck she could use these skills to sell her own products or even find employment. Only if the services delivered matched women's needs would they consent to join, and only then would the Union survive. Thus the Union as a mass organisation represents a means of hegemony for the ruling elite in the Gramscian sense in that the regime determines its policies in the best of its interests, and in that its services are a means of fostering consent in the sense of its members supporting and even carrying 'vital aspects' of the system. However, the Union's projects also reveal another side to hegemony: its dependency on consent as opposed to its determining role. It is in view of this dependency that, on behalf of the regime, the Union evaluated opinion on the regime's more general policies among the wider population and sought to offer need-receptive services to win membership.

In this regard, mass organisations in a totalitarian setting serve a similar purpose to elections in democratic systems. In the latter, eligible individuals may simply give their vote to the party they habitually vote for; or they may study the parties' programmes and evaluate their past and planned policies before making a decision. Political parties will largely perceive their election results as a judgement of their package of policies. Through elections, political parties inside or outside of government receive feedback on their performance at regular intervals.

In totalitarian regimes that oppress political opposition with substantially different programmes, elections do not offer a similar range of choices, but nonetheless individuals hold preferences on public policies and possible alternatives that may differ widely. Here, too, the ruling elites need to maintain contact with 'the masses' in order to evaluate the full spectrum of public opinion, and they do so partially through the mass organisations. In totalitarian systems that have been active over longer periods of time, eligible individuals may join mass organisations for different reasons: because family members habitually do, because they opt to actively support the policies the organisation is committed to implement, or because they would like to access its services. The same way voters in democratic systems could be either in full or only partial support of the party they vote for eventually, Union members may completely or only partially agree with the organisation's projects. Just as abstention in democratic elections does not necessarily represent a rejection of the political system as such, the decision to join or abstain from joining mass organisations such as the Union does not inevitably indicate support for or rejection of the Syrian regime. As a result, individuals' consent emerges as a highly complex, multi-faceted notion that finds itself in a process of constant negotiation; we find 'shades of consent'. Consequently, it becomes clear that the question of indoctrination through ideology is part of, but by no means identical with, hegemony. If it is the aim of ideology to propagate one single, exclusivist and all-encompassing worldview, it is the aim of hegemony to transcend the outward adherence to expected behaviour, genuinely believed or enacted. Likewise, the avoidance of sheer co-optation, the absence of which has been excellently demonstrated by Thomas Pierret and Kjetil Selvik for the case of Islamic networks, is crucial.[120] The opinion of members and non-members alike needs to be given space in order for the ruling elites to judge the boundaries of consent with its actual policies. Importantly, this is achieved covertly and through observation, thereby leaving potential opponents in the dark as to where exactly the lines between permitted questions and suggestions, suspicion and arrest would lie. In this way, disagreement becomes noticeable, but those opposed to proposed or implemented policy remained deprived of speaking freely or joining forces. Having identified these strategies of creating as assessing consent, the next question is: How did the Union function on a day-to-day basis?

CHAPTER 5

ADMINISTRATION OF UNION MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITIES

Due to their large membership body and the range of services offered, mass organisations require an extensive administrative structure. Being a means of implementing public policies, they are closely tied to the regime. Accordingly, they mirror the structure of the ruling Party, which usually entails the hierarchical structuring not only of offices, but also of elected assemblies and standing committees. Typically, horizontal links between entities at each level are weak whilst, vertically, they are strong in order to enhance the regime's influence and curb pressure from below.[1] Thereby, the legal framework in which mass organisations are embedded determines both the scope allowed for the organisation's daily work and its limitations. At the same time, mass organisations set boundaries to the work of other organisations operating in the same field, or try to eradicate them completely, as shown in Chapter 3. Yet even within the mass organisation's formal structure, the everyday experiences of active members often present unforeseen challenges that tried their patience. Based on the Union's reports and interviews with members, how did the Union work, and what did it look like from an internal perspective?

Internal Structure

Although some basic principles in the Union's structure, such as its hierarchical order, have already been pointed out, the Union's

composition was actually much more complex than it appears at first sight. Indeed, its full internal structure is interesting to examine because it reveals the leeway for change and interference from below as well as from above. The first question to consider in this regard is that of access to membership. At the most basic level, Union membership was subject to an application process overseen by the offices. Apart from these offices, the Union, like other mass organisations, was made up of two other types of bodies, the conferences and the councils. We shall consider their role later.

As with other mass organisations, membership of the Union had to be applied for and approved. However, this application process was usually not very strict to enable it to sign up as many members as possible.[2] The conditions for Union membership were stipulated in its internal regulations. Mirroring Party membership, a member of the Union was either classified as a working member (*'adu 'amila*) or a participating member (*'adu musharika*). In order to become a working member, a woman had to be at least 18 years old and of Syrian nationality, or a citizen of another Arab state who is resident in Syria. Participating membership could be obtained from the age of 16 onwards. An aspiring member had to be entitled to exercise her civil rights fully, and accordingly, possessing a criminal record would exclude women from membership. As explained earlier, members were initially required to declare their dedication to the aims of the revolution but in 1986 this was expanded to include agreement with the aims of the Party also. Lastly, members had to guarantee their future compliance with the rules and regulations of the Union's internal regulations.[3]

Offices

Applications for membership were submitted to a unit, at the base of the pyramid. If the unit rejected the application, the applicant had the right to appeal against this decision.[4] If the application was accepted, members were affiliated to the unit in the area where they lived and worked. Working members were entitled to discuss and participate in all areas of their unit's work and to take part in elections for leading positions, both voting and standing for elections themselves.[5] If members did not fulfill their responsibilities, disregarded the internal regulations, used their position to their own benefit, were late in paying membership fees or absent themselves from the Union's activities,

they could be expelled from the organisation.[6] Participating members were subject to the same conditions, rights and obligations, but could not take part in elections or vote on resolutions.[7] On turning 18, participating members usually became working members.[8] As shown in Chapter 4, although Baʿth membership was not an official requirement for Union membership, in practice it was.

Each level in the structural pyramid, from the executive office in Damascus at the top, through the administrative offices in every governorate to the associations and units at local level, had its own office, responsible for running and administering its own affairs, with the higher levels supervising those below. All offices were obliged to document their work in annual and term reports, with the latter including financial reports detailing an office's final account and a draft budget for the coming year. Also, all offices had the right to draw up their own annual plans.[9] By contrast, the decision to accept new members was the units' prerogative alone.[10] The opening of new offices could originally be suggested by associations and administrative offices, but after 1986 the executive office became the sole body able to take final decisions in this respect. Similarly, only the executive office decided on the introduction or maintenance of specialist sections such as the section for Union nurseries within the different administrative offices. Also, it selected Union representatives to be sent to Arab or international conferences, and handled resignations from leading members in associations and administrative offices.[11]

The Union's laws and regulations laid down the number of leading members in the offices for each level. Originally, a unit used to be headed by five working members, and its establishment was subject to a decision by its higher administrative office so long as the unit comprised at least ten members – 20 since 1975.[12] Associations and administrative offices were run by seven leading members and the executive office by nine. As the Union grew, these numbers were raised in 1986 to nine for each administrative office and 11 for the executive office.[13] Also, the executive office and administrative offices were staffed with paid employees (*muwazzafin*) such as housekeepers, drivers or accountants. However, the vast majority of leading Union members, unless they occupied a position high up in the hierarchy, worked for it on a voluntary basis, as is the case elsewhere.[14]

In mass organisations positions are usually distributed through elections, although regimes tend to interfere with election results if they are judged unsuitable.[15] At the same time, indirect elections channelled upward through a variety of bodies lead to fewer candidates at higher levels in order to safeguard the regime's influence.[16] In the case of the Union, this process was ensured through the introduction of conferences as additional bodies at all levels. Initially, elections usually took place once every term, with the duration of a term being extended from two years (1967) to four (1975) and later to five years (1986). Basic democratic procedures to this end were already laid out in the original laws and regulations. At the bottom level of the units, the general committee or unit's conference (*al-hayʾa al-ʿamma*) gathered all the working members of a unit together to elect its leading members.[17] At the level of the associations, all the members of the units belonging to a given association would attend the association's conference, alongside members of the association's office and additional representatives who had been elected by the general committee from amongst the units. Together they would elect the new leading members of the association's office.[18] The same procedure was mirrored at the level of the administrative offices. Since all the associations in a given governorate depend on one administrative office, all members of the associations' offices would join the conference of their administrative office, together with the members of the administrative office itself. Again, additional representatives would be elected in the associations' conferences beforehand. All of these would then elect the new leading members of the administrative office for the following term.[19]

Although mass organisations were originally introduced as a means of introducing popular democracy in Syria, selection rather than the election of leading members was justified by the circumstances of its early years.[20] However, this procedure was later officially replaced by elections. Women who wished to put forward their own candidacy for election had to submit a written request beforehand to the respective conference, and elections were secret. Positions to be filled in each office at all levels were those of the chairwoman, her deputy, the secretary and a treasurer, plus additional roles to be distributed if necessary. Accordingly, the general assembly as well as the associations' and administrative offices' conferences elected the number of women needed for an office, who would then

hold another secret vote amongst themselves to allocate their specific roles during their first office meeting.[21]

Councils and Conferences

From the start, these procedures differed with regard to the general conference, which is the Union's highest body. Rather than the general conference directly electing the executive office, as was the case at lower levels, a third type of body was set in between: a council, or the general council (*al-hay'a al-idariyya*, later *al-majlis al-idari*).[22] Thus, the general conference comprised all the members of the administrative offices, additional members of the administrative offices as elected by the administrative conferences, as well as all the members of the general council – but not the existing members of the executive office.[23] In this way, members of the executive offices were excluded from the election process, while this regulation offered an additional step of possible intervention through the ruling elites at the highest level. The members of the general conference elected 21 members (1975: 31, 1986: 51) from amongst themselves to form the general
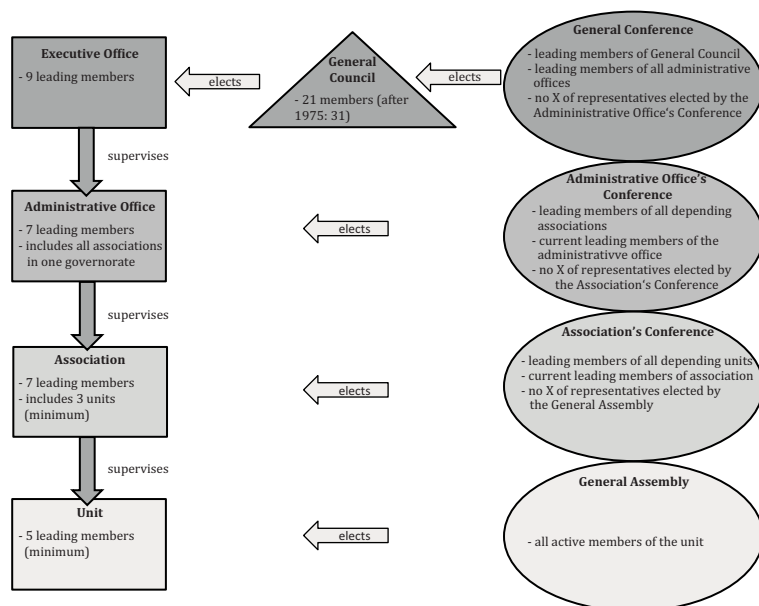
Figure 5.1   Union structure and election procedures prior to 1986

council, again for the duration of the whole term. The council then elected the new executive office from amongst its members.[24] Again, the newly elected members of the executive office distributed all other positions amongst themselves in a secret vote during their first meeting.[25] To summarise, the Union's structure and election procedures prior to 1986 are shown in Figure 5.2.

In 1986, election procedures changed in that, parallel to the procedures at the highest level, councils were also introduced for associations and administrative offices. Under these new laws, the associations' conference elected 15 to 21, and the branches' conferences 21 to 31, members to the council. These then elected the office's leading members from amongst themselves.[26] These amendments also affected the composition of the associations and branches conferences, replacing the former share of existing office members from the same level with council members and excluding existing leading members of the offices from the elections.[27] Having lost the ability to participate in their own re-election, leading members in the offices hence needed to rely on their networking skills and reputation in order to mobilise members at their
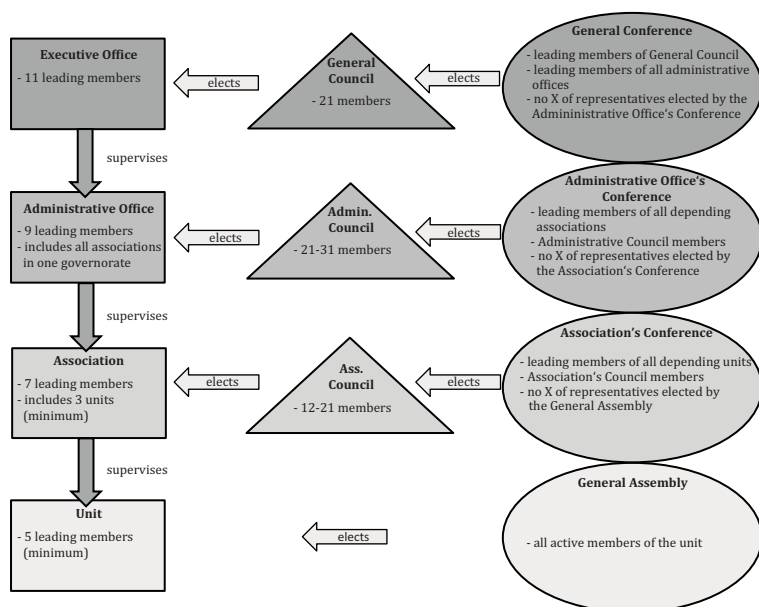
Figure 5.2   Union structure and election procedures since 1986

respective lower levels for their vote. Procedures for the units remained unchanged. The enlarged Union structure after 1986 looked as per Figure 5.2.

Although these are the procedures in theory, the results of elections were not always adhered to in practice. Despite Party membership not being an official requirement, some interviewees pointed out that only full Baʿth members stood a chance of occupying leading positions, especially at the higher levels. All election results had to be forwarded to the Party and were subject to its approval. Thus, in some cases, a woman elected by majority in a democratic election could be rejected if another candidate was considered more suitable from the Party's point of view. Likewise, complaints were often raised that those with the right connections would receive preferential treatment over those who worked hard, but who lacked such contacts. Although not discussed openly, such procedures caused resentment and frustration, and they discredited the elections even for those who emerged legitimately as successful candidates.[28] In this respect, it appears that the Union differed from mass organisations elsewhere where leading positions were openly allocated by appointment.[29]

Apart from holding elections, conferences at all levels examined the reports, including the financial reports, handed in to them by their office and proposed the new budget. If accepted, they passed the reports on to the office above. Also, they elected additional delegates to be sent to the next higher conference, the number of whom was determined by the general council for each term. Moreover, conferences were entitled to hold confidence votes against one or several members of their respective council. The general conference, as the Union's highest body, was additionally responsible for planning the Union's overall policies and for all measures undertaken for their implementation. Its resolutions were binding for all offices, members and sub-organisations. During its regular meetings, the general conference discussed its plans and programme for the following electoral period. Furthermore, it explored the affairs of the Union in general, as well as the implementation of its resolutions and recommendations. Also, the general conference was entitled to decide on amendments to provisions of the internal regulations. Lastly, it verified the final statement of accounts for the whole electoral term.[30]

Although the general conference enjoyed certain privileges, it becomes clear that the conferences' tasks lay mainly in holding elections

and monitoring the work of the offices. In fact, the same is true for the councils. Apart from the elections, both the associations and administrative councils supervised their offices' work and the implementation of their yearly plans. Also, they examined their final accounts and confirmed the proposed new budgets, which were then passed on to the relevant higher office. By contrast, the activity reports of an office were handed on to the responsible conference after approval by the council. All councils had the right to withhold confidence from one or several leading members of their dependent office.[31]

In addition to these responsibilities, only the general council had the right to decide the Union's planned activities. It also checked the final accounts submitted at all levels before passing them on to the general conference for approval. Further, the general council determined the number of elected representatives in the associations, administrative offices and general conferences in each term. Moreover, it was entitled to set up electoral procedures as suggested by the executive office and had the right to issue regulations (*anzima*) and internal provisions (*lawa'ih*) as needed for various activities of the Union and those of its sub-organisations.[32] Also, the general council was the only body that could put forward amendments to the Union's internal regulations as a whole or in part to the general conference. In its work, the general council was also permitted to consult external experts.[33] Until 1986, the Union's affiliation with Arab or international organisations was the general council's sole responsibility; thereafter, this was passed on to the executive office. Based on the above, the Union's structure can be depicted as per Figure 5.3.

Higher offices supervised the activities of lower offices, and the work of all the offices was checked by both their respective councils and conferences. Given that each single unit held its own general committee meeting, and the associations, administrative offices and the executive office their respective conferences and councils, the internal structure of the Union was in fact highly complex. With the executive office at the top, and 14 administrative offices, 114 associations and 1,634 units below, the Union's structure resembled a pyramid with a broad base. In terms of the distribution of positions, the outline of the Union's structure in Figure 5.2 represents an attempt to bring about upward election procedures. As a rule, members of lower bodies are included in the election of higher bodies via the conferences. Although leading
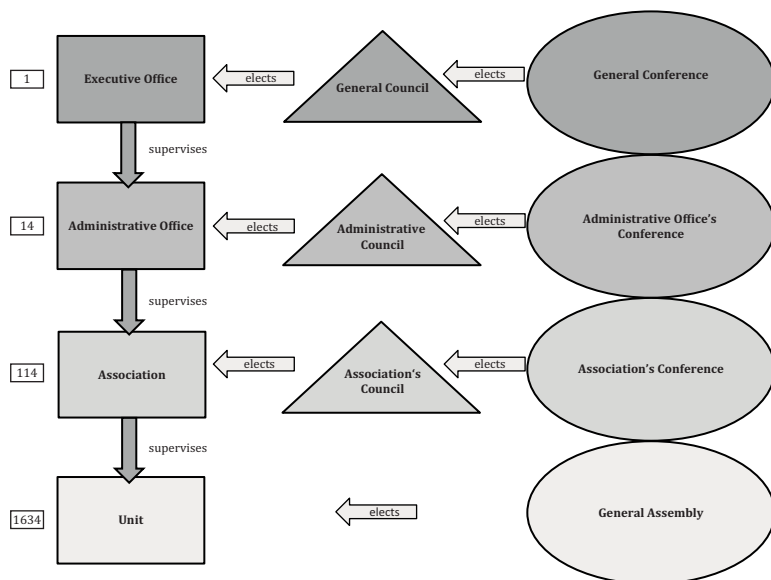
Figure 5.3 Countrywide Union structure (offices, councils and conferences)

members of a given office were part of their respective conference until 1986, and therefore participated in the election of future candidates for the positions they had held themselves in the previous term, the additional inclusion of all members of lower level offices, and additional representatives thereof, ensured that, in terms of numbers, the leading members could not dominate the election. For example, an association used to comprise seven members, while each unit (a minimum of three being bound to an association) would send five leading members to the association's conference. Accordingly, the relation was at least seven to a minimum of 15 plus an unknown number of additional units' delegates. However, it has been shown that in practice the number of units depending on a given association was considerably higher than the minimum of three, or between 85 and more than 200 on average, which – in theory at least – should have been enough to ensure a certain flux of leading members in councils and offices over the years. Also, new members entering the Union at the level of the units would automatically be included in elections at this level and possibly at higher

levels as well. This way, appointments made to positions during the establishment period should have been outweighed by the intake of new members at a later stage. As a result, we find a highly complex structure that did allow for electoral mobility, beginning with general elections including all Union members at the grassroots level, but which was then increasingly manipulated by Party interference at higher levels.

Claiming a Monopoly

Like mass organisations elsewhere, from its establishment onwards the Union tried to claim a monopoly on women's voluntary work.[34] Accordingly, the Union's declared aim was to incorporate all existing societies in the country. As it says in its original legal decree:

> §75 The Women's Union will be entrusted with drawing up policies for existing women's societies in the country and will direct their activities in accordance with the aims of this legal decree.
> §76 All existing women's unions are dissolved, and all their rights and funds are vested in the General Women's Union.
> §77 All documents in conflict with this legal decree are nullified, and the establishment of new societies in the country is prohibited.[35]

Although this decree explicitly demanded that only unions such as 'Adila Bayyhum's should be dissolved, the envisaged integration of existing societies into the Union's structure effectively meant the end of their individual agendas and activities. Considering the long history of endeavour by these small societies, which were closely linked to their founders, this attempt was bound to be resisted. A historically documented case in point was that of the Syrian Communist Party's Rabitat al-nisa' al-suriyyat li-himayat al-umuma wa'l-tufula (Association of Syrian Women for the Protection of Mothers and Children). As has been shown, in its early years in power, the Ba'th was lacking popular support and maintained a difficult relationship with the SCP, further complicated by Soviet backing for the latter. Both parties had a keen interest in mass organisations: the SCP for their ideal of modernisation, the Ba'th to exercise control and gain legitimacy through winning popular consent.[36] The Ba'th seemed to realise the need to proceed cautiously in trying to define the relationship of the General Union of Syrian Women with the

Rabita. The main point of contact was established between Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah (Union) and Najah Saʿati (Rabita), both of whom had been appointed to the People's Assembly in 1965. According to Nawwal Yaziji, the two women grew closer during the Six Day War[37] – presumably through the involvement of the emerging Union and the Rabita in providing relief work – following which they came to discuss the future role of the Union. Najah Saʿati welcomed the formation of the Union in principle, and expressed her hope that it would cooperate with the SCP's Rabita. Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah however argued that the Union should be one single inclusive body, and suggested to Najah that she could become its chairwoman if only she became Baʿthist. Yet Najah Saʿati stressed that she would prefer all women's societies to continue to exist individually, even if under the umbrella of the Union. Neither of them could convince the other. In the end, Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah became chairwoman of the Union herself while Najah continued her engagement with the Rabita.[38] Although this account shows that the Baʿth did not try to integrate the Rabita, with its longstanding tradition, by force, it did take steps to undermine the competing society's activities in later years. As can be seen from GDR archival material, letters sent by the Rabita to the Democratic Federation of Women (DFW), the GDR's women's organisation, in 1970 and 1971 to cement their bilateral cooperation were intercepted in what appears to have been an attempt to isolate the Rabita from foreign contacts. On 9 March 1971, a leading member of the Rabita wrote:

> I am making use of a friend's visit to the GDR to send you this letter out of reach of censorship. During the stay of your women's delegation in Syria, we discussed the working conditions of our organisation, and the German colleagues could see for themselves the difficulties we encounter in our work. Since then, I sent you two letters without receiving any reply. Perhaps you have not received these letters sent by mail.[39]

Although the DFW makes no further comment on this incident in the surviving GDR files, the prompt fulfillment of the Rabita's request to send sewing machines and children's toys seems to confirm that the earlier letters had not been received. The rival position of the two Syrian women's groups, delegates of both of which attended international women's conferences, placed states such as the GDR in a delicate position.

Handwritten comments on a translation of the letter indicate that the DFW needed to clarify with the German Central Party Committee and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs how to hand over the gifts without giving affront to either side before sending a response. As a result, the gifts were sent to the GDR Embassy to be handed out, but the embassy did not receive any notification of the shipment, prompting it to request clarification as to whether the recipient was the Union or the Rabita.[40] Eventually, it was confirmed that the gifts had reached their intended destination.[41] A few months later both groups tried to establish formal relations in the form of a treaty of friendship with the DWF.[42] Unfortunately, all record of the GDR's relations with both sides is lost for later years, but the Rabita is one of the societies that continue to carry out their individual work to the present day, although, at times, risking the arrest of its members.[43] The fact that the Rabita and societies such as Jihan al-Musuli's al-Nadwa al-thaqafiyya al-nisaʾiyya or the literary salons of Thurayya al-Hafiz continued their work demonstrates that the ruling elites refrained from ending such initiatives by force, even in later years. However, their activities became severely constrained. For every gathering at which more than five members were present, permission had to be sought from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs – in contrast to the newly inaugurated 'non-governmental organisations' initiated by Asmaʾ al-Asad, wife of the President.[44] In addition to private women's societies and the Rabita, a range of international organisations, especially the UN, also complemented the Union's activities. For example, UNWRA maintained schools, health services, vocational training centres, and cultural education initiatives for children, supporting Palestinian and Iraqi refugees. UNWRA also set up a sewing production unit especially for women in Hussayniyya, Damascus. Also supporting Palestinian refugees, the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) was the only other mass organisation for women allowed to operate in Syria, but with a very limited impact.[45]

Thus founded by the regime, the Union was practically aligned with the Baʿth, which monitored its work from its inception. The Union's structure paralleled that of the Party and was very extensive, with a broad base at the grassroots directed by fewer entities at higher levels. Whilst in the early years leading Union members were openly appointed, elections were later put in place in order to implement the Baʿthist vision of popular democracy. In this respect, the Union represents a paradox: on the one hand, it provided space for upward

mobility and democratic procedures, but, on the other hand, these met their limits when transgressing the boundaries of what was judged to be favourable by the Ba'th. If Party membership had to be considered by anyone wanting to become a Union member, aspirations for leading positions were inseparably tied to this decision.

Furthermore, the Union's influence on designing its own projects was rather restricted. Whilst the general conference could discuss the Union's planning policies, only the members of the general council had the right to pass a decision on them. However, the framework for the Union's work, as such, was set elsewhere, namely in the Party's five-year plans, as shown in the previous chapter. With these procedures in place, the Union worked to implement the Ba'thist understanding of women's welfare, but it offered only limited and indirect means for ambitious women to influence the shape its projects took.

Everyday Challenges

Although the procedures for setting up and running the Women's Union were clear on paper, the daily reality of a mass organisation's work posed various practical challenges. Gregory Kasza has argued that amongst other things, mass organisations aim to use up their members' time, leaving less room for unorganised activities beyond the reach of the regime.[46] Either way, considering the largely voluntary character of mass organisations, their work largely relied on the dedication of their leading members. What problems did they face, and what opportunities did the Union hold for them?

Finding Office Space

The Union acquired its strong position in providing women's welfare services in Syria not only by widening its membership basis, but also by expanding its office structure. In addition to its executive office and administrative offices, it opened units and associations throughout the country. Mass organisations elsewhere in the world adopted the same approach, usually by maintaining units in the very same space in which the Party operated, for example in factories for workers' organisations or in schools to recruit pupils into youth organisations.[47] The choice of a suitable location was less obvious in the case of a woman's organisation that was mainly, but not exclusively, made up of housewives.

From its inception, the Union made a constant effort to increase the number of units in all governorates. Thus, the overall number of units in the country rose almost continuously from scratch to 400 by 1973, increasing to 1,634 by 2008.[48] However, the opening of new units slowed down as time went on, coming to a virtual halt around the year 2000. Surprisingly, there seems to have been no correspondence between the setting up of Union's units, which were the first point of contact for Union members at grassroots level, and the size of the Union's membership. In 1973, for example, the ratio of members per unit varied from 25 in al-Suwayda' governorate to as many as 90 in Dayr al-Zur. By 2008 the differential gap had widened more than five times to between 126 members per unit in Tartous and 569 in Damascus.[49] The averages across all terms show that in Damascus the ratio of members per unit was exceptionally high (267) while in Tartous it was exceptionally low (85). This might indicate that units in some governorates worked more efficiently than in others, or that they had more means at their disposal. Whatever the case, high recruitment was not rewarded with a corresponding infrastructure, and the units in some governorates accordingly faced a much higher workload than in others. As office provision did not correlate to planned membership, units were left to meet their plans for maximising recruitment through other means. Lastly, it should be noted that the urban/rural environment does not explain such differences either; in other words, it cannot be generalised that the Union maintained more offices at the grassroots in the countryside than in the cities, or vice versa.[50]

However, the reasons for this phenomenon emerge more clearly from the Union's organisational reports. Indeed, the units' lack of appropriate office space and equipment was, and remained, a serious impediment to the Union's work throughout its history, and was frequently quoted as a major reason for the failure to hold regular meetings and for poor attendance levels. From the very beginning alternative meeting places such as schools or Peasant's Union premises were suggested to address this problem.[51] Use was also made of factories and workshops,[52] but by the 1990s it was stated that no more units would be opened in such premises because of the pressure of time on women workers and their need to focus on production. Instead, workers were expected to participate in the Union's activities outside their work shifts and place of work.[53] Baʿth Party offices also served as units' offices.[54] Across the

country as a whole, proper office space dedicated exclusively to the Union was the exception rather than the rule. In the mid-1970s, it was noted that only 113 units, about 10 per cent of the total number, were based in rented office space.[55] By 2008, more than half of all units were based in private houses, Baʿth offices or governmental premises, another 36 per cent met in Union-run institutions, and only 8 per cent possessed office space of their own.[56] There is no available breakdown of these figures per governorate, but the broad numbers indicate that the Union's infrastructure was, to a considerable extent, informal, depending on resources not primarily designed for the Union itself but relying instead on the willingness of its leading members or of other institutions to host meetings.

As the first contact of supervision and guidance for units, associations were set up slowly but steadily during the first two decades of the Union's existence.[57] For most governorates, a major decision seems to have been taken between 1979 and 1983 not to expand the Union any further at this level, but to focus on its activities at the grassroots level through the units.[58] Again, the number of associations per governorate varied considerably. While the number of units did not increase in step with membership growth, it could be assumed that at least the network of associations would be expanded to support the additional workload carried by the units with large numbers of members. Indeed, this was the case: the trend that emerges, although with minor variations, is that the higher the number of members in a given unit, the lower the number of units overseen by a single association.[59] In addition, the provision of actual office space for associations was less precarious than it was for units.[60]

The question of where to set up units and associations, whether in the form of actual offices or not, was a delicate one. Would the people living in the chosen area be receptive to the Union's plans? Would women there be interested in participating in its activities, or in assuming a leading role? In theory, the opening of units and associations was subject to a decision by the executive office. Usually, the possibilities would be explored beforehand. For instance, members would suggest an appropriate location, and the executive office would make sure that qualified members were available to take up the lead. At this stage in the proceedings, the Union would take soundings from members of other mass organisations in the area. Only if the location seemed favourable

would it appear among the 'planned' offices listed for the next term.[61] In reality, however, these measures were not always followed. For example, the closure of 21 units between 1976 and 1980 was partly blamed on the arbitrary decisions taken by several administrative offices to set up units without adequate consultation.[62] In addition, 'societal backwardness and widespread ignorance' were also blamed for bringing some units to an end.[63] It is not clear whether this was due to opposition against a *women's* mass organisation in the area, or against a mass organisation as such. At other times, units were merged if they were too close to each other and therefore drew upon the same clientele.[64] By contrast, associations were often split up if the units they supervised grew too numerous in order to reduce workload and create greater geographical proximity between an association and its dependent units.[65] Despite such efforts, the Union's structure remained highly heterogeneous.

Keeping in Touch

The difficulty of communications, even within the organisation, added to the challenges facing the Union. For an organisation established in Syria in the late 1960s and intended to operate throughout the whole country, the lack of telephones was a serious problem, which continued to hinder communications between units and their supervising associations 20 years later.[66] Not until 2004 was the internet able to link five of the administrative offices to the executive office.[67] Consequently, personal visits by leading members of higher offices to lower offices were considered central to maintaining smooth relationships between the different levels.[68] Progress and difficulties were supposed to be discussed in regularly held meetings. For instance, the leading members of an administrative office would meet the leadership of its dependent association every two months and the leadership of their dependent units twice a year, as well as meeting all the unit members on an annual basis. For their part, the leading members of associations met those of their dependent units every two months and all unit members twice a year.[69] Often, however, the lack of transport and money proved an obstacle to such plans. Some administrative offices had been provided with their own cars by 1980 and special funds were allocated to these meetings in the yearly budget, which expressly mentioned the generous support of the Party.[70] In later years, the administrative offices or the Party branches would lend their

cars to the associations.[71] In 1989, financial restraints continued to prevent the purchase of cars.[72] This presented particular difficulties for associations that had responsibility for units based in the countryside, which were usually spread over a wide geographic area,[73] a problem that persisted.[74]

Judging from the regular criticisms made of low attendance figures, similar importance was attached to the regular holding of meetings at each level. Although the requirements vary in detail, in principle the leading members of units, associations, administrative offices and the executive office were supposed to hold weekly meetings, while conferences were to be held annually, and the general council would meet every three months. Major changes were introduced in 1986, when the amended law and internal regulations stipulated that the unit meetings should be fortnightly and their conferences take place once a month instead of annually. By contrast, the branches' conferences would only be held every two years and the general conference every five years from then on.[75]

Yet, in practice, the holding of regular unit meetings in particular was seen to be problematic. Attendance at unit meetings increased from less than 50 per cent in 1976–80 to almost 90 per cent in 1989–93, later dropping to 80 per cent on average for the period between 1999 and 2003.[76] The performance of associations and administrative offices was generally considered more satisfactory,[77] and the executive office convened meetings on average once or twice a week almost as laid down.[78] The association and administrative councils also largely convened as required.[79] However, the general council at times met only once rather than four times a year.[80] Lastly, conferences at the level of units,[81] associations[82] and administrative offices were held regularly, with the number of conferences at the level of administrative offices on average dropping to two per term after 1986, in line with the regulations.[83] Although it is clear that these regulations were put in place at a time when personal meetings were held to be essential for leading Union members to stay in touch, they were extremely time-consuming and added to the burden of responsibilities that women had to carry.

Conflicts of Interests

Women's multiple responsibilities for housework, childcare, and work outside the home represented another major challenge to the Union, not

just with regard to the holding of meetings, but to the smooth running of its work as a whole.[84] In the countryside, seasonal work in the fields prevented women from continuous engagement with the Union, but the same also applied to women who needed to coordinate their active Union membership with their schedules in school or at university.[85] Such responsibilities often caused women to withdraw from Union activities. According to internal surveys, other reasons cited for women leaving a governorate where they were affiliated to the Union included marriage, their age, or 'societal circumstances' – the latter not being specified.[86] From a personal perspective, all the interviewees who occupied leading positions in the Union, past or present, repeatedly stressed that their contribution would have been impossible without the support of their husbands and neighbours, especially in looking after their children.[87] At the leadership level, members sometimes left the Union altogether to take up other positions in the Party or the government. In 1994, for example, several leading members of different administrative offices resigned their positions in order to take up a place in the People's Assembly.[88] For the Union as a whole, this meant that its work was interrupted, and suitable candidates had to be found to replace these women.

Cadre Formation

Instances such as these, when mass organisations serve as a vehicle for a career in the political elite, are considered rare.[89] In the case of Syria, though, women's representation in parliament is regulated by quota and, in fact, all female parliamentarians are Union members.[90] Regardless of the likelihood of such transitions, the Union needed to find women who had the interest and the time to help build the Union, and who were capable of responsibly managing an office. Although the early reports mention the recruitment of members with prior experience in societal engagement, the focus soon shifted towards the education and training of the Union's own elite, or leading cadre. By 1973, it had become clear that the need for well-educated women to take up leading positions in the Union by far exceeded the number of those available for this task, particularly in the countryside.[91] In response, the Union set out to train its own elite. Cadre training courses were introduced for leading members of administrative offices, associations and units throughout all governorates, starting with 30 to 50 members each.[92] This way, cadre building became a fixed component of the Union's work over the

following decades. These training courses, which lasted from between one and two weeks, embraced a wide range of topics. Firstly, they aimed to give participants an overview of the Union's internal organisation and projects, as well as portraying the situation of women in other parts of the world. On a broader level, participants were provided with an overview of the Syrian state's political and economic structure, including the functioning of local administration, the organisation of the Syrian workforce, and the role of the Peasant's Union and the Youth Federation. Added to this was an introduction to the Ba'th Party and to the achievements of the Corrective Movement, as the Ba'th under Hafiz al-Asad was called, as it was considered to have led the Party back onto the 'right path' after the radical policies of his predecessors. Last but not least, the problem of 'backwardness' and how to overcome it was addressed, as were foreign relations, the threat posed to Syria by Israel and the role of the Syrian military. Women attending these courses were also practically trained in civil defence and shooting.[93] Lectures held in these sessions were printed and distributed to offices at all levels.[94]

This approach was continued in later years. Cadre training explicitly became one of the central obligations of the Union working towards the Party's aims of 'Unity, Freedom and Socialism' – yet not for its own sake but in order to prepare women for leading positions in the Party and the government.[95] In fact, it was emphasised that women who occupied leading positions in these two fields already had originally been Union members.[96] In the early 1980s, a remarkable shift occurred towards focusing on 'civic work' (al-'amal al-midani), while civil defence training and shooting for cadre training candidates seem to have been silently dropped.[97] Cadre training courses continued to be held until 2008. While the available sources record the number of classes run, they do not allow any insight into the number of women trained, and it remains unclear which institution or Union section was actually involved in setting up these classes.[98]

Career Opportunities

Only for a very few women, and in exceptional cases men, did the Union actually offer opportunities of employment. How satisfactory did this role prove? A sample of 11 interviews suggests that it depended both on the individual's position in the Union and on their own expectations. For paid full-time employees, the primary concern was not necessarily the Union's overall agenda but the prospect of secure employment that

allowed them to provide for their families. All four interviewees in this group commuted to work from the countryside. One of them remarked that she was frustrated by the lack of space for personal development and a more ambitious career, while two were content to have secured a regular income.[99]

By contrast, founding members of the Union were greatly concerned by the situation of women in the country, both back in the 1960s as well as at the time of the interviews. When they joined the organisation members were few in number, and they kept closely in touch each other, able to witness the immediate impact of their work. They were usually well educated or socially active, came from urban areas, and had joined the Union out of conviction and on a voluntary basis, i.e. without payment. They were married or had other family members who were Baʿthists working in the military, state administration or education, and were themselves politically active. None of the three interviewees in this group, active in the Union for several decades, had abandoned their original career, usually in teaching. Often, they were active in other professional associations or mass organisations as well. Despite their age at the time of interviews, they still maintained close links with each other and continued their engagement for women's or children's welfare and social work with great enthusiasm.[100]

Amongst current members, a similar background and development prevailed. However, personal ties between leading members seemed much less relevant amongst this group and, in general, even at the level of the two administrative offices I visited. In the generation that followed the founding members, it was not unusual for a member to be active at unit level or in an association for more than ten years before advancing upwards. Where elections should have meant greater mobility, in practice, this was often not the case. While this did not in itself prevent a leading member of a unit in a remote rural area from eventually taking up a paid leading position in one of the urban administrative offices, the long waiting periods for such advancement, which might never happen, coupled with Party interference in election results, was a cause of frustration to many. Only in absolutely exceptional cases did Union members leave the Union for a career in the Party or in parliament, perceived as the crown to their career.[101] Thus, even within the Union, satisfaction with the options the Union offered women differed and, regardless of their personal efforts, were often outside their control.

Voluntary Work

As in every organisation, large or small, managing finances proved a major difficulty. Although the number of financial reports secured for this study is incomplete, complaints of insufficient funding were consistently raised over the years, indicating that the Union had difficulty in making ends meet.[102] The Union generally relied on the following streams for income: a one-off membership fee, monthly subscriptions, bequests and donations, state funds, income drawn from public events and other projects including a Union-run lottery, interest from bank accounts, and additional funds subject to agreement by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.[103] The Union's funds were jointly managed by the executive office and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.[104] Each month, a certain amount of money was released and to be paid to each office.[105]

In the late 1970s and mid-1980s, it is clear that a significant share of Union funds, representing between 70 and 90 per cent of fixed income, stemmed from the Baʿth Party National Command.[106] This meant that the Union could allocate funds to its administrative offices only after the Party had drawn up its annual budget. At times, this process proved problematic. For example, if the Party delayed its reports and hence payments, it left the Union with no means to cover its regular administrative costs such as rents and salaries. Furthermore, the widening of the Union's structure led to an increase in costs, which it aimed to meet by enhancing its services and recruiting more members.[107]

Although the Union relied heavily on the work of volunteers, it soon became clear that it needed to employ more leading members at every level to ensure the smooth running of the organisation. The original legal decree allowed only for the employment of a few members in the administrative offices, subject to approval by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.[108] This meant that first hundreds then thousands of active members carried out their responsibilities on a purely voluntary basis. In Aleppo, for example, only the general secretary received a salary, she being the one responsible for the financial registers, a situation that persisted for many years. Generally, if the employee had worked in another public office previously, then the original employer remained responsible for their salary; otherwise they would be paid from the Union's budget.[109] It seems that the rising workload led to changes in these rules for employment during the 1975 amendments, when not only was the number of employees for each administrative office fixed at seven, but units

were allowed to employ one leading member each. In addition, each association could employ two leading members, and the executive office seven.[110] However, complaints were soon voiced that these provisions were actually not being fulfilled: not all units had at least one employed leading member by the end of 1983.[111] Similarly, many associations battled, in some cases for several years, to secure a second leading member to keep up with their workload when they supervised more than ten units.[112] By 1999 some associations were supervising up to 35 units.[113] Yet their persistent demands remained unfulfilled. By contrast, the situation of the administrative offices appears to have been better right from the start. At the end of the first term, the employment of a fourth leading member in each office was requested.[114] After some leading members left the administrative offices during the second term, due to the amount of unpaid work they were required to do, the employment of an additional fifth member was demanded (implying that the fourth position had been granted), and the issue was never raised again. The administrative offices were also given special funds to equip their offices.[115]

Even when able to employ its members, the organisation faced an additional problem regarding the rate of payment. Although the Union was explicitly set up to promote the equal and active involvement of women in society, it is remarkable that the renumeration of paid leading members was lower than that in other mass organisations. This led to complaints that, as a result, the Union lacked financial incentives to attract capable leadership.[116] Although this problem subsequently disappears from the reports, it shows that the Union, at least in this instance, was not automatically granted the same rights as other organisations at the same level, but rather had to demand them. Over the years, though, the Union's financial dependency on the Party would be increasingly balanced by the income it generated through its own projects.

Summary: Restraints and Opportunities

This chapter has shown that the Union's existence as a mass organisation in a totalitarian setting imposed restraints on its work, but also offered new opportunities. On the one hand, the Union's extensive administrative structure and complex election procedures offered active women the opportunity to reach higher positions over time, even though this could take many years or even decades. On the other hand, members

were often disappointed that a woman's efforts were not necessarily rewarded if she did not fit the Party's agenda or lacked connections. Overall, the Union operated within the framework of an agenda set by the Baʿth, which it implemented under the close supervision of the Party at all levels. By contrast, other organisations working in the same field were sidelined but not expressly forbidden. The Rabita in particular still occupies a prominent role, as seen in the context of the CEDAW amendments. In this respect, too, the Union represented a means of hegemony that, in implementing regime policies, sought to dominate the field of women's welfare at the expense of competing initiatives. Furthermore, the ruling elites' hegemonic force also revealed itself in the way the regime determined every step of policy formulation and implementation in the Union's work. Nonetheless, the Union's internal procedures also point to the ambivalent nature of this hegemonic force by revealing that its daily functioning is highly dependent on voluntary consent. Having made the Union responsible for implementing its concept of women's welfare in Syria, the regime relied heavily on the personal commitment of its active members, whether their hosting of meetings or giving up time to attend them. Their work was often made more difficult by the lack of resources such as telephones, the internet and transport. However, the time-consuming nature of their activities may not have been deliberately imposed by the regime but simply reflected a lack of funds. As the interviews with active members show, these obstacles did not necessarily produce job dissatisfaction; the work was often considered rewarding and, in exceptional cases, led to a political career. Whilst many members looked back on many years – and sometimes a lifetime – of voluntary work, for some of them, and some employees, the organisation represented an opportunity to secure a regular income. Nonetheless, by and large, employment in the Union was exceptional, underscoring its voluntary character even amongst active members.

With these features in place, the Union as a mass organisation embedded in a totalitarian system assumes a hybrid role between the state and the private realm. To begin with, it confirms Kasza's categorisation of mass organisations as implementers of public policies. As he had observed in mass organisations elsewhere, the Union does not hold any decision-making powers and therefore does not form part of the regime. However, the Union is not an institution of state bureaucracy in the Weberian sense either. According to Weber, a bureaucracy is characterised by six elements.

It operates on the basis of separating official duties from the person holding office, who is employed only if qualified according to the rules (1). In this sense, the office is a vocation, and the nature of the work is impersonal. Offices are ordered hierarchically (2). Their work is managed through written documents (files) (3). Furthermore, officials are trained in their field of specialisation (4). They are expected to work to their full capacity even if it exceeds official working hours (5). Lastly, the bureaucratic system is based on rules (6).[117]

Although the Union shows some of these characteristics, it also differs from them in a number of important points. To begin with, leading positions in the Union are not allocated through appointments on the basis of technical expertise, but through a mixture of elections and covert appointments. Instead of expert knowledge, decisive factors for acquiring a certain position are a candidate's interest in, and (proven) commitment to, the task. Other factors include her ability to network and compete in elections and her loyalty to the Party. In addition, the lack of consistent payment for leading positions and the high degree of informality in the Union's structure also negate Weber's definition. Furthermore, although the Union's legal status resembles that of other state institutions, for example public schools, its income-generating funding policies, reliance on volunteers and again its informal characteristics do not allow for this categorisation. However, mass organisations are also distinct from other civil society groups, such as privately funded charitable associations, in that they hold no power to draft their own programme. Expanding on Gramsci's political analysis, civil society therefore emerges as a complex sphere in constant flux. The hegemony of some actors, such as public schools or, to a lesser extent, mass organisations, is significantly stronger than that of groups such as private charities, which continue to operate further afield from state control. While competing with counter-hegemonic actors, the consent that these groups are capable of invoking will differ over time and in depth depending on the significance of the projects and policies at stake for the lives of individuals. The more a given group is able to address needs perceived as essential, the stronger popular consent becomes. In the case of the Union, the mass organisation as a distinctive characteristic of totalitarianism represented not only the regime's capacity to absorb and dominate spheres of civil society, which indeed continue to persist, but also its dependency on consent in a continuous quest to maintain hegemony.

CONCLUSION

As this study has shown, the Baʿthist regimes have employed a two-fold strategy in maintaining their grip on the Syrian state and society. On the one hand, as it has been documented in numerous works, the Baʿth has dominated the country by force. Its dissolution of legal and institutional barriers between the executive, legislative and jurisdiction have allowed for mass surveillance and arbitrary arrest, torture and widespread fear for decades. Unlike in the case of Egypt, for example, the integration of the military with the ruling elites has so far prevented large-scale defections, let alone attempts at a military coup.[1] In parallel, the regime's continuous control over Syria's economy and strong economic support by its allies have, despite severe losses and a fragmentation of Syrian territory, prevented a complete breakdown of the system even after almost five years of war.[2] Furthermore, the regime has adapted its ideology to dismiss any oppositional activity as a conspiracy of 'terrorists' funded by foreign forces.[3]

On the other hand, Syria's Baʿthist regimes have also relied on hegemony. In the past, nepotism and corruption have been identified as mechanisms that have been central to explaining the resilience of their power. This approach, however, has focused on the co-optation of society; that is, the attempt to achieve the outward compliance of citizens, which becomes reduced to citizens paying lip service to the regime. In contrast, this book has uncovered another side of Baʿthist hegemony: that is, consent. In the case of the Union, this study has highlighted the fact that as in the case of democratic systems, consent in imperfect totalitarianism does not necessarily reflect approval of the overall system. It does, however,

indicate different degrees of approval of parts of the system, or individual policies. Public policy in the form of welfare and social services such as those implemented by the Union form a fundamental part of this strategy. While the concept of totalitarianism has been largely dismissed since 1989, this book demonstrates that it remains of utmost importance in understanding the full impact of systems like the Syrian. Indeed, it unravels a level of depth and complexity of totalitarian rule that, so far, has remained underestimated because the role of need-receptive consent and its marked difference to mere co-optation had not been considered. At the core of this strategy, the conceptual lens of Gramscian hegemony has served to explain the ways in which even totalitarian systems are dynamic and adaptable to change. At the time same, this approach has highlighted that, although not all-encompassing, the power of the Baʿthist regimes goes far beyond authoritarian practice as seen elsewhere in the Middle East. Accordingly, this perspective offers new insights into the reasons as to why the popular uprisings of the Arab Spring have prompted regime change in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen within relatively short periods of time, while Asad's rule has proven deeply entrenched in some parts of the country, if fiercely contested in others.

In the analysis of such processes, in my view, outside observers should refrain from moral judgement of consent in any totalitarian system; for they can hardly be fully understood unless experienced. As for the Union, it has remained active throughout the war, most prominently in supporting campaigns for Bashar al-Asad's re-election in June 2014. Judging from its online presence, it seeks to maintain its regular activities wherever possible while displaying solidarity with the Syrian regime and the army in particular.[4] As we have seen, it has based its work on an alternate vision of a long tradition of women's societies in the country.

Its establishment period coincided with the turbulent years of inner-Baʿthist military coups, whilst at the same time the respective ruling elites sought to implement socialist reform, new institutions and alternative approaches to state building. In ideal terms, the Party's founders, most prominently Michel ʿAflaq and Salah al-Din Bitar, brought forward their vision of a society marked by social equality and equal opportunities for men and women as early as the 1940s. These claims stood in sharp contrast to the actual conditions in the country upon reaching independence in 1946. Only then were the formerly

mandated territories of the Druze and the Alawis as well as Damascus, Aleppo and the Jazira subsumed into one state. In the patchwork of semi-independent territories that existed under the Mandate, dominated as it was by a relatively few large landowning families or powerful tribes, the provision of public social services such as schooling or health care was prone to a high degree of inequality, both between urban and rural areas as well as between the sexes. Access to schooling, in particular, was additionally constrained by poor economic conditions making it necessary that even young children work, especially in the countryside. In order to address such gaps, individual women had already started to run private initiatives to provide welfare especially for girls and women in the Syrian territories before World War I. From then on, women like Nazik al-ʿAbid, Mari al-ʿAjami, ʿAdila Bayyhum, Thurayya al-Hafiz and Jihan al-Musuli set up schools and provided financial support to female students, provided relief work in times of war and violent conflict, and built orphanages and elderly people's homes. Likewise, they held literary gatherings and wrote about women's concerns in magazines that they sometimes ran themselves. Basing their benevolent work on private funds and donations, they were often enthused by the same nationalism that inspired leading figures of the National Bloc in their struggle for independence, and whom they supported during demonstrations. However, if these women held any hope in turn of being supported in their demand for the right to vote, they were to be disappointed. Nonetheless, they continued to expand their initiatives, amongst which the work of ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri became most prominent from the 1930s onwards. Although ʿAdila Bayyhum founded Syria's first women's Union, the Union of Women's Societies in Damascus, this Union continued to acknowledge the independence of the groups that were affiliated to it. Whilst reaching out beyond national boundaries by attending international women's conferences and liaising with the Arab Women's Union, ʿAdila Bayyhum's engagement nonetheless relied on her personal contacts rather than the backing of a women's movement, which Syria was lacking. It was due to these contacts, too, that Syrian women were finally granted the right to vote in 1949.

With the door now open for Syrian women to become involved in national politics not only on the streets but at the polls, a handful of women appeared on the scene who were driven by political ideas other than nationalism. Amongst them, Najah Saʿati dedicated her efforts to the

Communist Party, whilst Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah was a member of the Baʿth. Although the latter was active in charitable work in Syria for only about a year before leaving to continue her studies in Egypt, both belonged to a new generation of politically active women whose background was markedly different from that of earlier women organisers. Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah later led the setting up of the Union. It was women like them whom the Baʿth welcomed: they did not belong to the former elites that the Baʿth resented for their wealth and status but came from modest, though well-educated, middle-class families. Rather than enrolling them in foreign schools, their families had gone through hardships to enable them to attend state schools and receive a good, but not private, education. Yet despite their official renouncement of the bourgeoisie, the Baʿthist regimes included women of both groups when drawing up its National Assemblies in 1965 and 1966, illustrating that they could not afford to break the link with the old elites completely.

Nonetheless, the idea of creating mass organisations, as first formulated in *Some Theoretical Propositions* in late 1963, was aimed at the 'toiling masses'. In this respect, the Baʿthist writers' ideological outlook bears striking resemblance to Lenin's and later Stalin's concepts of mass organisations, even though ʿAflaq had categorically rejected any link between Baʿthism and Soviet Socialism. However, during the 1960s ʿAflaq's influence on the Party was reduced by the rise of the Party's military wing in Syria. Facing the challenges of everyday government, the Party adopted a more pragmatic stance towards socialist state building, and adopted the Soviet concept of mass organisations in which the Party would assume a leading role as the vanguard for the masses. Nonetheless, the Baʿthist idea of extending this concept to a separate organisation for women was not derived from the Soviet model. Although fascist and leftist states alike gave rise to women's mass organisations, the Soviet Union was not amongst them. While it is true that the Union replicated the Soviet pattern of paralleling its structure to that of the Party at every level, the GDR seems likely to have influenced it more at governmental level. The Chinese mass organisation for women may also have been a further influence as a result of ʿAdila Bayyhum's personal contacts. As we have seen, she travelled to China to gain a better understanding of women's social initiatives directed through a mass organisation three years before the Baʿth even discussed such options, and was later awarded the honorary presidency of the

General Union of Syrian Women in 1970, despite the Baʿth Party's contempt for the old elite.

The history of women's societies in Syria, the formation of Unions and eventually of a mass organisation for women, demonstrates remarkable continuities. Despite the Baʿth Party's ambitions for total reform on the ideological level, it was forced to compromise in practice. Suddenly charged with the task of running the country and facing popular resistance, it could not completely dismiss the old elite. More importantly, it also benefited from their experience: private women's societies had made a substantial contribution to women's welfare for more than half a century. ʿAdila Bayyhum initiated the foundation of the first Union of women's societies in Syria (1933/1944), she participated in the establishment and later work of the Arab Women's Union (1944), as well as in the Afro-Asian Federation for Women (1958). Like her, leading women benefactors contributed to creating a tradition of co-ordinating the activities of civil society groups that long predated the Baʿth Party's concern for mass organisation. For private societies, the benefits of joining forces mainly lay in increasing their potential for pressuring the state into fulfilling the goals they pursued, such as better education, raising the standards of the social system, and legal rights for girls and women. In adopting the idea of mass organisation, the Baʿthist regimes not only imported Leninist and Stalinist ideas, they also built onto the existing pattern to institutionalise it in the newly emerging state. In so doing, they reversed the effect that civil society groups had aimed to achieve. Through introducing mass organisations, the Baʿthist regimes severely weakened competition in, and opposition to, the new order: not only did they restrict the scope of established groups, they also occupied the very same field by providing the same services. This way, they drew the attention of beneficiaries of former societies towards themselves. Capitalising on the experiences of these earlier groups, they were able to evaluate whether an earlier local project met a need in every region of the country. If the result was favourable, they were then in a position to implement the idea across the whole of Syria, especially in remote areas where private societies might have had limited or no presence. With their claim to total control, the Baʿthists drew large parts of what had formerly constituted a more independent Syrian civil society closer to themselves. The complete dissolution of civil society, however, was neither feasible nor

desirable for it would have deprived the ruling elites of assessing public opinion and gauging the popularity of alternative approaches to areas of public policy. In this sense, mass organisations served as a means of establishing hegemony *par excellence*.

Yet, by not establishing mass organisations as state bureaucracies, mass organisations were not only a *means* of hegemony, but they were also *sites* of hegemony; that is, sites of vying for consent. Firstly, this characteristic is reflected in the voluntary nature of Union membership. Whilst membership included about 400,000 women by 2008, the heterogeneity of Union membership across the country is a clear indication that the Union did not target women of a particular level of education or occupation. However, in most governorates, the majority of its members were housewives. Mechanisms such as the withdrawal of goods and services that were used to enforce subscription to mass organisations in other comparable settings would have had little effect on this group. Accordingly, the Union depended on offering services of importance to women who would not have enrolled otherwise; without their willingness to join or stay in the organisation, it would have collapsed. On the one hand, the Union served as a means of hegemony in that it sidelined competitors and shaped a new understanding of women's welfare; but on the other hand, it had to draw women into the Union through their own consent; and the key to fostering such consent was to respond to their needs.

To some extent, the factual condition of membership with the Baʿth Party seems to have served both as a filter for pressures from below and as a reinforcement of Baʿthist hegemony within the organisation. As for the risk of opposition, the requirement of Party membership should have prevented the recruitment of women with strong alternative political convictions. However, the establishment of Baʿthist hegemony seems to have proved much more challenging. As has been shown, the discrepancies identified in planning and maintaining full Party membership amongst Union members indicated a high degree of fluctuation and instability. Here, the aspiration for hegemony, not merely on paper but in the form of active participation in the Party, either clashed with women's reluctance to become involved, or was thwarted by the Party's dissatisfaction with their performance. In both cases, it demonstrates that, whilst the regime could try to determine that the Union functioned meticulously, it could not impose itself on its members completely.

Despite such difficulties, through the services delivered by the Union the regimes proceeded to occupy the field of social services for women that had previously been filled by private societies. Turning large parts of the sphere of civil society into that of the state, the Baʿth did not simply replicate the activities of earlier societies but reshaped women's welfare as provided through the Union in line with its own interests. Thus, vis-à-vis the wider population, the Union represented and implemented Baʿthist hegemony. It continued projects such as literacy classes, healthcare services and civil defence training, but, in contrast to earlier societies, women's vocational training ranked high on its agenda too. In this sense, it challenged previously held ideas of gender roles through public welfare programmes. Women were no longer seen only as mothers, nurses and teachers, but also as family members who could make a direct contribution to both their family's well-being and the country's economic development through paid work. However, the tasks considered suitable for women replicated traditional ideas in that they focused on 'feminine' skills.

It becomes evident that the Baʿth refrained from imposing policies on the population that would have challenged the foundations of traditional gender roles as such. Although, to a limited extent, it encouraged changes by offering women options such as vocational training, the take-up of these was voluntary. In contrast, the realisation of women's legal equality through amendments to Syrian law would have touched on basic rights applying to each and every citizen. In the field of law, as elsewhere, the Union helped implement public policy and conducted studies to highlight areas of concern. At the same time, like other organisations, the Union facilitated discussion of the proposed amendments based on CEDAW. Recognising the importance of popular approval, it brought together legal experts and parliamentarians in debates that were broadcast to a wide audience across the country. As has been shown, the regime never took action to implement these legal reforms, despite an apparent consensus amongst participants from all layers of society and the regime. Indeed, I suggest that this deadlock occurred because the regime sensed that it had reached the limits of consent. The Union contributed to this process in the very sense of the concept of the transition belt; it assumed a mediating role through encouraging debate and feeding back responses from below to the Baʿth. Thus, whilst representing a means of hegemony vis-à-vis the wider population, not only did the Union identify and

implement need-receptive projects, it also assessed the risk of rejection, or the very limits of hegemony. Although ideological commitment, in the sense of at least paying lip service to the party within the Union or among society at large, remained imperative on the surface, it was the role of hegemony to transcend precisely such practices. Here, hegemony is likely to reflect the ruling elites' awareness of the fact that a full, unquestioning internalisation of the Baʿthist worldview as intended originally was impossible to achieve, which, in response, they silently, but intently and pragmatically dealt with in their own best interest.

In other respects, too, the Union helped the regime to stay in touch with the needs of the population: all the Union's initiatives were based on detailed studies that had explored the need for a given project beforehand, and they were assessed afterwards. In some areas, such as vocational training, the Union created such needs itself. Whilst official Baʿthist discourse encouraged paid work for women, the Union provided the infrastructure to support this ambition by setting up training centres, factories and workshops and by providing childcare facilities for working mothers. Although this creation of new needs reinforces the hegemonic character of the Union in its implicit rejection of traditional roles models, as well as being demand-rejecting, it also contained need-receptive features in responding to widespread poverty. Creating women's employment opportunities helped to alleviate the situation for impoverished families. Likewise, the Baʿthist campaign for women's literacy, largely implemented through the Union, was in the interest of both the regime and of women themselves. Whilst it may be one of the Union's most outstanding achievements to have taught about half of all women who became literate outside formal schooling between 1973 and 2004 – when female illiteracy fell by two thirds – the acquisition of these skills also opened new avenues for the women themselves. Capable of reading and writing, they became less dependent on their male relatives. They could educate themselves and their children, deal confidently with bureaucratic procedures if necessary, and sometimes go on to learn a profession.

The Union's hegemonic character comes to the fore not only in its role as an implementer of social services for women in society, but also in its internal work. Amongst the group of active members within the organisation, the totalitarian setting provided little room for personal ambitions and creativity. The Union operated within the

framework of the Party's five-year plans, and the Party's control of its work was felt at all levels. Active members needed to possess singular dedication to their work, which was mostly voluntary, highly time-consuming and characterised by obstacles such as the lack of resources. Nonetheless, patience could eventually have rewards for a very few who, after many years, might advance to higher positions. Despite the many daily challenges to the Union's work, the leading members I interviewed saw their engagement as fulfilling and rewarding because it enabled them to make an active contribution to the welfare of girls and women in the country. As for earlier societies with the same ambitions, the regime refrained from closing them down by force. However, it severely restricted their activities. It allowed for limited pluralism, but undermined it in such a way as to prevent these societies from competing with its own organisations. Other mass organisations adopted the same approach of dominating certain fields of civil society, thus serving as a means whereby the regime could realise its ambition of total reform through a mixture of exercising control while remaining receptive to public opinion.

In view of the Union's distinct institutional characteristics within the sphere of civil society, this case study adds to existing literature on totalitarianism by highlighting the need to analyse totalitarian practices as expressions of mutual dependency between the rulers and the ruled. Mass organisations such as the Union can offer a unique insight into such processes if they are understood as both the means and sites of struggles for regime hegemony. Through combining Gramsci's concept of hegemony with theories of totalitarianism, this work suggests that a distinction between demand-rejecting and need-receptive forms of hegemony helps us to develop a more nuanced approach to totalitarianism. Rather than focusing on the allegedly all-encompassing power of the totalitarian state, it has revealed how mass organisations represent a continuous process of reaching out to and mobilising the masses. To some extent, this form of institution has rendered the regimes vulnerable. Being at the intersection between state institutions and the private realm through its reliance on volunteers, its own income-generating projects alongside the state funding it receives, and the use of private space, the Union had not only to create but also to rely on consent, which is in constant mediated flux. However, this apparent weakness also functioned as a source of strength because it allowed for

flexibility. Had the Union relied on bureaucrats rather than volunteers to run its activities, it might have worked more efficiently. It would, however, have had far fewer resources at its disposal for its actual projects, and it would probably never have elicited a similar degree of personal commitment. Although the Union included only about 13 per cent of the total number of eligible females, it increased the regimes' ability to remain perceptive of public opinion by creating forums for implicit negotiations of needs and wants, acceptance and rejection. Only through its voluntary character could the mere willingness of women to sign up with the Union serve as an additional indication of local feelings. The Union was only one mass organisation amongst many through which the regimes constantly informed and modified their interaction with the population at large. Thus, rather than representing pillars of force, mass organisations constitute sites of negotiation in the overall framework of a totalitarian system, which, in spite of its well-known oppression, surveillance and intimidation was also striving to implement its own visions of welfare and development.

Thus in Syria under the Ba'th, women's welfare was shaped both by the socialist vision as conceived at the top, and by the needs of the local population below. In between these two poles, the Union functioned as an implementer of public policies as well as a mediator. It met the needs of women at the grassroots, but it also explored the boundaries of consent: for all their power, the Ba'thist regimes depended on knowing their limits. The uprisings that started in February 2011 made it clear that these limits had been transgressed, leaving large parts of the population vulnerable. Amidst ongoing combat, 10.9 million people, i.e. more than half the country's population, have been forced to leave their homes, with most of these lacking the bear minimum of shelter, drinking water, food and medical supplies.[5] After decades of near-complete oppression of political opposition, thousands of civilian and armed groups have emerged to fight the current regime. Once again, women, like men, have picked up arms to defend their homes and neighbourhoods or to join brigades.[6] Other groups have set up home-based printing presses to distribute leaflets calling for collective acts of civil disobedience, to document the identities and numbers of victims, or to publish stories and poetry about the tragedy of the current war.[7] Although most opposition groups have affiliated themselves with umbrella organisations to form a more unified front, their visions for the

future often differ widely. Some groups operate at a local level only, whilst others are present in different parts of the country. Such varying constellations of groups competing to gain control of shared territory have become embroiled in internal disagreements, infighting and frequent changes of alliances which have weakened the opposition.[8] Over the past four years, all sides – including the regime – have reportedly and repeatedly violated international humanitarian law through the besiegement of civilian areas, rape, torture and killings of prisoners, as well as the recruitment of children.[9] Backed by Russia, China, Iran and Hizballah, the regime has demonstrated its unwillingness to compromise with the opposition or to implement processes of participatory democracy, while the international community has remained utterly divided over questions of economic sanctions, lethal aid and asylum for refugees. Among the armed opposition, the Free Syrian Army was formed as a major force of resistance mostly by leading military figures who defected from Syrian government forces in the early months of the conflict. It has since gained control over various areas in the north west, central and southern Syria. Since 2013, the extremist group IS (Islamic State) has spread its terror through brutality and the enforcement of rigid adherence to the understanding of 'Islamic rule' by its leaders. As an offshoot of al-Qaeda originally based in Iraq, it has seized control over large areas of northern Syria and Iraq since its entry into the Syrian conflict. As of June 2014, it announced the foundation of a new state under a self-declared Islamic Caliphate in the region.[10] Equally in the north, Kurdish groups have brought significant parts of Syrian territory under their control.

Since September 2014, the Syrian war has become further internationalised. In the name of the War on Terror, the US-led alliance of more than 60 nations has carried out airstrikes against IS in Syria and Iraq for over a year now.[11] In September 2015, Russia began its direct military intervention in support of the regime, and in the aftermath of IS attacks on Paris on 13 November 2015, France has reinforced its role in the alliance.[12] The UK followed suit in December.[13] While Syria has once again been turned into a battlefield of foreign interests, it is Syrians themselves who have been paying the price, but who, up until now, have not been consulted. As this book shows, however, a successful solution to this war cannot be based on military intervention or political agreements concluded from afar.

If Baʿthist Syria was a state mostly relying on coercion, then, speaking with Gramsci, a 'war of movement', i.e. a fierce attack on the institutions of the state may have proven sufficient to achieve revolutionary change. By contrast, in a state where the ruling elites have firmly established their hegemony through civil society, according to Gramsci, a 'war of position' is needed in order to fundamentally alter the system in place. The 'war of position' is the struggle for groups with alternative visions to elaborate on their ideas and to create counter-hegemony; that is, a consent to alternative ideologies, services and political organisation that would eventually supersede consent to existing structures.[14] In other words, a successful resolution of this conflict needs to come from within; and the tragedies of Afghanistan and Iraq should be proving clearly the consequences of military interventions failing to take this point into account.

Against the backdrop of the war, Syrian opposition groups have finally gained space. In opposition-held areas, alternative structures of governance have emerged, showing high levels of local variation. Among them, IS has created state-structures and services seeking to eradicate and replace the former regime. In the Kurdish areas, Local People's Committees are operating under the Kurdish Surpreme Council since its establishment in 2012. In so doing, they mirror the activities of Local Administrative Councils and Local Coordination Committees, which started to take roots in other territories controlled by oppositional forces since the early weeks of the war. The make-up, responsibilities and credibility of these alternative forms of governance differ widely.[15] Nonetheless, with the exception of IS, they are Syrian initiatives trying to build the country's future, while humanitarian aid is now complementing or replacing former public welfare.[16] In many areas, residents have organised themselves in such a way as to fill the void of public service functions, to help build parallel infrastructure and maintain basic administration, and to distribute aid where accessible.[17] In this way, traditional methods of oppression, control and mediation are being challenged on a daily basis. Amidst fighting and destruction, dramatic shortages and agonising suffering, alternative forms of community organisation such as these lend hope to the idea that a return to the country's previous totalitarian mode of governance has become unimaginable at last.

APPENDIX A

MAPS
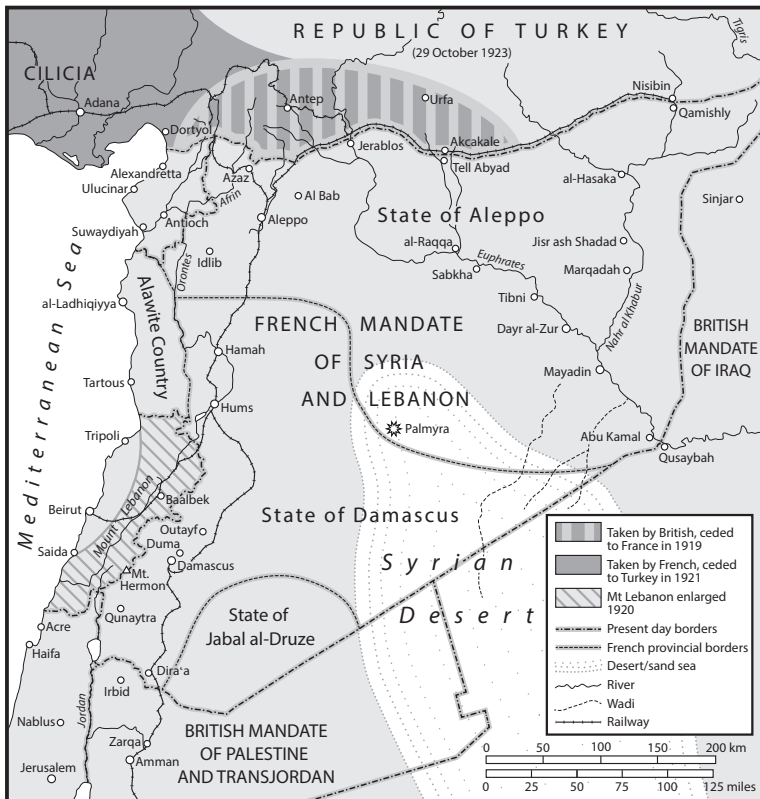
Map 1   Syria and Lebanon

Map 2   Governorates in Syria

APPENDIX B

TABLES AND DIAGRAMS

Table 1 part 1 Total membership countrywide, 1973–2008

Year	1973	1976	1980	1983	1989	1993	1998	2003	2008
Members	19126	53314	84473	135271	123721	183901	252365	337055	395316
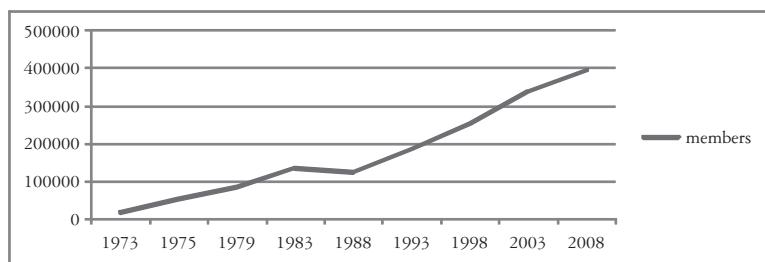
Diagram to table 1 part 1 Total membership countrywide, 1973–2008

Remarks: The 1988 figure is based on the statistics for the professional and educational background of all members as there is no table indicating total membership as such. The 2004 report only provides term increase figures, but no total figures. Sources: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-munʿaqad bi-taʾrikh 03/01/1976*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 10 table 2; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a): *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi majal maktab al-tanzim iʿtibaran min 03/01/1976 wa-lighayat 19/01/1980*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 2; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi li'l-dawra al-intikhabiyya*

bayna ʿam 1980–1983 al-Muqaddam li'l-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-rabiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 2; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: Taqrir al-nashatat*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, tables 4 and 7; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis li'l-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 52, table 13; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi – 'Inna rafʿ al-hayf ʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumarasat al-marʾa dawraha fi hayat al-mujtamʿa darura wataniyya qawmiyya insaniyya', al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 adhar 1999*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 11; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – ,,al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʾid Hafiz al-Asad*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 43, table 9, and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – 'al-Marʾa hiya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya waʾl-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 75, table 16.

Table 1 part 2   Total membership per governorate, 1973–2008

Governorate	1973	1976	1979	1983	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008
Damascus	2053	4789	11738	16337	5458	12615	22816	34330	42656
D. countrys.	1940	6225	5828	9744	10812	15993	21797	31530	36508
Qunaytra	1035	3280	5517	8354	7242	10252	13062	15861	18277
Diraʿa	720	1975	4180	7518	8114	11972	16451	23547	29984
al-Suwaydaʾ	803	2218	6273	9589	10346	14774	20051	27977	31472
Hums	1528	3594	5969	10680	9763	15531	24595	31413	36243
Hamah	2545	3887	7366	10809	8731	13383	19285	25868	31191
Aleppo	1008	4705	5028	8741	7049	16713	18690	28716	34321
Idlib	1179	3769	5674	6895	11232	14630	18043	21555	24408
al-Raqqa	1277	3545	4413	9254	7495	11651	15008	18233	20991
Dayr al-Zur	1077	3516	4126	6773	5906	9833	13581	17032	19714
al-Hasaka	1102	3758	5595	8284	6955	9543	12318	15118	17419
Tartous	1405	4165	8951	15282	17568	16018	21606	26664	30323
al-Ladhiqiyya	1454	3888	3815	7011	7050	10993	15071	19211	21809
sum	19126	53314	84473	135271	123721	183901	252365	337055	395316

Sources: See table 1 part 1.

Table 2   Sum annual/term vs total membership per governorate by 2008

Governorate	total membership	sum annual/term membership
Damascus	42656	58145
D. countrys.	36508	36178
Qunaytra	18277	22294
Diraʿa	29984	32604
al-Suwaydaʾ	31472	31421
Hums	36243	41742
Hamah	31191	38197
Aleppo	34321	36868
Idlib	24408	27448
al-Raqqa	20991	23451
Dayr al-Zur	19714	24755
al-Hasaka	17419	21523
Tartous	30323	39924
al-Ladhiqiyya	21809	26295
sum	395316	460845

Sources official total of members: See sources table 1. Sources annual membership data (official): al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a): *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi majal maktab al-tanzim iʿtibaran min 03/01/1976 wa-lighayat 19/01/1980.* Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 1; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi liʾl-dawra al-intikhabiyya bayna ʿam 1980−1983 al-Muqaddam liʾl-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-rabiʿa liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi.* Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 1; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi liʾl-dawra al-intikhabiyya bayna ʿam 1984−1989 al-muqaddam liʾl-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi.* Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 1; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis liʾl-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994.* Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 43, table 5; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi − 'Inna rafʿ al-hayf ʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumarasat al-marʾa dawraha fi hayat al-mujtamʿa darura wataniyya qawmiyya insaniyya', al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 adhar 1999.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 1; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 − „al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʾid Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 43, table 9, and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 − 'al-Marʾa hiya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya waʾl-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 30, table 2.

Table 3 part 1 Calculation of real membership based on the subtraction of total membership figures at the end of each term

Governorate	total by 1973	total 1975 minus 1973	total 1979 minus 1975	total 1983 minus 1979	total 1988 minus 1983	total 1993 minus 1988	total 1998 minus 1993	total 2003 minus 1998	total 2008 minus 2003	sum real term increase	Official total in 2008
Damascus	2053	2736	6949	4599	−10879	7157	10201	11514	8326	42656	42656
D. countrys.	1940	4285	−397	3916	1068	5181	5804	9733	4978	36508	36508
Qunaytra	1035	2245	2237	2837	−1112	3414	2406	2799	2416	18277	18277
Dira'a	720	1255	2205	3338	596	3862	4475	7096	6437	29984	29984
al-Suwayda'	803	1415	4055	3316	757	4428	5277	7926	3495	31472	31472
Hums	1528	2066	2375	4711	−917	5768	9064	6818	4830	36243	36243
Hamah	2545	1342	3479	3443	−2078	4652	5902	6583	5323	31191	31191
Aleppo	1008	3697	323	3713	−1692	9664	1977	10026	5605	34321	34321
Idlib	1179	2590	1905	3580	1978	3398	3413	3512	2853	24408	24408
al-Raqqa	1277	2268	868	2482	600	4156	3357	3225	2758	20991	20991
Dayr al-Zur	1077	2439	610	2647	−867	3927	3748	3451	2682	19714	19714
al-Hasaka	1102	2656	1837	2689	−1329	2588	2775	2800	2301	17419	17419
Tartous	1405	2760	4786	6331	2286	−1550	5588	5058	3659	30323	30323
al-Ladhiqiyya	1454	2434	−73	3196	39	3943	4078	4140	2598	21809	21809
sum	19126	34188	31159	50798	−11550	60588	68056	84690	58261	395316	395316

Sources: Calculation based on table 1 part 2 and table 2.

Table 3 part 2   Official term increases as reported (since 1976)

Governorate	1976	1976–1979	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	sum official term increase	total members until 2008
Damascus	4789	7996	4599	4610	7157	10201	11514	8326	59192	42656
D. countrys.	6225	5079	3916	4852	5190	5804	5610	4978	41654	36508
Qunaytra	3280	2326	2837	2905	3010	2810	2799	2416	22383	18277
Diraʿa	1975	3438	3338	3205	3869	4479	7096	6437	33837	29984
al-Suwaydaʾ	2218	4095	3316	3998	4246	5277	4816	3495	31461	31472
Hums	3594	2917	4711	4646	5768	9064	6818	4766	42284	36243
Hamah	3887	3925	3443	4621	4890	5902	6583	5392	38643	31191
Aleppo	4705	2797	3713	5144	5662	5977	5739	5605	39342	34321
Idlib	3769	3733	3580	5018	3398	3404	3521	2853	29276	24408
al-Raqqa	3545	1800	2482	2871	3945	3757	3225	2758	24383	20991
Dayr al-Zur	3516	3010	2647	3353	4749	3748	3450	2682	27155	19714
al-Hasaka	3758	3107	2689	2776	2587	2775	2800	2301	22793	17419
Tartous	4165	4503	6331	6625	3712	5588	5058	3659	39641	30323
al-Ladhiqiyya	3888	3247	3196	4550	3943	4078	4115	2598	29615	21809
sum	53314	51973	50798	59174	62126	72864	73144	58266	481659	395316

Sources: See table 2.

Table 3 part 3 Real vs official membership per term (direct comparison of results)

Membership growth	1976–1979	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
Real	31159	50798	−11550	60588	68056	84690	58261
Official	51973	50798	59174	62126	72864	73144	58266
Surplus/deficit	−20814	0	−70724	−1538	−4808	11546	−5

Source: See table 3 parts 1 + 2.

Table 4 part 1 Planned membership growth in absolute numbers per term, 1976–2008

Governorate	1976–1979	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
Damascus	5736	4824	5400	6500	9150	9250	9000
D. countrys.	2970	4978	4350	5010	5000	5000	4500
Qunaytra	2100	2516	2450	2650	2500	2500	2370
Dirāʿa	3150	3148	2975	3155	4210	6875	6625
al-Suwaydaʾ	3300	3784	3750	4250	4300	4550	3722
Hums	2700	3597	3800	5000	5000	5000	4310
Hamah	3250	3252	3575	4045	4750	6155	5585
Aleppo	2350	3740	4800	5000	5200	5500	5500
Idlib	2500	2764	4025	3000	3000	3000	2800
al-Raqqa	1565	2156	2300	2700	3000	3000	2700
Dayr al-Zur	2350	2541	2500	3000	3000	3000	2550
al-Hasaka	3500	2802	2300	2500	2500	2500	2300
Tartous	3820	5414	5900	3100	3390	3500	2957
al-Ladhiqiyya	2600	2986	3950	3920	4000	4000	2750
sum	41891	48502	52075	53830	59000	63780	57669

*Remark for all tables: Results in % are round to one decimal place, but calculations are based on full figures. At times this leads to minimal deviations in averages.

Sources: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a): *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi majal maktab al-tanzim iʿtibaran min 03/01/1976 wa-lighayat 19/01/1980*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 1; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi liʾl-dawra al-intikhabiyya bayna ʿam 1980–1983 al-Muqaddam liʾl-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-rabiʿa liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 1; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: Taqrir al-nashatat*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 1; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis liʾl-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 43, table 5; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi – ʿImma rafʿ al-bayʿʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumarasat al-marʾa dawraha fi bayat al-mujtamʿa darura wataniyya qaumiyya insaniyya', al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 adhar 1999*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 1; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – „al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajut yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʾid Hafiz al-Asad*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 43, table 9 (yearly), and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – ʿal-Marʾa hiya allati tashum fi mukhtalif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya waʾl-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 30, table 2 (yearly).

Table 4 part 2 Planned membership growth (in %), 1976–2008

Governorate	1976–1979	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	119.8	41.1	33.1	119.1	72.5	40.5	26.2	64.6
D. countrys.	47.7	85.4	44.6	46.3	31.3	22.9	14.3	41.8
Qunaytra	64.0	45.6	29.3	36.6	24.4	19.1	14.9	33.4
Dirāʿa	159.5	75.3	39.6	38.9	35.2	41.8	28.1	59.8
al-Suwaydaʾ	148.8	60.3	39.1	41.1	29.1	22.7	13.3	50.6
Hums	75.1	60.3	35.6	51.2	32.2	20.3	13.7	41.2
Hamah	83.6	44.1	33.1	46.3	35.5	31.9	21.6	42.3
Aleppo	49.9	74.4	54.9	70.9	31.1	29.4	19.2	47.1
Idlib	66.3	48.7	58.4	26.7	20.5	16.6	13.0	35.8
al-Raqqa	44.1	48.9	24.9	36.0	25.7	20.0	14.8	30.6
Dayr al-Zur	66.8	61.6	36.9	50.8	30.5	22.1	15.0	40.5
al-Hasaka	93.1	50.1	27.8	35.9	26.2	20.3	15.2	38.4
Tartous	91.7	60.5	38.6	17.6	21.2	16.2	11.1	36.7
al-Ladhiqiyya	66.9	78.3	56.3	55.6	36.4	26.5	14.3	47.8
average per term	84.1	59.6	39.4	48.1	32.3	25.0	16.8	n/a

Sources: Calculation based on sources of tables 1 and 4 part 1.

Table 4 part 3   Official membership growth (in %), 1976–2008

Governorate	1976–1979	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	167.0	39.2	28.2	131.1	80.9	50.5	24.3	74.4
D. countrys.	81.6	67.2	49.8	48.0	36.3	25.7	15.8	46.3
Qunaytra	70.9	51.4	34.8	41.6	27.4	21.4	15.2	37.5
Dira'a	174.1	79.9	42.6	47.7	37.4	43.1	27.3	64.6
al-Suwayda'	184.6	52.9	41.7	41.0	35.7	24.0	12.5	56.1
Hums	81.2	78.9	43.5	59.1	58.4	27.7	15.2	52.0
Hamah	101.0	46.7	42.8	56.0	44.1	34.1	20.8	49.4
Aleppo	59.4	73.8	58.8	80.3	35.8	30.7	19.5	51.2
Idlib	99.0	63.1	72.8	30.3	23.3	19.5	13.2	45.9
al-Raqqa	50.8	56.2	31.0	52.6	32.2	21.5	15.1	37.1
Dayr al-Zur	85.6	64.2	49.5	80.4	38.1	25.4	15.7	51.3
al-Hasaka	82.7	48.1	33.5	37.2	29.1	22.7	15.2	38.4
Tartous	108.1	70.7	43.4	21.1	34.9	23.4	13.7	45.0
al-Ladhiqiyya	83.5	83.8	64.9	55.9	37.1	27.3	13.5	52.3
average per term	102.1	62.6	45.5	55.9	39.3	28.4	16.9	n/a

Sources: Calculation based on table 1 part 2 and table 3 part 2.

Table 5 Real membership growth (in %), 1976–2008

Governorate	1976–1979	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	145.1	39.2	−66.6	131.1	80.9	50.5	24.3	57.8
D. countrys.	−6.4	67.2	11.0	47.9	36.3	44.7	15.8	30.9
Qunaytra	68.2	51.4	−13.3	47.1	23.5	21.4	15.2	30.5
Dira'a	111.6	79.9	7.9	47.6	37.4	43.1	27.3	50.7
al-Suwayda'	182.8	52.9	7.9	42.8	35.7	39.5	12.5	53.4
Hums	66.1	78.9	−8.6	59.1	58.4	27.7	15.4	42.4
Hamah	89.5	46.7	−19.2	53.3	44.1	34.1	20.6	38.4
Aleppo	6.9	73.8	−19.4	137.1	11.8	53.6	19.5	40.5
Idlib	50.5	63.1	28.7	30.3	23.3	19.5	13.2	32.7
al-Raqqa	24.5	56.2	6.5	55.5	28.8	21.5	15.1	29.7
Dayr al-Zur	17.3	64.2	−12.8	66.5	38.1	25.4	15.7	30.6
al-Hasaka	48.9	48.1	−16.0	37.2	29.1	22.7	15.2	26.4
Tartous	114.9	70.7	15.0	−8.8	34.9	23.4	13.7	37.7
al-Ladhiqiyya	−1.9	83.8	0.6	55.9	37.1	27.5	13.5	30.9
average per term	65.6	62.6	−5.6	57.3	37.1	32.5	16.9	n/a

Sources: Calculation based on table 3 part 1.

Table 6 part 1 Surplus/deficit in official membership based on planned membership (in %), 1976–2008

Governorate	1976–1979	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	47.2	−1.9	−4.8	12.0	8.3	9.9	−2.0	9.8
D. countrys.	33.9	−18.2	5.2	1.7	5.0	2.8	1.5	4.5
Qunaytra	6.9	5.8	5.4	5.0	3.0	2.3	0.3	4.1
Dira'a	14.6	4.5	3.1	8.8	2.2	1.3	−0.8	4.8
al-Suwayda'	35.8	−7.5	2.6	0.0	6.6	1.3	−0.8	5.4
Hums	6.0	18.7	7.9	7.9	26.2	7.4	1.5	10.8
Hamah	17.4	2.6	9.7	9.7	8.6	2.2	−0.7	7.1
Aleppo	9.5	−0.5	3.9	9.4	4.6	1.3	0.4	4.1
Idlib	32.7	14.4	14.4	3.5	2.8	2.9	0.2	10.1
al-Raqqa	6.6	7.4	6.2	16.6	6.5	1.5	0.3	6.4
Dayr al-Zur	18.8	2.6	12.6	29.6	7.6	3.3	0.8	10.7
al-Hasaka	−10.5	−2.0	5.7	1.3	2.9	2.4	0.0	0.0
Tartous	16.4	10.2	4.7	3.5	13.7	7.2	2.6	8.3
al-Ladhiqiyya	16.6	5.5	8.6	0.3	0.7	0.8	−0.8	4.5
average per term	18.0	3.0	6.1	7.8	7.1	3.3	0.2	n/a

Sources: Calculation based on tables 3 part 2 and 4 part 1.

Table 6 part 2 Planned *vs* official membership growth (in %), 1976–2008

Membership growth	1976–1979	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
Planned	84.1	59.6	39.4	48.1	32.3	25.1	16.8
Official	102.1	62.6	45.5	55.9	39.3	28.4	16.9
Surplus/deficit	18.0	3.0	6.1	7.8	7.0	3.3	0.1
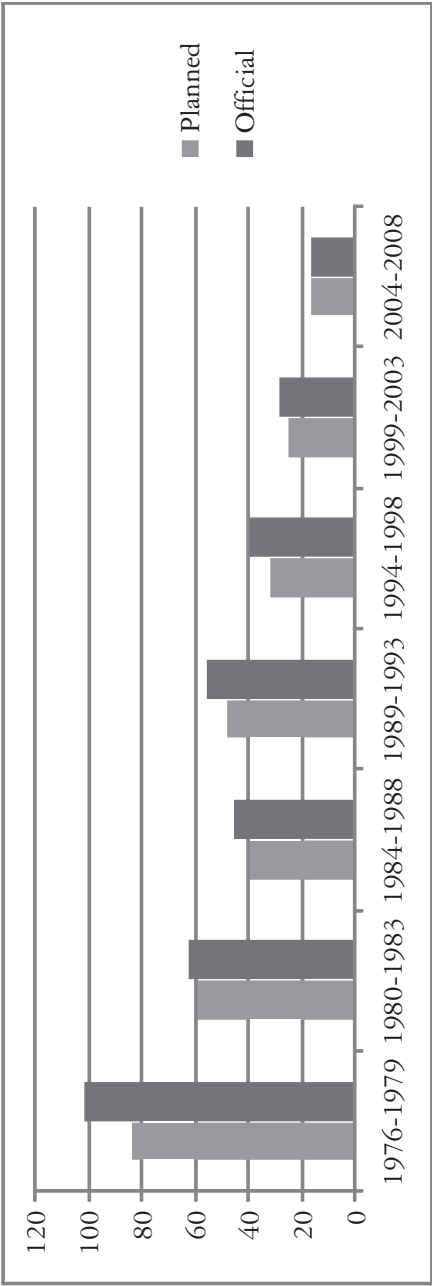
Diagram to table 6 part 2 Planned *vs* official membership growth (in %), 1976–2008
Sources: See preceding tables.

Table 6 part 3 Surplus/deficit in real membership based on planned membership (in %), 1976–2008

Governorate	1976–1979	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	25.3	−1.9	−99.6	12.0	8.3	9.9	−2.0	−6.8
D. countrys.	−54.1	−18.2	−33.7	1.6	5.0	21.7	1.5	−10.9
Qunaytra	4.2	5.8	−42.6	10.5	−0.9	2.3	0.3	−2.9
Diraʿa	−47.8	4.5	−31.6	8.7	2.2	1.3	−0.8	−9.1
al-Suwaydaʾ	34.0	−7.5	−31.2	1.7	6.6	16.8	−0.8	2.8
Hums	−9.0	18.7	−44.2	7.9	26.2	7.4	1.7	1.2
Hamah	5.9	2.6	−52.3	7.0	8.6	2.2	−1.0	−3.9
Aleppo	−43.1	−0.5	−74.3	66.2	−19.3	24.2	0.4	−6.6
Idlib	−15.8	14.4	−29.7	3.5	2.8	2.8	0.2	−3.1
al-Raqqa	−19.7	7.4	−18.4	19.4	3.1	1.5	0.3	−0.9
Dayr al-Zur	−49.5	2.6	−49.7	15.7	7.6	3.3	0.8	−9.9
al-Hasaka	−44.3	−2.0	−43.8	1.3	2.9	2.4	0.0	−11.9
Tartous	23.2	10.2	−23.6	−26.5	13.7	7.2	2.6	1.0
al-Ladhiqiyya	−68.8	5.5	−55.8	0.3	0.7	0.9	−0.8	−16.8
average per term	−18.5	3.0	−45.0	9.2	4.8	7.4	0.2	n/a

Sources: Calculation based on table 3 part 1 and table 4 part 1.

Table 6 part 4   Planned vs real membership growth per term in % (direct comparison of results)

Membership growth	1976–1979	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
Planned	84.1	59.6	39.4	48.1	32.3	25.1	16.8
Real	65.6	62.6	−5.6	57.3	37.1	32.5	16.9
Surplus/deficit	−18.5	3.0	−45.0	9.2	4.8	7.4	0.1
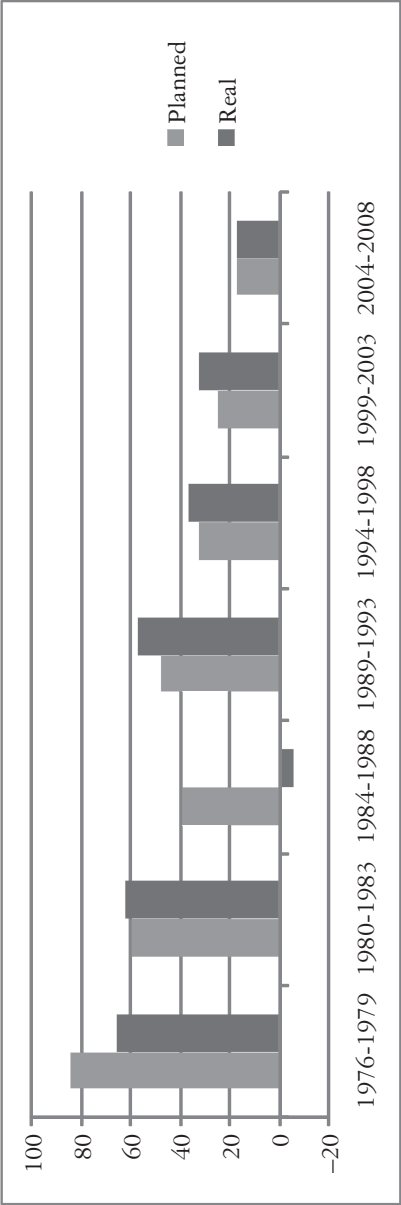
Diagram to table 6 part 4   Planned vs real membership increase per term (in %), 1976–2008
Sources: See preceding tables.

Table 6 part 5   Real increases/losses (in %), 1976–2008

Governorate	1973–1975	1976–1979	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	133.3	145.1	39.2	−66.6	131.1	80.9	50.5	24.3	67.2
D. countrys.	220.9	−6.4	67.2	11.0	47.9	36.3	44.7	15.8	54.7
Qunaytra	216.9	68.2	51.4	−13.3	41.6	27.4	21.4	15.2	53.6
Dira'	174.3	111.6	79.9	7.9	47.5	37.4	43.1	27.3	66.1
al-Suwayda'	176.2	182.8	52.9	7.9	42.8	35.7	39.5	12.5	68.8
Hums	135.2	66.1	78.9	−8.6	59.1	58.4	27.7	15.4	54.0
Hamah	52.7	89.5	46.7	−19.2	53.3	44.1	34.1	20.6	40.2
Aleppo	366.8	6.9	73.8	−19.4	137.1	11.8	53.6	19.5	81.3
Idlib	219.7	50.5	21.5	62.9	30.3	23.3	19.5	13.2	55.1
al-Raqqa	177.6	24.5	109.7	−19.0	55.5	28.8	21.5	15.1	51.7
Dayr al-Zur	226.5	17.3	64.2	−12.8	66.5	38.1	25.4	15.7	55.1
al-Hasaka	241.0	48.9	48.1	−16.0	37.2	29.1	22.7	15.2	53.3
Tartous	196.4	114.9	70.7	15.0	−8.8	34.9	23.4	13.7	57.5
al-Ladhiqiyya	167.4	−1.9	83.8	0.6	55.9	37.1	27.5	13.5	48.0
average	193.2	65.6	63.4	−5.0	56.9	37.4	32.5	16.9	n/a

Source: Calculation based on total membership per governorate (table 1 part 2).

Table 7 part 1   Distribution of rural/urban populations per governorate

Governorate	1970 urban	1970 rural	1981 urban	1981 rural	1990 urban	1990 rural	1994 urban	1994 rural	2004 urban	2004 rural
Damascus	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
D. countrys.	29.3	70.7	36.2	63.8	42.0	58.0	44.4	55.6	65.0	35.0
Qunaytra	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Dirāʿa	14.2	85.8	21.2	78.8	28.3	71.7	31.3	68.7	45.0	55.0
al-Suwaydaʾ	27.9	72.1	28.6	71.4	29.5	70.5	30.3	69.7	30.8	69.2
Hums	46.5	53.5	50.1	49.9	52.8	47.2	53.9	46.1	54.2	45.8
Hamah	34.0	66.0	33.7	66.3	33.6	66.4	33.7	66.3	36.7	63.3
Aleppo	53.8	46.2	59.7	40.3	64.3	35.7	65.9	34.1	62.4	37.6
Idlib	22.1	77.9	21.0	79.0	20.2	79.8	20.0	80.0	28.5	71.5
al-Raqqa	16.0	84.0	38.8	61.2	65.4	34.6	69.7	30.3	38.4	61.6
Dayr al-Zur	30.4	69.6	30.6	69.4	30.8	69.2	31.1	68.9	44.6	55.4
al-Hasaka	20.5	79.5	29.0	71.0	37.0	63.0	40.4	59.6	35.9	64.1
Tartous	18.2	81.8	20.1	79.9	21.8	78.2	22.5	77.5	28.6	71.4
al-Ladhiqiyya	38.2	61.8	41.8	58.2	42.9	57.1	44.0	56.0	51.2	48.8

Table 7 part 2 Groupings according to rural/urban populations

Governorate	Urban average	Group	Rural average
Damascus	100.0	1	0.0
Aleppo	61.2	1	38.8
Hums	51.5	2	48.5
al-Raqqa	45.7	2	54.3
al-Ladhiqiyya	43.6	2	56.4
D. countrys.	43.4	2	56.6
Hamah	34.3	3	65.7
Dayr al-Zur	33.5	3	66.5
al-Hasaka	32.6	3	67.4
al-Suwaydaʾ	29.4	3	70.6
Diraʿa	28.0	4	72.0
Idlib	22.4	4	77.6
Tartous	22.2	4	77.8
Qunaytra	0.0	4	100.0

Remark: The groups identified above will serve as reference points for the following analyses across a period of almost 45 years. For this reason, Diraʿa is counted towards group 4 here although the average urban population of Diraʿa is very close to that of al-Suwaydaʾ because its shift towards a more urban pattern occurred rather late, i.e. mainly between 1994 and 2004. While all governorates except al-Suwaydaʾ and Hamah show a trend towards urbanisation over time, Damascus countryside is the only governorate in which urban agglomeration led to a complete shift from a clearly predominantly rural population (29.3% in 1970) to almost two-thirds living in urban areas by 2004. Sources: See preceding table.

Table 7 part 3 Planned and real membership and surplus/deficit per governorate on average (in %), 1976–2008

Planned	Governorate	Group	Real	Governorate	Group	Surplus/deficit	Governorate	Group
64.6	Damascus	1	57.8	Damascus	1	2.8	al-Suwaydaʾ	3
59.8	Diraʿa	4	53.4	al-Suwaydaʾ	3	1.2	Hums	2
50.6	al-Suwaydaʾ	3	50.7	Diraʿa	4	1.0	Tartous	4
47.8	al-Ladhiqiyya	2	42.4	Hums	2	−0.9	al-Raqqa	2
47.1	Aleppo	1	40.5	Aleppo	1	−2.9	Qunaytra	4
42.3	Hamah	3	38.4	Hamah	3	−3.0	Idlib	4
41.8	D. countrys.	2	37.7	Tartous	4	−3.9	Hamah	3
41.2	Hums	2	32.7	Idlib	4	−6.8	Aleppo	1
40.5	Dayr al-Zur	3	30.9	al-Ladhiqiyya	2	−6.8	Damascus	2
38.4	al-Hasaka	3	30.9	D. countrys.	2	−9.1	Diraʿa	4
36.7	Tartous	4	30.6	Dayr al-Zur	3	−9.9	Dayr al-Zur	3
35.8	Idlib	4	30.5	Qunaytra	4	−10.9	D. countrys.	2
33.4	Qunaytra	4	29.7	al-Raqqa	4	−11.9	al-Hasaka	3
30.6	al-Raqqa	2	26.4	al-Hasaka	3	−16.8	al-Ladhiqiyya	2
43.6	average	n/a	38.1	average	n/a	−5.6	average	n/a

Sources: See table 4 part 2, table 5 and table 6 part 3.

Table 8 Share of Union members amongst females aged 14 + per governorate

Governorate	females 14 + (1970)	total Union members (1973)	share Union members	females 14 + (1994)	total Union members (1993)	share Union members	females 14 + (2004)	total Union members (2003)	share Union members
Damascus	218649	2053	0.9	345882	12615	3.6	520425	34330	6.6
D. countrys.	151119	1940	1.3	373097	15993	4.3	674625	31530	4.7
Qunaytra	3898	1035	26.6	12168	10252	84.3	19128	15861	82.9
Dira'a	58159	720	1.2	147470	11972	8.1	234278	23547	10.1
al-Suwayda'	37952	803	2.1	84440	14774	17.5	111651	27977	25.1
Hums	136767	1528	1.1	324866	15531	4.8	464651	31413	6.8
Hamah	128167	2545	2.0	291202	13383	4.6	412105	25868	6.3
Aleppo	331974	1008	0.3	754692	16713	2.2	1134782	28716	2.5
Idlib	97216	1179	1.2	230753	14630	6.3	326326	21555	6.6
al-Raqqa	58417	1277	2.2	135732	11651	8.6	215540	18233	8.5
Dayr al-Zur	41365	1077	2.6	173730	9833	5.7	264677	17032	6.4
al-Hasaka	115368	1102	1.0	225202	9543	4.2	373069	15118	4.1
Tartous	75900	1405	1.9	179577	16018	8.9	242301	26664	11.0
al-Ladhiqiyya	96706	1454	1.5	228990	10993	4.8	305910	19211	6.3

Remark: Years quoted refer to the census used, whilst the years in brackets indicate the year for which the closest real membership figures are available. Data limitations: The 1981 census does not provide figures for the population younger than 14 per governorate. Years for which total Union membership is available do not exactly coincide with the censuses. Also, Union membership is available for girls aged 16 +, but census data only lists age groups by single years in countrywide figures or for those aged less than 1 year, 1–4, 5–9, 10–14, and 15–19 years per governorate. This is the most approximate calculation possible.

Sources: Calculation based on Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (1970): *Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. Damascus: Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ. p. 1ff. Table 2 and p. 6f. Table 4; Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (1994): *Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. Damascus: Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ. No page, table 9; Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (1994): *Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. Also available at www.cbssyr.org and http://www.cbssyr.org/General %20census/census%202004/pop-str.pdf (no page) and table 2, and total membership per governorate (table 1 part 2).

Table 9 Units per governorate, 1973–2008

Governorate	until 1973	until 1974	until 1979	until 1983	until 1988	until 1993	until 1998	until 2003	until 2008
Damascus	35	36	49	61	56	60	61	75	68
D. countrys.	48	61	107	119	132	136	144	148	147
Qunaytra	24	32	52	56	66	79	88	94	93
Diraʿa	13	24	52	60	70	76	91	101	101
al-Suwaydaʾ	32	42	95	102	123	126	142	148	147
Hums	30	42	63	95	103	118	128	159	163
Hamah	33	55	73	100	114	133	136	153	149
Aleppo	31	36	54	70	84	96	101	103	103
Idlib	25	28	45	53	53	58	63	76	77
al-Raqqa	15	22	42	56	57	62	62	62	62
Dayr al-Zur	12	21	41	50	63	63	67	74	76
al-Hasaka	21	30	57	65	76	76	85	85	85
Tartous	51	56	113	168	204	212	230	240	243
al-Ladhiqiyya	30	45	54	87	110	118	120	120	120
total	400	530	907	1142	1311	1413	1518	1638	1634

Remark: Data for individual governorates is available from 1973 onwards only. Sometimes, separate statistics are provided for the number of units closed, but too unregularly to discern general trends. See also Chapter 5. Sources: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-munʿaqad bi-taʾrikh 03/01/1976*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 8 table 1 and p. 10 table 2; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a): *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi majal maktab al-tanzim iʿtibaran min 03/01/1976 wa-lighayat 19/01/1980*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 4; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi liʾl-dawra al-intikhabiyya bayna ʿam 1980–1983 al-Muqaddam liʾl-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-rabiʿa liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 4; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: Taqrir al-nashatat*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 9; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis liʾl-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 49 table 11; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi – ʾInna rafʿ al-hayf ʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumarasat al-marʾa dawraha fi hayat al-mujtamʿa darura watamiyya qawmiyya insaniyya*, al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 adhar 1999. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 9; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi; Dimashq, adhar 2004 – ,,al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuba shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʿid Hafiz al-Asad*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 51, table 13, and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – ʿal-Marʾa biya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya waʾl-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 44, table 9.

Table 10 Average of members (real) per unit in each governorate, 1973–2008

Governorate	1973	1975	1979	1983	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008	average	group
Damascus	59	133	240	268	97	210	374	458	569	267	1
D. countrys.	40	102	54	82	82	118	151	213	247	121	2
Qunaytra	43	103	106	149	110	130	148	169	194	128	4
Dira'a	55	82	80	125	116	158	181	233	297	148	4
al-Suwayda'	25	53	66	94	84	117	141	189	213	109	2
Hums	51	86	95	112	95	132	192	198	228	132	2
Hamah	77	71	101	108	77	101	142	169	204	117	3
Aleppo	33	131	93	125	84	174	179	279	333	159	1
Idlib	47	135	126	130	212	252	297	284	321	200	4
al-Raqqa	85	161	105	165	131	188	242	294	339	190	2
Dayr al-Zur	90	167	101	135	94	156	203	230	266	160	3
al-Hasaka	52	125	98	127	92	126	145	178	205	128	3
Tartous	28	74	79	91	86	76	94	111	126	85	4
al-Ladhiqiyya	48	86	71	81	64	93	126	160	182	101	2
average	52	108	101	128	102	145	187	226	266	n/a	n/a
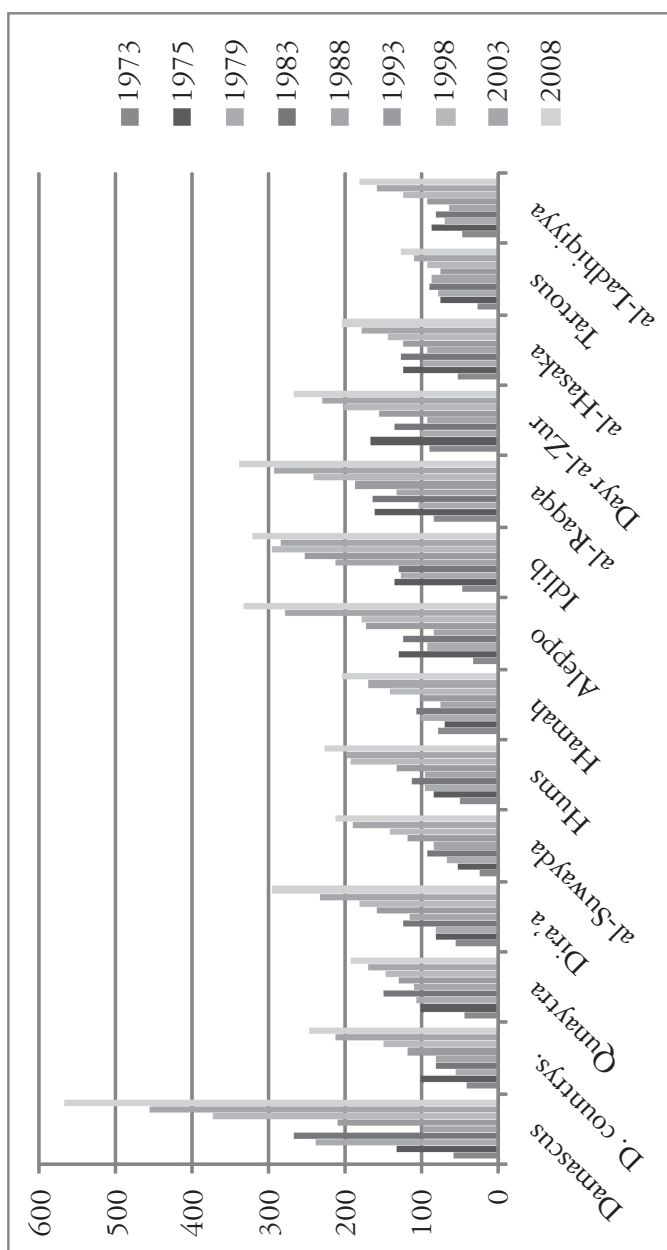
Diagram to table 10   Average of members (real) per unit in each governorate, 1973–2008
Sources: Calculation based on table 3 part 1 and table 9.

Table 11 Associations per governorate, 1973–2008

Governorate	1973	1976	1979	1983	1988	1993	1998	2003	2008	average
Damascus	5	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
D. countrys.	6	10	12	12	12	16	12	12	12	12
Qunaytra	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Diraʿa	3	6	7	8	9	8	8	8	8	7
al-Suwaydaʾ	3	5	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	6
Hums	4	8	11	12	12	16	12	12	12	11
Hamah	4	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	6
Aleppo	4	7	9	9	11	11	9	11	11	9
Idlib	4	6	8	9	9	9	11	9	9	8
al-Raqqa	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Dayr al-Zur	4	5	5	7	7	6	6	6	6	6
al-Hasaka	4	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	6
Tartous	5	8	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9
al-Ladhiqiyya	4	5	5	7	9	7	7	7	7	6
sum	59	90	104	109	114	114	114	114	114	n/a

Sources: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-munʿaqad bi-taʾrikh 03/01/1976.* Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 8 table 1; for 1976 and 1979 see al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a): *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi majal maktab al-tanzim iʿtibaran min 03/01/1976 wa-lighayat 19/01/1980.* Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 5; for 1984 and 1988 see al-Ittihad al- āmm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: Taqrir al-nashatat.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 10; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis li'l-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994.* Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 52 table 13; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a), no page, table 11, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – „al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʿid Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 53 table 15, and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – 'al-Marʾa hiya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya wa'l-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 49, table 11.

Table 12   Members per unit and units per associations in each governorate on average, 1973–2008

Governorate	members per unit (average)	units per association (average)	group
Tartous	85	18	4
al-Ladhiqiyya	101	13	2
al-Suwaydaʾ	109	16	3
Hamah	117	16	3
D. countrys.	121	10	2
al-Hasaka	128	10	3
Qunaytra	128	13	4
Hums	132	9	2
Diraʿa	148	9	4
Aleppo	159	8	1
Dayr al-Zur	160	9	3
al-Raqqa	190	10	2
Idlib	200	6	4
Damascus	267	7	1

Remark: Data sorted in ascending order of members per unit.
Sources: Tables 9, 10 and 11.

Table 13 Educational background amongst new recruits per term countrywide, 1984–2008

Level of education	1980–1983*	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
illiterate	15.3	9.2	6.8	1.7	0.6	1.8	5.9
semi-literate	14.9	18.6	16.9	17.7	11.0	7.9	14.5
primary	33.0	32.5	34.4	30.1	33.2	23.7	31.2
preparatory	23.2	22.6	22.8	25.1	25.4	26.6	24.3
secondary	8.5	9.1	11.1	13.1	16.3	22.1	13.4
vocational training	3.8	4.4	4.0	4.9	4.2	5.1	4.4
intermediate institutes	0.4	1.4	2.4	4.8	6.4	8.0	3.9
university	1.0	1.1	1.4	2.6	2.7	4.8	2.2
doctorate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

* The data for the term 1980–1983 is not depicted in the diagram. Educational data will be compared with occupation data in the following section, for which no figures are available during the 1980–1983 term.

Sources: Calculation based on al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b): al-Taqrir al-tanzimi liʾl-dawra al-intikhabiyya bayna ʿam 1980–1983 al-Muqaddam liʾl-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-rabiʿa liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 5; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a): al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi; Taqrir al-nashatat. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 3; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis liʾl-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 45 table 7; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a): al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi – ʿInma rafʿ al-bayf ʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumarasat al-marʾa dawraha fi bayat al-mujtamʿa darura watamiyya qaumiyya insaniyya', al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 adhar 1999. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 5; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi; Dimashq, adhar 2004 – ,,al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuba sbaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamaiyaz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʿid Hafiz al-Asad. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 41, table 8; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi; Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – ,,al-Marʾa briya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya waʾl-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 34, table 4. Original tables are not listed as they are too extensive (figures for 14 governorates at 9 educational levels for 6 terms). More information available from the author.

Table 14   National average of education of girls and women aged 10 + (1981)

Level of education	total	female	male	% female	% male	Educational level	% women only	% men only
illiterate	2227781	1568025	659756	70.4	29.6	Illiterate	54.5	21.9
semi-literate	1527711	580061	947650	38.0	62.0	semi-literate	20.2	31.5
primary	1228221	436023	792198	35.5	64.5	primary	15.2	26.4
preparatory	439195	159136	280059	36.2	63.8	preparatory	5.5	9.3
secondary	282242	82851	199391	29.4	70.6	secondary	2.9	6.6
vocational	80285	31350	48935	39.0	61.0	vocational	1.1	1.6
university	91578	17052	74526	18.6	81.4	university	0.6	2.5
doctorate	3164	325	2839	10.3	89.7	doctorate	0.0	0.1
not stated	1628	824	804	50.6	49.4	not stated	0.0	0.0
total	5881805	2875647	3006158	48.9	51.1	total	100.0	100.0

Remarks: Due to limitations of the data, the results allow for approximate comparison only. Whilst the census of 1981 provides educational data for over 10 year olds, girls become eligible for Union membership at the age 16, leaving a six-year gap. Therefore, the result for 1981 can only be taken as an estimate. Otherwise, the size of the sample allows for representativeness; in absolute numbers, more than 50,000 women joined the Union between 1980–1983 (or more than 73,000 between 1999–2003), compared to almost 3,000,000 females in the 1981 census (or more than 5,000,000 in 2004). For the Union average of education amongst new recruits aged 16+ (1980–3), see Table 13.

Source: Calculation based on Maktab al-markazi liʾl-ihsaʾ (1988): Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm liʾl-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya. Damascus: Maktab al-markazi liʾl-ihsaʾ. p. 118 table 29a.

Table 15 National average of education of girls and women aged 15 + (2004)

Level of education	total	female	male	% female	% male	Level of education	% women only	% men only
Illiterate	1998841	1331594	667247	66.6	33.4	Illiterate	25.8	12.3
semi-literate	3333949	1534834	1799115	46.0	54.0	semi-literate	29.8	33.3
primary	1946734	854398	1092336	43.9	56.1	primary	16.6	20.2
intermediate	1479874	664451	815423	44.9	55.1	intermediate	12.9	15.1
secondary	947717	413942	533775	43.7	56.3	secondary	8.0	9.9
vocational	432070	215383	216687	49.8	50.2	vocational	4.2	4.0
university	360456	115057	245399	31.9	68.1	university	2.2	4.5
doctorate	5234	844	4390	16.1	83.9	doctorate	0.0	0.1
not stated	56745	27690	29055	48.8	51.2	not stated	0.5	0.5
total	10561620	5158193	5403427	48.8	51.2	total	100.0	100.0

Remark: Due to a change in compulsory schooling law, the 2004 census accounts for girls aged 15 and older, allowing for a more precise comparison with Union membership. Again, sample sizes are representative. For the Union average of education amongst new recruits aged 16+ (1999–2003), see Table 13.

Source: Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsa' (1994): *Nata'ij al-ta'dad al-'amm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-'arabiyya al-suriyya*. Also available at www.cbssyr.org and http://www.cbssyr.org/General%20census/census%202004/pop-str.pdf (no page).

Table 16 Education of new recruits (overview)

Table 16 part 1 Education of new recruits per governorate on average, 1980–2008

Governorate	illiterate	semi-literate	primary	primary and below	preparatory	secondary	voc. training	secondary	interm. institute	university	group
Damascus	2.0	9.5	34.0	45.4	26.9	16.7	2.7	46.4	4.8	3.4	1
D. countrys.	2.5	9.6	41.3	53.3	24.3	12.3	4.8	41.3	2.8	2.7	2
Qunaytra	9.6	13.7	35.4	58.7	22.5	12.4	2.5	37.4	2.5	1.4	4
Diraʿa	6.3	13.2	32.2	51.7	30.1	10.6	3.2	43.9	3.0	1.4	4
al-Suwaydaʾ	6.1	10.7	40.4	57.3	23.3	12.5	1.6	37.4	4.2	1.1	3
Hums	3.0	7.1	26.2	36.3	32.1	15.9	5.3	53.3	6.5	3.7	2
Hamah	4.1	12.7	32.3	49.1	24.5	15.8	5.1	45.4	3.0	2.4	3
Aleppo	1.0	16.2	26.5	43.6	23.9	17.3	8.6	49.8	4.0	2.6	1
Idlib	6.9	11.9	41.0	59.8	21.0	9.9	4.2	35.1	3.0	2.3	4
al-Raqqa	14.3	27.0	25.4	66.7	15.3	8.8	5.1	29.2	3.2	1.1	2
Dayr al-Zur	16.4	25.8	23.4	65.7	16.0	10.1	3.4	29.6	3.5	1.3	3
al-Hasaka	8.2	22.2	32.0	62.4	18.7	9.8	4.2	32.7	3.2	1.7	3
Tartous	1.3	13.8	23.9	39.0	29.3	15.4	4.7	49.4	7.4	3.5	4
al-Ladhiqiyya	1.1	10.3	22.5	34.0	32.3	19.8	6.3	58.4	3.4	4.2	2
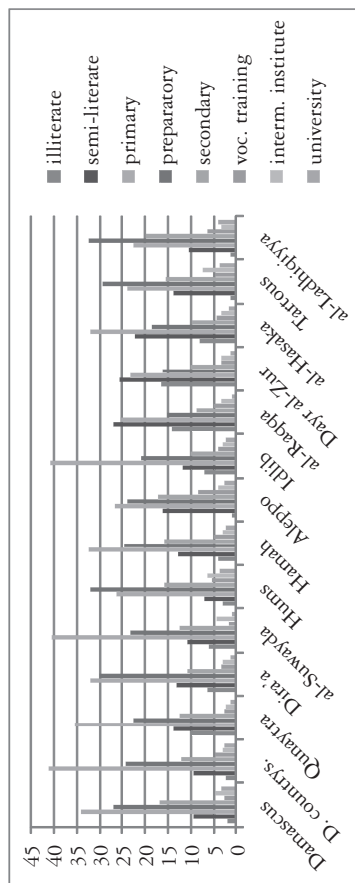
Diagram to table 16 part 1   Education of new recruits per governorate on average, 1980–2008

Sources: Calculation based on al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi liʾl-dawra al-intikhabiyya bayna ʿam 1980–1983 al-Muqaddam liʾl-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-rabiʿa liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 5; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: Taqrir al-nashatat.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 3; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis liʾl-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, 08/03/1994. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 45 table 7; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi – ʾInna rafʿ al-bayṭ ʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumarasat al-marʾa dawraha fi bayat al-mujtamʿa darura watamiyya qaumiyya insaniyya', al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 adhar 1999*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 5; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – "al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuba shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʿid Hafiz al-Asad*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 41, table 8; and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – ʾal-Marʾa biya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya waʾl-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 34, table 4. Original tables are not listed as they are too extensive (figures for 14 governorates at 9 educational levels for 6 terms). More information available from the author.

Table 16 part 2 Education of new recruits per governorate vs women in general, case study 2004 (ctnd next page)

Governorate	illiterate			semi-literate			primary			prep.			group
	Union	census	diff.	Union	census	diff.	Union	census	diff.	Union	census	diff.	
Damascus	0.0	9.9	−9.9	5.7	28.2	−22.4	31.2	16.3	14.9	28.6	18.4	10.1	1
D. countrys.	0.0	13.3	−13.3	5.4	31.8	−26.4	35.3	20.6	14.8	30.3	17.6	12.7	2
Qunaytra	2.1	23.7	−21.6	9.3	24.8	−15.5	42.7	27.8	14.9	23.4	12.2	11.3	4
Diraʿa	4.7	21.6	−16.9	10.0	25.7	−15.7	30.2	24.0	6.1	26.0	15.2	10.8	4
al-Suwaydaʾ	0.0	17.4	−17.4	6.8	15.3	−8.5	45.1	24.4	20.6	29.8	18.6	11.1	3
Hums	0.0	19.2	−19.2	3.7	31.3	−27.6	27.2	15.2	12.1	30.0	16.3	13.7	2
Hamah	0.4	24.2	−23.7	12.9	29.0	−16.1	32.2	18.4	13.8	25.1	13.4	11.7	3
Aleppo	0.0	30.2	−30.2	11.8	39.6	−27.8	37.9	13.7	24.2	24.5	8.3	16.2	1
Idlib	1.3	29.2	−27.9	10.7	27.3	−16.6	41.8	26.4	15.5	17.9	8.7	9.2	4
al-Raqqa	0.0	49.0	−49.0	23.6	26.4	−2.9	32.7	12.7	20.0	20.1	5.8	14.3	2
Dayr al-Zur	0.0	44.8	−44.8	21.9	32.7	−10.8	24.1	6.6	17.5	21.6	6.1	15.5	3
al-Hasaka	0.0	47.7	−47.7	23.1	20.9	2.2	35.2	15.2	20.0	19.1	8.1	11.0	3
Tartous	0.0	18.7	−18.7	5.0	23.7	−18.8	25.2	9.5	15.7	28.3	20.0	8.3	4
al-Ladhiqiyya	0.0	18.5	−18.5	4.0	16.4	−12.4	24.6	14.9	9.6	30.6	19.0	11.6	2

Table 16 part 2 (ctnd) Education of new recruits per governorate vs women in general, case study 2004

Governorate	sec.			voc.			univ.			not stated		group
	Union	census	diff.	Union	census	diff.	Union	census	diff.	Union	census	
Damascus	20.5	14.7	5.8	9.6	5.3	4.2	4.4	6.3	−1.8	0.0	1.0	1
D. countrys.	15.4	9.7	5.7	11.1	4.0	7.1	2.4	2.5	−0.1	0.0	0.5	2
Qunaytra	14.9	6.8	8.1	6.1	3.3	2.9	1.4	0.8	0.6	0.0	0.6	4
Dira'a	16.9	7.7	9.2	9.3	4.3	5.0	2.8	1.3	1.5	0.0	0.1	4
al-Suwayda'	11.0	13.4	−2.4	6.4	8.0	−1.6	1.0	2.3	−1.3	0.0	0.6	3
Hums	19.8	9.9	9.9	14.5	5.3	9.2	4.8	2.7	2.1	0.0	0.2	2
Hamah	18.0	7.9	10.0	8.5	4.6	3.9	2.9	1.6	1.3	0.0	0.8	3
Aleppo	13.6	4.2	9.4	9.5	2.2	7.3	2.7	1.4	1.3	0.0	0.4	1
Idlib	12.9	4.0	8.9	12.5	2.9	9.6	2.9	0.9	2.0	0.0	0.6	4
al-Raqqa	10.5	2.5	8.0	13.1	2.1	11.0	0.2	0.4	−0.2	0.0	1.2	2
Dayr al-Zur	18.9	3.3	15.6	11.7	3.4	8.2	1.7	0.6	1.1	0.0	2.4	3
al-Hasaka	11.6	4.5	7.1	8.6	2.9	5.7	2.5	0.6	1.9	0.0	0.1	3
Tartous	20.6	15.3	5.3	15.8	8.9	6.9	5.1	3.7	1.4	0.0	0.1	4
al-Ladhiqiyya	23.5	16.8	6.6	12.1	8.4	3.7	5.3	5.4	−0.1	0.0	0.5	2
average	16.3	8.6	7.7	10.6	4.7	5.9	2.9	2.2	0.7	0.0	0.7	

Remark: In the 1970 census, educational data for women is available per governorate, but at the time the Union did not yet gather such data. Although this had changed by the time of the 1981 census, this census did not include education data for the population per governorate. Whilst both data sets are available for 1994, only 2004 was chosen as a case study for ease of overview.

Sources: Calculations based on al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – "al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʿid Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 41, table 8 and Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (1994): *Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya. Also available at www.cbssyr.org and http://www.cbssyr.org/General%20cens us/census%202004/pop-str.pdf (no page). Again, individual tables per governorate are available from the author.

Table 17 Occupational background amongst new recruits per term countrywide, 1984–2008

Occupation	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
employee	3.3	3.3	4.8	4.7	6.2
student	15.2	11.0	10.2	11.9	18.8
teacher	6.3	6.5	7.1	7.3	7.7
housewife	61.9	66.0	61.8	58.7	49.4
worker	3.5	3.9	5.3	5.1	4.4
peasant	5.2	4.3	4.1	3.7	3.6
tailors & hairdrs.	3.1	3.3	4.3	6.1	6.7
nurse	1.1	1.2	1.6	1.7	1.7
other	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.8	1.4

Remark: "other" includes doctors, university lecturers, engineers, lawyers and judges, and pharmacists – figures summarised.

Sources: Calculation based on al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: Taqrir al-nashatat.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 2; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis li'l-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994.* Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 44 table 6; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi – 'Inna rafʿ al-hayf ʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumarasat al-marʾa dawraha fi hayat al-mujtamʿa darura wataniyya qawmiyya insaniyya', al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 adhar 1999.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 4; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – "al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʾid Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 39, table 7; and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – 'al-Marʾa hiya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya wa'l-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 32, table 3. Original tables are not listed as they are too extensive (figures for 14 governorates with 15 occupational groups for 5 terms). More information available from the author.

Table 18 National average of occupation of women vs occupation of new Union members, 1981

Table 18 part 1 National average of occupation of women, 1981

a)

1981 total	total measured	economically inactive				economically active				
		total inactive	homemakers	students	others	total employed	at home	out of house	total unemployed	all ec active
women	2875647	2691404	2006412	552120	132872	175014	13527	161487	9229	184243
men	3006158	1053002	0	865390	187612	1858324	8956	1849368	94832	1953156
total	5881805	3744406	2006412	1417510	320484	2033338	22483	2010855	104061	2137399

b)

1981 total	total measured	economically inactive				economically active				
		total inactive	homemakers	students	others	total employed	at home	out of house	total unemployed	all ec active
women in%	100	93.6	74.5	20.5	4.9	6.1	7.7	92.3	0.3	6.4
men in %	100	35.0	0.0	82.2	17.8	61.8	0.5	99.5	3.2	65.0
average	100	63.7	53.6	51.3	11.4	34.6	4.1	95.9	1.8	36.3

c)
1981

	total women	total inactive	economically inactive			total employed	at home	economically active	total unemployed	all ec active
			homemakers	students	others			out of house		
women	2875647	2691404	2006412	552120	132872	175014	13527	161487	9229	184243

d)
1981

	total women	total inactive	economically inactive			total employed	at home	economically active	total unemployed	all ec active
			homemakers	students	others			out of house		
women in %	100	93.6	69.8	19.2	4.6	6.1	7.7	92.3	0.3	6.4

Sources: For a), see Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (1988): *Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. Damascus: Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ. No page, table 52. b) shows a) in %. Cells in italics indicate subgroups (e.g. homemakers (housewives) = the share of homemakers *amongst the economically inactive*). By contrast, d) depicts e.g. the share of homemakers amongst all women. The latter allows for comparison with the Union data.

Table 18 part 2   Occupation of new Union members, 1984–1988

1984–1988	economically inactive		economically active	
	students	housewives	all professions	others
women in %	15.2	61.9	22.5	0.4

Sources: See table 17.

Table 19 National average of occupation of women vs occupation of new Union members, 2004

Table 19 part 1 National average of occupation of women, 2004

a)

2004 Total	total measured	total inactive	economically inactive homemakers	students	others	total employed	economically active at home	out of house	total unemployed	all ec active
women	5153694	4396612	3548857	517188	330567	593729	28080	565649	163353	757082
men	5403427	1330587	98176	599201	633210	3637988	109159	3528829	434852	4072840
total	10557121	5727199	3647033	1116389	963777	4231717	137239	4094478	598205	4829922

b)

2004 Total	total measured	total inactive	economically inactive homemakers	students	others	total employed	economically active at home	out of house	total unemployed	all ec active
women in %	100	85.3	80.7	11.8	7.5	11.5	4.7	95.3	3.2	14.7
men in %	100	24.6	7.4	45.0	47.6	67.3	3.0	97.0	8.0	75.4
average	100	54.2	63.7	19.5	16.8	40.1	3.2	96.8	5.7	45.8

c)

2004	total women	economically inactive				economically active				
		total inactive	homemakers	students	others	total employed	at home	out of house	total unemployed	all ec active
women	5153694	4396612	3548857	517188	330567	593729	28080	565649	163353	757082

d)

2004	total women	economically inactive				economically active				
		total inactive	homemakers	students	others	total employed	at home	out of house	total unemployed	all ec active
women in %	100	85.3	68.9	10.0	6.4	11.5	4.7	95.3	3.2	14.7

Table 19 part 2 Occupation of new Union members, 1999–2003

1999–2003	economically inactive		economically active	
	students	housewives	all professions	others
women in %	11.9	58.7	28.6	0.8

Sources: See table 17.

Table 20   Occupation of new recruits per governorate on average, 1984–2008

Governorate	Employees	Students	Housewives	Teachers	Workers	Peasants	T&H	Nurses	Others	Group
Damascus	5.3	10.2	65.4	3.5	7.1	0.1	7.7	0.3	0.4	1
D. countrys.	3.7	14.2	64.2	7.6	2.7	3.3	3.4	0.6	0.4	2
Qunaytra	4.1	18.6	63.2	3.0	5.6	2.5	2.2	0.4	0.4	4
Diraʿ	1.9	21.1	61.6	4.7	3.8	2.2	3.3	0.9	0.4	4
al-Suwaydaʾ	2.1	16.1	60.3	4.0	2.5	11.7	2.0	1.1	0.2	3
Hums	6.2	18.5	57.9	10.2	1.2	1.1	2.2	1.7	1.0	2
Hamah	4.5	7.6	58.9	7.2	5.0	6.7	5.1	0.8	0.8	3
Aleppo	2.9	10.1	59.6	12.6	3.4	1.2	7.7	0.8	1.8	1
Idlib	3.7	6.7	70.0	6.0	2.7	3.4	5.1	1.9	0.4	4
al-Raqqa	6.3	9.6	38.1	9.5	11.3	13.3	7.2	4.3	0.4	2
Dayr al-Zur	2.3	15.5	47.8	6.8	8.1	11.5	3.6	3.4	0.9	3
al-Hasaka	5.2	3.3	62.7	7.9	2.9	8.4	7.5	1.3	0.8	3
Tartous	6.3	10.4	65.1	8.4	2.3	1.6	2.7	2.7	0.7	4
al-Ladhiqiyya	7.3	20.4	47.6	6.7	6.0	1.1	6.5	3.3	1.0	2
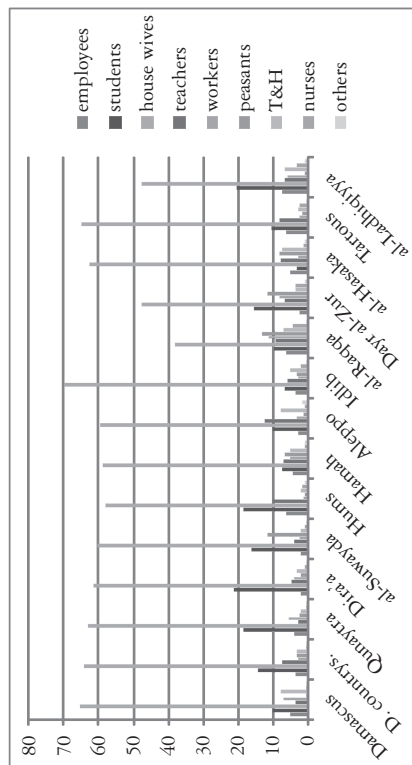
Diagram to table 20   Occupation of new recruits per governorate on average, 1984–2008

Sources: Calculation based on al-Ittihad al-ʿāmm al-nisāʾī (al-Maktab al-tanfīdhī) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿāmm al-khāmis liʾl-ittihād al-ʿāmm al-nisāʾī: Taqrīr al-nashaṭāt.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 2; al-Ittihad al-ʿāmm al-nisāʾī (al-Maktab al-tanfīdhī) (1994): *al-Taqrīr al-tanzīmī: al-muʾtamar al-ʿāmm al-sādis liʾl-Ittihad al-ʿāmm al-nisāʾī, 08/03/1994.* Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 44 table 6; al-Ittihad al-ʿāmm al-nisāʾī (al-Maktab al-tanfīdhī) (1999a): *al-Taqrīr al-tanzīmī: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿāmm al-sābiʿ liʾl-ittihād al-ʿāmm al-nisāʾī – ʿInna rafʿ al-ḥayf ʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumārasat al-marʾa dawraha fī ḥayāt al-mujtamaʿa ḍarūra waṭaniyya qawmiyya insāniyya', al-rafīq al-munādil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 ādhār 1999.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 4; al-Ittihad al-ʿāmm al-nisāʾī (al-Maktab al-tanfīdhī) (2004): *Taqrīr al-tanzīmī: al-muʾtamar al-ʿāmm al-thāmin liʾl-ittihād al-ʿāmm al-nisāʾī, Dimashq, ādhar 2004 – "al-Marʾa insān shaʾnuba shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikān maʿan fī bināʾ al-waṭan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʾid Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 39, table 7; and al-Ittihad al-ʿāmm al-nisāʾī (al-Maktab al-tanfīdhī) (2009): *Taqrīr al-tanzīmī: al-muʾtamar al-ʿāmm al-tāsiʿa liʾl-ittihād al-ʿāmm al-nisāʾī, Dimashq, 7 nīsān 2009 – ʿal-Marʾa bīya allatī tasbum fī mukhtallif mawāqiʿ al-ʿamal fī l-tanmiyya waʾl-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾīs Bashar al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 32, table 3. Original tables are not listed as they are too extensive (figures for 14 governorates with 15 occupational groups for 5 terms). More information available from the author.

Table 21 Economically active women per governorate vs Union recruits, case study 2004

2004–2008	Union recruits							Women in governorate					
Governorate	students	housewives	total new recruits	% students	% house-wives	% ec. inactive	% ec. active	% students	% house-wives	% other ec. inactive	% ec. inactive	% ec. active	group
Damascus	1160	5111	8326	13.9	61.4	75.3	24.7	12.9	61.2	9.8	83.9	16.1	1
D. countrys.	1091	2354	4978	21.9	47.3	69.2	30.8	11.5	73.2	3.7	88.4	11.6	2
Qunaytra	755	1022	2416	31.3	42.3	73.6	26.4	11.7	70.5	7.2	89.4	10.6	4
Diraʿa	2576	2854	6437	40.0	44.3	84.4	15.6	11.1	74.9	4.6	90.6	9.4	4
al-Suwaydaʾ	547	2305	3495	15.7	66.0	81.6	18.4	14.2	57.8	10.0	82.0	18.0	3
Hums	1131	2533	4766	23.7	53.1	76.9	23.1	11.5	69.0	5.5	86.0	14.0	2
Hamah	914	1202	5392	17.0	22.3	39.2	60.8	10.2	61.5	9.6	81.3	18.7	3
Aleppo	974	3228	5605	17.4	57.6	75.0	25.0	7.1	78.3	4.5	89.9	10.1	1
Idlib	297	1688	2853	10.4	59.2	69.6	30.4	7.0	77.0	6.6	90.6	9.4	4
al-Raqqa	139	1138	2758	5.0	41.3	46.3	53.7	6.9	66.8	9.7	83.4	16.6	2
Dayr al-Zur	341	952	2682	12.7	35.5	48.2	51.8	8.5	63.0	10.0	81.5	18.5	3
al-Hasaka	159	1001	2301	6.9	43.5	50.4	49.6	8.6	73.5	5.5	87.6	12.4	3
Tartous	318	2139	3619	8.8	59.1	67.9	32.1	14.1	51.9	7.6	73.6	26.4	4
al-Ladhiqiyya	537	1242	2598	20.7	47.8	68.5	31.5	14.7	47.4	8.1	70.2	29.8	2
sum	10939	28769	58266	18.8	49.4	68.1	31.9	10.7	66.1	7.3	84.2	15.8	n/a

Diagram to table 21   Economically active women per governorate vs Union recruits, case study 2004

Table 22   Total of full party members (*hizbiyyat*) amongst Union members, 1984–2008

Table 22 part 1   Total of full party members countrywide, 1984–2008

Year	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
full party members	26145	38810	49675	96055	123459
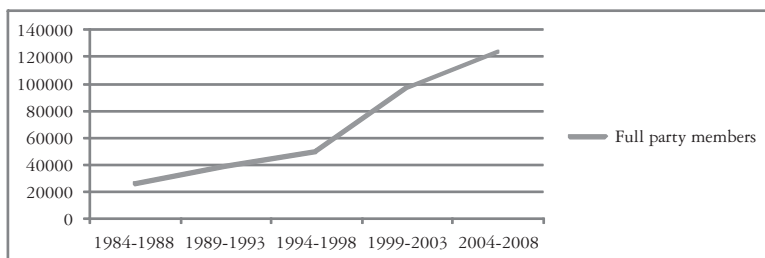
Diagram to table 22 part 1   Total of full party members countrywide, 1984–2008

Sources: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: Taqrir al-nashatat.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 7; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis li'l-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994.* Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 42 table 4; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi – 'Inna rafʿ al-hayf ʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumarasat al-marʾa dawraha fi hayat al-mujtamʿa darura wataniyya qawmiyya insaniyya', al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 adhar 1999.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 17; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – "al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʾid Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 35, table 5; and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – 'al-Marʾa hiya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya wa'l-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 63, table 19.

Table 22 part 2 Total of full party members per governorate, 1984–2008

Governorate	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
Damascus	677	1337	4424	8000	9741
D. countrys.	1425	2174	4376	10994	13578
Qunaytra	1706	2076	2831	3824	4972
Diraʿa	1888	2904	2282	4215	6135
al-Suwaydaʾ	1499	4512	3175	4730	5880
Hums	2359	4173	4722	9904	13045
Hamah	4570	5336	3575	6455	9907
Aleppo	1143	2334	5247	9542	8485
Idlib	1324	1689	3687	7101	12241
al-Raqqa	918	1639	4329	3492	4380
Dayr al-Zur	799	1165	3827	5504	7168
al-Hasaka	781	1023	1871	5483	6902
Tartous	4891	2903	2559	9086	11567
al-Ladhiqiyya	2165	5545	2770	7725	9458
sum	26145	38810	49675	96055	123459

Sources: See table 22 part 1.

Table 23 Sum annual/term vs total party membership per governorate by 2008

Governorate	total membership	sum annual/term membership
Damascus	9741	8799
D. countrys.	13578	13881
Qunaytra	4972	4937
Diraʿa	6135	6160
al-Suwaydaʾ	5880	5383
Hums	13045	15279
Hamah	9907	12429
Aleppo	8485	13731
Idlib	12241	7881
al-Raqqa	4380	4811
Dayr al-Zur	7168	7304
al-Hasaka	6902	6903
Tartous	11567	13819
al-Ladhiqiyya	9458	10990
sum	123459	132307

Sources: For official increases, see al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: Taqrir al-nashatat.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 6; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis li'l-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994. Damascus: {publisher unknown}.* p. 40 table 6; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi – 'Inna rafʿ al-hayf ʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumarasat al-marʾa dawraha fi hayat al-mujtamʾa darura wataniyya qawmiyya insaniyya', al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 adhar 1999.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 2; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – "al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʾid Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 21, table 2; and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – 'al-Marʾa hiya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya wa'l-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 28, table 1. See also table 22.

Table 24   Real vs official growth in full party membership per term, 1984-2008

Table 24 part 1   Calculation of real membership based on the subtraction of total membership figures at the end of each term

Governorate	total 1993 minus 1989	total 1998 minus 1993	total 2004 minus 1998	total 2008 minus 2004
Damascus	660	3087	3576	1741
D. countrys.	749	2202	6618	2584
Qunaytra	370	755	993	1148
Diraʿa	1016	−622	1933	1920
al-Suwaydaʾ	3013	−1337	1555	1150
Hums	1814	549	5182	3141
Hamah	766	−1761	2880	3452
Aleppo	1191	2913	4295	−1057
Idlib	365	1998	3414	5140
al-Raqqa	721	2690	−837	888
Dayr al-Zur	366	2662	1677	1664
al-Hasaka	242	848	3612	1419
Tartous	−1988	−344	6527	2481
al-Ladhiqiyya	3380	−2775	4955	1733
sum	12665	10865	46380	27404

Sources: See table 22 part 1 + 2. Although planned and official increase figures are available since 1980, total membership figures have been listed since 1988 only.

Table 24 part 2 Official term increases in party membership as reported (since 1984)

Governorate	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
Damascus	258	548	670	2127	3576	1749
D. countrys.	348	421	767	2243	6618	2828
Qunaytra	450	134	228	891	993	1119
Diraʾa	65	258	240	1216	1555	1261
al-Suwaydaʾ	187	443	551	914	1933	486
Hums	209	330	407	3038	5182	4293
Hamah	583	719	751	1441	2880	2787
Aleppo	480	504	516	2133	5715	4224
Idlib	480	1146	365	1419	2772	2001
al-Raqqa	118	245	214	1155	1621	903
Dayr al-Zur	166	209	331	1615	2945	1614
al-Hasaka	154	296	342	1598	2713	1469
Tartous	531	316	548	2460	3839	2081
al-Ladhiqiyya	346	327	328	2155	4038	2304
sum	4375	5896	6258	24405	46380	29119

Sources: For term increases since 1988, see al-Ittiḥad al-ʿamm al-nisāʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfīdhī) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khāmis liʾl-ittiḥad al-ʿamm al-nisāʾi: Taqrīr al-nashaṭāt.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 6; al-Ittiḥad al-ʿamm al-nisāʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfīdhī) (1994): *al-Taqrīr al-tanzīmī: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sādis liʾl-Ittiḥad al-ʿamm al-nisāʾi,* 08/03/1994. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 40, table 6; al-Ittiḥad al-ʿamm al-nisāʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfīdhī) (1999a): *al-Taqrīr al-tanzīmī: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sābiʿ liʾl-ittiḥad al-ʿamm al-nisāʾi – ʾInma rafʿ al-bayʾ ʾan al-marʾa la majarr minbu inma mumarasat al-marʾa dawraba fi bayat al-mujtamʿa darura watanīyya qawmīyya insanīyyaʾ; al-rafīq al-munadil Ḥafiẓ al-Asad,* 16 adbar 1999. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 2; al-Ittiḥad al-ʿamm al-nisāʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfīdhī) (2004): *Taqrīr al-tanzīmī: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thāmin liʾl-ittiḥad al-ʿamm al-nisāʾi; Dimashq, adbar 2004 – "al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuba shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi bināʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan",* al-qaʾid Ḥafiẓ al-Asad. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 21, table 2; and al-Ittiḥad al-ʿamm al-nisāʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfīdhī) (2009): *Taqrīr al-tanzīmī: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa liʾl-ittiḥad al-ʿamm al-nisāʾi; Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – "al-Marʾa biya allati tasbum fi mukbtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya waʾl-taqaddum", al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 28, table 1. The data for 1980–1988 is listed for comprehensiveness.

Table 24 part 3   Real vs official party membership per term (direct comparison of results)

Membership	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
official	6258	24405	46380	29119
real	12665	10865	46380	27404
surplus/deficit	6407	−13540	0	−1715
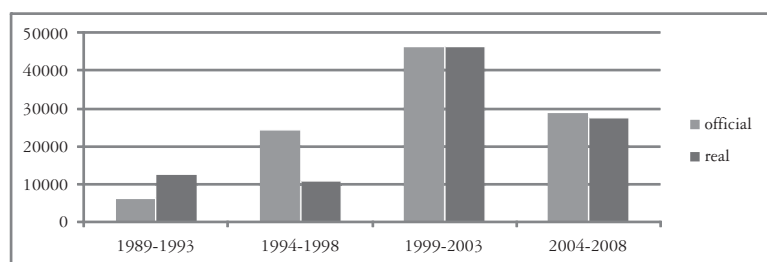
Diagram to table 24 part 3   Real vs official membership per term (direct comparison of results)
Sources: Table 24 part 1 + 2.

Table 25 Planned vs official growth in party members (in %), 1989–2008

Table 25 part 1 Planned growth in party members in absolute numbers per term, 1980–2008

Governorate	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
Damascus	720	550	711	2234	4850	2197
D. countrys.	472	343	754	2500	8220	4927
Qunaytra	572	182	221	1075	1170	995
Dira'a	108	205	172	1355	1950	1368
al-Suwayda'	384	305	507	1400	2530	717
Hums	486	190	320	2875	5555	4181
Hamah	581	567	825	1765	3965	3257
Aleppo	445	426	441	2735	6920	4066
Idlib	385	477	291	1905	3175	2151
al-Raqqa	128	176	215	1425	2120	985
Dayr al-Zur	245	174	288	1600	2850	1829
al-Hasaka	245	207	300	1600	2720	1675
Tartous	657	214	380	2375	3825	2604
al-Ladhiqiyya	411	144	296	2110	4305	2398
sum	5839	4160	5721	26954	54155	33350

Sources: For term increases since 1988, see al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: Taqrir al-nashatat.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 6; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis liʾl-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994.* Damascus: [publisher unknown]. p. 40, table 6; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisai – ʾInna rafʿ al-hayf ʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumarasat al-marʾa dawraha fi hayat al-mujtamʿa darura watamiyya qaumiyya insaniyyaʾ, al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 adhar 1999.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. No page, table 2; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisai, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – ʾal-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʾan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadanʾ, al-qaʾid Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 21, table 2; and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisai, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – ʿal-Marʾa biya allati tashum fi makhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi-tanmiyya waʾl-taqaddumʾ, al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]. p. 28, table 1. The data for 1980–1988 is listed for comprehensiveness.

Table 25 part 2 Planned party membership growth (in %), 1984–2008

Governorate	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	105.0	167.1	109.6	27.5	102.3
D. countrys.	52.9	115.0	187.8	44.8	100.1
Qunaytra	13.0	51.8	41.3	26.0	33.0
Diraʿa	9.1	46.7	85.5	32.5	43.4
al-Suwaydaʾ	33.8	31.0	79.7	15.2	39.9
Hums	13.6	68.9	117.6	42.2	60.6
Hamah	18.1	33.1	110.9	50.5	53.1
Aleppo	38.6	117.2	131.9	42.6	82.6
Idlib	22.0	112.8	86.1	30.3	62.8
al-Raqqa	23.4	86.9	49.0	28.2	46.9
Dayr al-Zur	36.0	137.3	74.5	33.2	70.3
al-Hasaka	38.4	156.4	145.4	30.5	92.7
Tartous	7.8	81.8	149.5	28.7	66.9
al-Ladhiqiyya	13.7	38.1	155.4	31.0	59.5
average per term	21.9	69.5	109.0	34.7	n/a

Sources: Table 22 part 2 and table 25 part 1.

Table 25 part 3   Official growth in party members (in %), 1984–2008

Governorate	1980–1983	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	5.6	11.9	9.4	20.9	31.1	21.0	18.8
D. countrys.	8.9	8.7	14.8	38.6	118.0	56.8	47.4
Qunaytra	15.9	4.6	7.6	31.7	35.5	46.3	25.1
Dira'a	1.9	8.0	6.2	27.1	21.9	19.6	16.6
al-Suwayda'	5.6	11.1	13.0	17.3	40.1	13.9	19.1
Hums	4.4	7.1	7.1	33.5	76.0	90.1	42.8
Hamah	16.9	15.6	15.4	24.4	43.7	51.7	30.2
Aleppo	12.9	9.8	9.1	35.7	99.6	75.4	45.9
Idlib	13.4	22.8	10.7	41.7	78.7	70.1	44.8
al-Raqqa	4.8	8.5	5.4	30.7	50.3	32.7	25.5
Dayr al-Zur	6.3	6.2	7.0	43.1	85.4	60.2	40.4
al-Hasaka	5.7	10.7	13.2	57.6	96.9	63.8	48.4
Tartous	8.4	4.8	14.8	44.0	75.9	56.9	39.3
al-Ladhiqiyya	10.8	7.2	8.3	52.8	98.1	88.7	51.0
average per term	8.6	9.8	10.1	35.7	67.9	53.4	n/a

Sources: See table 25 part 1.

Table 26   Real growth in party members (in %), 1989–2008

Governorate	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	97.5	230.9	80.8	21.8	107.7
D. countrys.	52.6	101.3	151.2	23.5	82.1
Qunaytra	21.7	36.4	35.1	30.0	30.8
Diraʿa	53.8	−21.4	84.7	45.6	40.7
al-Suwaydaʾ	201.0	−29.6	49.0	24.3	61.2
Hums	76.9	13.2	109.7	31.7	57.9
Hamah	16.8	−33.0	80.6	53.5	29.4
Aleppo	104.2	124.8	81.9	−11.1	74.9
Idlib	27.6	118.3	92.6	72.4	77.7
al-Raqqa	78.5	164.1	−19.3	25.4	62.2
Dayr al-Zur	45.8	228.5	43.8	30.2	87.1
al-Hasaka	31.0	82.9	193.1	25.9	83.2
Tarrous	−40.6	−11.8	255.1	27.3	57.5
al-Ladhiqiyya	156.1	−50.0	178.9	22.4	76.8
sum	48.4	28.0	93.4	28.5	49.6

Sources: Calculation based on tables 22 part 2 and table 24 part 1.

Table 27 Surplus/deficit in planned, official and real full party membership (1989–2008)

Table 27 part 1 Surplus/deficit in official full party membership based on planned membership (in %), 1976–2008

Governorate	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	−95.7	−146.2	−78.6	−6.5	−81.7
D. countrys.	−38.1	−76.3	−69.9	12.0	−43.1
Qunaytra	−5.4	−20.1	−5.9	20.3	−2.8
Diraʿa	−2.9	−19.5	−63.5	−12.9	−24.7
al-Suwaydaʾ	−20.8	−13.7	−39.5	−1.3	−18.8
Hums	−6.5	−35.4	−41.6	47.9	−8.9
Hamah	−2.7	−8.7	−67.2	1.2	−19.3
Aleppo	−29.5	−81.5	−32.3	32.7	−27.6
Idlib	−11.2	−71.1	−7.4	39.8	−12.5
al-Raqqa	−18.0	−56.2	1.3	4.5	−17.1
Dayr al-Zur	−29.1	−94.2	10.9	26.9	−21.4
al-Hasaka	−25.2	−98.8	−48.5	33.3	−34.8
Tartous	7.0	−37.8	−73.6	28.2	−19.0
al-Ladhiqiyya	−5.4	14.8	−57.3	57.6	2.4
average per term	−11.7	−33.8	−41.1	18.7	n/a

Sources: Calculation based on table 24 part 2 and table 25 part 1.

Table 27 part 2   Planned vs official growth in party members (in %), 1989–2008

Membership growth	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
planned	21.9	69.5	109.0	34.7
official	10.1	35.7	67.9	53.4
surplus/deficit	−11.8	−33.8	−41.1	18.7
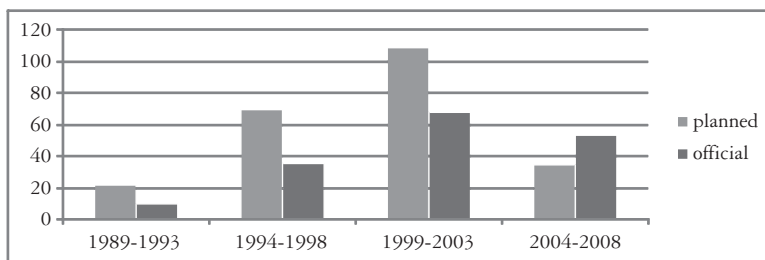
Diagram to table 27 part 2   Planned vs official growth in party members (in %), 1989–2008

Sources: See preceding table.

Table 27 part 3   Surplus/deficit in real full party membership based on planned membership (in %), 1989–2008

Governorate	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	−7.5	63.8	−28.8	−5.7	5.4
D. countrys.	−0.4	−13.7	−36.6	−21.3	−18.0
Qunaytra	8.7	−15.4	−6.3	4.0	−2.2
Diraʿa	44.7	−68.1	−0.7	13.1	−2.8
al-Suwaydaʾ	167.2	−60.7	−30.7	9.2	21.2
Hums	63.3	−55.7	−7.9	−10.5	−2.7
Hamah	−1.3	−66.1	−30.3	3.0	−23.7
Aleppo	65.6	7.6	−50.0	−53.7	−7.6
Idlib	5.6	5.5	6.5	42.1	14.9
al-Raqqa	55.1	77.2	−68.3	−2.8	15.3
Dayr al-Zur	9.8	91.2	−30.7	−3.0	16.8
al-Hasaka	−7.4	−73.5	47.7	−4.7	−9.5
Tartous	−48.4	−93.7	105.6	−1.4	−9.5
al-Ladhiqiyya	142.4	−88.1	23.5	−8.6	17.3
average per term	26.6	−41.5	−15.7	−6.2	n/a

Sources: Calculation based on table 24 part 1 and table 25 part 1.

Table 27 part 4   Planned vs real growth in party members per term in %
(direct comparison of results)

Full party membership increase in %	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
Planned	21.9	69.5	109.0	34.7
Real	48.4	28.0	93.4	28.5
Surplus/deficit	26.5	−41.5	−15.6	−6.2
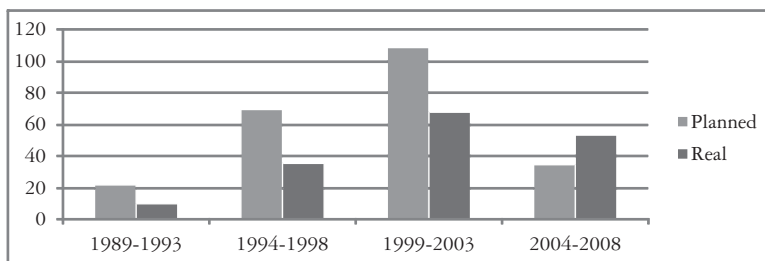
Diagram to table 27 part 4   Planned vs real growth in party members per term (in
%), 1989–2008
Sources: See preceding tables.

Table 27 part 5   Real increases/losses in party membership (in %), 1989–2008

Governorate	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	97.5	230.9	80.8	21.8	107.7
D. countrys.	52.6	101.3	151.2	23.5	82.1
Qunaytra	21.7	36.4	35.1	30.0	30.8
Dira'a	53.8	−21.4	84.7	45.6	40.7
al-Suwayda'	201.0	−29.6	49.0	24.3	61.2
Hums	76.9	13.2	109.7	31.7	57.9
Hamah	16.8	−33.0	80.6	53.5	29.4
Aleppo	104.2	124.8	81.9	−11.1	74.9
Idlib	27.6	118.3	92.6	72.4	77.7
al-Raqqa	78.5	164.1	−19.3	25.4	62.2
Dayr al-Zur	45.8	228.5	43.8	30.2	87.1
al-Hasaka	31.0	82.9	193.1	25.9	83.2
Tartous	−40.6	−11.8	255.1	27.3	57.5
al-Ladhiqiyya	156.1	−50.0	178.9	22.4	76.8
average	48.4	28.0	93.4	28.5	49.6

Source: Calculation based on table 22 part 2.

Table 28   Share of full and affiliated party members amongst Union members, 1989–2008

Table 28 part 1   Affiliate party members amongst Union members, 1984–2008

Governorate	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
Damascus	4781	11278	18392	26329	32856
D. countrys.	9387	13819	17421	20536	22904
Qunaytra	5536	8176	10231	12037	13305
Dira'a	6226	9068	14169	19332	23845
al-Suwaydaʾ	8847	10262	16876	23247	25554
Hums	7404	11358	19873	21498	23078
Hamah	4161	8047	15710	19410	21342
Aleppo	5906	10379	14863	19173	15900
Idlib	9908	12941	13705	14453	22079
al-Raqqa	6577	9612	13137	14741	16606
Dayr al-Zur	5107	8668	11022	11526	12543
al-Hasaka	6174	8520	9548	9631	10495
Tartous	12677	13115	16359	17578	18744
al-Ladhiqiyya	4885	5448	11384	11485	12299
sum	97576	140691	202690	240976	271550

Sources: See table 22 part 1.

Table 28 part 2   Difference sum full and affiliate party members/total Union members (1984–2008)

Governorate	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008
Damascus	0	0	0	1	59
D. countrys.	0	0	0	0	26
Qunaytra	0	0	0	0	0
Dira'a	0	0	0	0	4
al-Suwayda'	0	0	0	0	38
Hums	0	0	0	11	120
Hamah	0	0	0	3	−58
Aleppo	0	4000	−1420	1	9936
Idlib	0	0	651	1	−9912
al-Raqqa	0	400	−2458	0	5
Dayr al-Zur	0	0	−1268	2	3
al-Hasaka	0	0	899	4	22
Tartous	0	0	2688	0	12
al-Ladhiqiyya	0	0	917	1	52
sum	0	4400	0	24	307

Remark: Deviations are likely to indicate statistical errors.
Sources: Calculation based on table 22 part 2 and table 26 part 1.

Table 29 Planned and real full party membership and surplus/deficit per governorate on average between 1989–2008 (in %)

Planned	Governorate	group	Real	Governorate	group	Surplus/deficit	Governorate	group
102.3	Damascus	1	107.7	Damascus	1	21.2	al-Suwaydaʾ	3
100.1	D. countrys.	2	87.1	Dayr al-Zur	3	17.3	al-Ladhiqiyya	2
92.7	al-Hasaka	3	83.2	al-Hasaka	3	16.8	Dayr al-Zur	3
82.6	Aleppo	1	82.1	D. countrys.	2	15.3	al-Raqqa	2
70.3	Dayr al-Zur	3	77.7	Idlib	4	14.9	Idlib	4
66.9	Tartous	4	76.8	al-Ladhiqiyya	2	5.4	Damascus	1
62.8	Idlib	4	74.9	Aleppo	1	-2.2	Qunaytra	4
60.6	Hums	2	62.2	al-Raqqa	2	-2.7	Hums	2
59.5	al-Ladhiqiyya	2	61.2	al-Suwaydaʾ	3	-2.8	Diraʿa	4
53.1	Hamah	3	57.9	Hums	2	-7.6	Aleppo	1
46.9	al-Raqqa	2	57.5	Tartous	4	-9.5	Tartous	4
43.4	Diraʿa	4	40.7	Diraʿa	4	-9.5	al-Hasaka	3
39.9	al-Suwaydaʾ	3	30.8	Qunaytra	3	-18.0	D. countrys.	2
33.0	Qunaytra	4	29.4	Hamah	4	-23.7	Hamah	3

Remark: Data sorted according to averages in descending order.
Sources: See table 25 part 2 and table 26.

Table 30 Share of full party members in the Union (in %), 1984–2008

Governorate	1984–1988	1989–1993	1994–1998	1999–2003	2004–2008	average
Damascus	12.4	10.6	19.4	23.3	22.8	17.7
D. countrys.	13.2	13.6	20.1	34.9	37.2	23.8
Qunaytra	23.6	20.2	21.7	24.1	27.2	23.4
Dira'a	23.3	24.3	13.9	17.9	20.5	20.0
al-Suwayda'	14.5	30.5	15.8	16.9	18.7	19.3
Hums	24.2	26.9	19.2	31.5	36.0	27.6
Hamah	52.3	39.9	18.5	25.0	31.8	33.5
Aleppo	16.2	14.0	29.1	33.2	24.7	23.4
Idlib	11.8	11.5	19.7	32.9	50.2	25.2
al-Raqqa	12.2	14.1	28.8	19.2	20.9	19.0
Dayr al-Zur	13.5	11.8	28.2	32.3	36.4	24.4
al-Hasaka	11.2	10.7	15.2	36.3	39.6	22.6
Tarrous	27.8	18.1	11.8	34.1	38.1	26.0
al-Ladhiqiyya	30.7	50.4	18.4	40.2	43.4	36.6
average per term	20.5	21.2	20.0	28.7	32.0	n/a

Sources: Calculation based on table 22 part 2 and table 28.

Table 31 Estimate of Union party members amongst party members at large, around 1988

Governorate	Union party members by 1988	Party members in total by 1984	Union party members amongst all party members	non-Union party members
Damascus	677	50736	1.3	98.7
D. countrys.	1425	35841	4.0	96.0
Qunaytra	1706	19333	8.8	91.2
DiraꜤa	1888	20603	9.2	90.8
al-SuwaydaꜤ	1499	22561	6.6	93.4
Hums	2359	57535	4.1	95.9
Hamah	4570	52765	8.7	91.3
Aleppo	1143	59997	1.9	98.1
Idlib	1324	33812	3.9	96.1
al-Raqqa	918	22003	4.2	95.8
Dayr al-Zur	799	18067	4.4	95.6
al-Hasaka	781	34652	2.3	97.7
Tartous	4891	44272	11.0	89.0
al-Ladhiqiyya	2165	57526	3.8	96.2
total/average	26145	529703	5.3	94.7

Sources: For Union party figures see table 28. For party membership per governorate in 1984, see van Dam, Nikolaos (2011): *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society under Asad and the BaꜤth Party*. 3rd ed. London, New York: I.B.Tauris. p. 87.

Table 32 Comparison of Baʿth membership and share of party members in Union per governorate, around 1988

Governorate	share of full party members in the Union	Baʿth amongst population
Damascus	12.4	6.1
D. countrys.	13.2	5.9
Qunaytra	23.6	14.1
Diraʿa	23.3	9.2
al-Suwaydaʾ	14.5	16.5
Hums	24.2	10.6
Hamah	52.3	9.7
Aleppo	16.2	4.6
Idlib	11.8	9
al-Raqqa	12.2	9.3
Dayr al-Zur	13.5	6.4
al-Hasaka	11.2	7.5
Tartous	27.8	14.9
al-Ladhiqiyya	30.7	14.9

Sources: See preceding table.

APPENDIX C

CEDAW CONVENTION
(EXCERPTS)

Article 2.
States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

[. . .]

Article 9.

1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

Article 15.

1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.

2. States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.

3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.

4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

[. . .]

Article 16.

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and

family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same right to enter into marriage;

(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

APPENDIX D

LIST OF WOMEN'S SOCIETIES IN SYRIA BEFORE 1967[1]

Name	Initiatives	Location	Year	Founding member(s)	Affiliation
Dar kafala al-fatat (the House for Girls' Protection)	education, medical care and vocational training for orphans	Damascus	1927	Thurayya al-Hafiz, Sunya Qabbani	–
Dawhat al-adab (Tree of Social Graces)	society promoting girls' education	Damascus	1928	ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri	Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya fi Dimashq
Dawhat al-adab (Tree of Social Graces)	school and library	Damascus	1931	ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri	–
Halqat zuharaʾ al-adabiyya (Circle of Literary Flowers)	literature (salon)	Damascus	1953	Thurayya al-Hafiz and Zahra al-ʿAbid	–
al-Halqa al-ijtimaʿiyya li-khariji al-maʿahid al-ʿaliyya (Social Circle for the Graduates of the Higher Institutes)	–	Damascus	1951	–	–

Appendix D: *continued*

Name	Initiatives	Location	Year	Founding member(s)	Affiliation
al-Ittihad al-ʿarabi al-nisaʾi fi Dimashq (Arab Women's Union in Damascus)	various	Damascus	1933	ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri	–
Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya fi Dimashq (Union of Women's Societies in Damascus)	various	Damascus	1944	ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri	successor of the Ittihad al-ʿarabi al-nisaʾi fi Dimashq (renamed)
Jamʿiyyat al-dur liʾl-muʿallimat (the Society for Women Teachers' Colleges)	education	Damascus	1927 (or 1928)[2]	Thurayya al-Hafiz	Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya fi Dimashq
Jamʿiyyat al-hilal al-ahmar (Red Crescent)	health	Damascus, Hums, al-Ladhiqiyya, al-Jazira and the Hawran	1922	Nazik al-ʿAbid	–
Jamʿiyyat himayat al-ahdath liʾl-banat (the Society for the Protection of Young Female Convicts)	education and vocational training for convicts	–	–	–	–
Jamʿiyyat al-ʿinaya bi-mashfa al-sill (the Society for the Treatment of Tuberculosis)	health	Damascus	–	Thurayya al-Hafiz	–

Name	Field	Location	Year	Founder	Affiliation
Jamʿiyyat irshad al-fatat al-ʿarabiyya (Society for the Guidance of the Arab Girl)	education	Damascus (targeting rural areas)	1955	Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah and others	–
Jamʿiyyat al-isʿaf al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (the Society for Women's First Aid)	health	Damascus	1945	–	Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya fi Dimashq
Jamʿiyyat kafala al-tufula (the Society for the Protection of Childhood)	care of abandoned babies	Aleppo	1961	–	–
Jamʿiyyat kharijat dur al-muʿallimat (Society for Graduates from the Women's Teachers' Colleges)	education	Damascus	1928	–	–
al-Jamʿiyya al-khayriyya liʾl-sayyidat fi Dimashq (Benevolent Society of Damascene Ladies)	support for widows and pupils from poor backgrounds	Damascus	1934	–	–
Jamʿiyyat al-khayriyya al-nisaʾiyya (Society of Women's Charity)	–	Aleppo	–	–	–
Jamʿiyyat al-marʾa al-ʿarabiyya (Society for the Arab Woman)	various	Damascus, Diraʿa, al-Suwayda', Hums, al-Ladhiqiyya, and Aleppo; see also below	1959	–	–

Appendix D: *continued*

Name	Initiatives	Location	Year	Founding member(s)	Affiliation
Jamʿiyyat al-marʾa al-ʿarabiyya fi Dayr al-Zur (the Society for the Arab Woman in Dayr al-Zur)	various, incl. moral and financial support for families of prisoners and widows	Dayr al-Zur	1959	–	–
Jamʿiyyat al-marʾa al-ʿarabiyya fiʾl-Hasaka (the Society for the Arab Woman in al-Hasaka)	–	al-Hasaka	1959	–	–
Jamʿiyyat al-marʾa al-ʿarabiyya fi Hamah (the Society for the Arab Woman in Hamah)	–	Hamah	1950 (1959?)	–	–
Jamʿiyyat al-marʾa al-ʿarabiyya fi l-Suwaydaʾ (the Society for the Arab Woman in Suwaydaʾ)	–	Suwaydaʾ	–	–	–
Jamʿiyyat al-mubarra al-khayriyya (the Society for Charitable Benevolence)	–	Damascus	1953	–	Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya fi Dimashq
Jamʿiyyat al-nahda al-nisaʾiyya biʾl-Qunaytra (Society for Women's Awakening in Qunaytra)	–	–	–	–	Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya fi Dimashq

Name	Activities	Location	Date	Person
Jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾ al-ʿarab al-qawmiyyat (Society of Arab Nationalist Women)	women's political rights, support for Palestine; sub-groups	—	1943	—
al-Jamʿiyya al-nisaʾiyya liʾl-khidamat al-ijtimaʿiyya (Women's Society for Social Services)	education, lodging, medical care and moral support for children of soldiers	—	—	Samiyya al-Mudarris
Jamʿiyyat nur al-ihsan (the Society of the Light of Benevolence)	—	Aleppo	1953	—
Jamʿiyyat riʿayat al-ʿajuza waʾl-musinnin (the Society for the Care of the Elderly)	care of the elderly	Aleppo	—	—
Jamʿiyyat riʿayat al-tufula (the Society for the Care of Childhood)	—	al-Ladhiqiyya	—	—
Jamʿiyyat al-riʿaya al-ijtimaʿiyya (the Society for Social Welfare)	care of the elderly	Aleppo	1962	—
Jamʿiyyat sayyidat al-hinan (the Society of the Ladies of Compassion in Aleppo)	—	Aleppo	1942	—
Jamʿiyyat al-sayyidat al-injiliyya fi Hums (the Society of Evangelical Ladies in Hums)	—	Hums	1960	—

Appendix D: *continued*

Name	Initiatives	Location	Year	Founding member(s)	Affiliation
al-Jamʿiyya al-suriyya liʾl-funun (Syrian Society for Arts)	arts	–	1950	–	–
al-Jamʿiyya al-thaqafiyya al-ijtimaʿiyya (Society for Culture and Social Affairs)	–	–	–	–	Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya fi Dimashq
Jamʿiyyat rabitat al-jamʿiyyat al-ʿarabiyyat al-suriyyat (League for the Societies of Arab Syrian Women)	–	–	1965	–	–
Jamʿiyyat usrat al-jundi (the Society for the Family of the Soldier)	care for the families of soldiers	–	–	Samiyya al-Mudarris	Jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾ al-ʿarab al-qawmiyyat
al-Jamʿiyya al-wataniyya liʾl-tamrid (National Society for Nursing)	health	–	–	–	Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya fi Dimashq
Jamʿiyyat yaqazat al-marʾa al-shamiyya (the Society for the Awakening of Damascene Women)	vocational training	Damascus	1927	ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri	–

Name	Activity	Location	Year	Founders	
Lajna farʿiyya nisaʾiyya liʾl-difaʿ al-madani (the Women's Branch of the Committee for Civil Defence)	civil defence	Damascus	1956	ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri and others	—
Lajnat al-sayyidat liʾl-difaʿ ʿan al-falistin (Committee of the Defence for Palestine)	support of Palestine	—	1938	Suʿad and Furlan Mardam Bek, Naʿima Maghribi, Buhayra al-ʿAzmah Ruqiyya al-Quwatli and others	—
Madrasat banat al-shuhadaʾ (School for Daughters of Martyrs)	school and library	Damascus	1918/1920	Nazik al-ʿAbid, Mari ʿAjami	Nur al-Fayhaʾ
Muntada al-sakina (Society of Tranquility)	literature (salon)	Damascus	1943	Thurayya al-Hafiz	—
al-Nadi al-adabi al-nisaʾi (Women's Literary Club)	literature (salon), support of traditional handicrafts	Damascus	1920	Mari ʿAjami	Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya fi Dimashq
al-Nadwa al-thaqafiyya al-nisaʾiyya (Women's Cultural Club)	education and literature	Damascus	1942	Jihan al-Musuli	—
Najmat al-hamraʾ (Red Star)	health	Damascus	1920	Nazik al-ʿAbid	Nur al-Fayhaʾ

Appendix D: *continued*

Name	Initiatives	Location	Year	Founding member(s)	Affiliation
al-Nahda al-nisaʿiyya fi l-Qamishli (Women's Awakening in al-Qamishli)	–	al-Qamishli	–	–	–
Nuqtat al-halib (Drop of Milk)	distribution of bottles, poverty relief for mothers and children	Damascus	1922	–	Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya fi Dimashq
Nur al-Fayhaʾ (the Light of Damascus)	education	Damascus	after WW1	Nazik al-ʿAbid; Mari ʿAjami	–
Riʿayat al-jundi (Society for Care of the Soldiers)	poverty relief	Damascus	1945	Thurayya al-Hafiz	Jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾ al-ʿarab al-qawmiyyat
Rabitat al-thaqafa (Association for Culture)	literature (salon)	Damascus	1921	Mari ʿAjami	–
al-Nisaʾ al-suriyyat li-himayat al-umuma wa'l-tufula (Syrian Women's League for the Protection of Mothers and Children)	various	–	1948	Syrian Communist Party	–
Muslim Women's Society	day school and orphanage	Aleppo	1920/1931	(poss. Samiyya) Mudarris	–

NOTES

Pages in reports are not always numbered continuously, but often according to sections. In this case, the following abbreviations are applied: lit = literacy, nk = nurseries and kindergartens, vt = vocational training, h= health, hcd = health and civil defence, sp = statistics and planning, fr = foreign relations, mp = media and publications, pc = political culture, fs = finances, l= law, wfp = world food programme. Page numbers in square brackets indicate numbers added by me for ease of overview, years of print in square brackets refer to the year which appears likely even if not indicated. I would like to thank Nesibe Ercakir for having helped me in locating many of these reports in Damascus.

Introduction

1. See Associated Press (29 March 2011): 'Syrian Loyalists take to Streets in Support of Asad'. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/29/syrian-regime-loyalists-march. Reuters (29 March 2011): 'Syria mobilizes Thousands for pro-Asad Marches'. http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/29/us-syria-idUSTRE72N2 MC20110329.
2. Aji and Karam (10 December 2011): 'Syria: Pro-Asad Demonstration mobilizes tens of Thousands' http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/12/syria-pro-assad-demonstration_n_1006554.html, Fisk (27 October 2011): 'Robert Fisk: Syria Slips towards Civil War'. http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-syria-slips-towards-sectarian-war-2376408.html.
3. UNOCHA (2016): 'Humanitarian Needs Overview – Syrian Arab Republic.' http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2016_hno_syrian_arab_republic.pdf, p. 5.
4. Foucault, Michel (1988): *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977–1984*. Tr. A. Sheridan et al. London: Routledge, p. 167f.

5. See e.g. George, Alan (2003): *Syria: Neither Bread nor Freedom.* London: Zed Books; Hinnebusch, Raymond A. (1990): *Authoritarian Power and State Formation in Baʿthist Syria: Army, Party, and Peasant.* Boulder: Westview Press; Perthes, Volker (1995): *The Political Economy of Syria under Asad.* London: I.B. Tauris; Pipes, Daniel (1989): 'The Alawi Capture of Power in Syria.' *Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 429–50; van Dam, Nikolaos (2011): *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society under Asad and the Baʿth Party.* 3rd ed. London, New York: I.B.Tauris; Human Rights Watch (2010): 'Syria: A Wasted Decade. Human Rights in Syria during Bashar al-Asad's First Ten Years in Power.' http://www.hrw.org/node/91583.

6. See e.g. Lobmeyer, Hans Günther (1991): 'Al-dimukratiyya hiya al-hall? The Syrian Opposition at the End of the Asad Era.' In: Antoun, Richard T. and Donald Quataert (eds): *Syria: Society, Culture, and Polity.* Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 81–96; Abd-Allah, Umar F. (1983): *The Islamic Struggle in Syria.* Berkeley: Mizan Press; Batatu, Hanna (1982): 'Syria's Muslim Brethren.' *MERIP Reports,* vol. 12, no. 9, pp. 12–20; 34–35; Wedeen, Lisa (1999): *Ambiguities of Domination. Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 15, and Anderson, Paul (2013): 'The Politics of Scorn in Syria and the Agency of Narrated Involvement.' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 19, pp. 463–81.

7. For a detailed introduction, see e.g. Howard, Michael C. and John E. King (1985): *The Political Economy of Marx.* Harlow: Longman.

8. Martin, James (1998): *Gramsci's Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction.* Basingstoke: Macmillan, p. 69. Gramsci's exact conceptualisation of the state is, in fact, fiercely debated. As most of Gramsci's work was written under censorship whilst confined to prison under Mussolini, it has been criticised for being contradictory. For a critical overview of Gramsci's notion of the state and other concepts, see e.g. Anderson, Perry (1976): 'The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci.' *The New Left Review*, no. 100, pp. 5–78. While at times Gramsci equates the state with political society (rather than political society + civil society), it has been argued that such inconsistencies can be explained if one considers his writings, including his letters, comprehensively. Cf. Thomas, Peter D. (2009): *The Gramscian Moment. Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism*. Leiden, Boston: Brill. Chapter 2; Buci-Glucksmann, Christine (1980): *Gramsci and the State*. London: Lawrence and Wishart. Esp. p. 70 and p. 92f.; and by the same author (1982): 'Hegemony and Consent: A Political Strategy.' In: Showstack-Sassoon, Anne (ed.): *Approaches to Gramsci*. London: Writers and Readers. pp. 116–26.

9. Gramsci, Antonio (1971): *Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* Ed. by Hoare, Quintin and Geoffry N. Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, p. 262f.

10. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 57.

11. Femia, Joseph V. (1981): *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Conciousness, and the Revolutionary Process*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp. 31–5.

12. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 261 and p. 268.

13. Indeed, according to Gramsci, only when a strong alternative hegemony can be established in civil society can the old order be challenged. See ibid., n.56 and p. 366.

14. See for example Chomsky, Noam and Edward S. Herman (1994): *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. London: Vintage.

15. Cf. Aronowitz, Stanley (2002): 'Gramsci's Theory of Education: Schooling and Beyond.' In: Borg, Carmel, Joseph Buttigieg et al. (eds): *Gramsci and Education*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield. pp. 109–20.

16. Hourani, Albert H. (1946): *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay*. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, p. 172. Alexandretta was legally part of Aleppo, but Turkish was admitted as an official language, and it was independent from Aleppo in terms of administration and budgeting.

17. Khoury, Philip S. (1982): 'The Tribal Shaykh, French Tribal Policy, and the Nationalist Movement in Syria between Two World Wars.' *Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 180–93, p. 183. Eventually, the Jaziīra did not emerge as a separate state though. See appendix A map 1.

18. Longrigg, Stephen H. (1958): *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate.* London: Oxford University Press, p. 129f.

19. Ibid., p. 221, Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 253f.

20. Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 237ff.

21. For an excellent account of Syrian state formation under the French Mandate, see Neep, Daniel (2012): *Occupying Syria under the French Mandate: Insurgency, Space and State Formation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

22. Thompson, Elizabeth (2000): *Colonial Citizens: Republic Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*. New York: Columbia University Press.

23. Seale, Patrick (1986): *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945–1958.* 2nd ed. London: I.B.Tauris.

24. Roberts, David (1987): *The Baʿth and the Creation of Modern Syria.* London: Croom Helm, p. 16.

25. On Baʿthist ideology, see Devlin, John F. (1979): *The Baʿth Party: A History from Its Origins to 1966*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 21ff. and on the issue of Palestine in particular p. 49ff.

26. Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*, p. 15.

27. For a more detailed account of these reforms, see Chapter 3. For a good overview of economic measures in Baʿthist Syria in general, see Garzouzi, Eva (1963): 'Land Reform in Syria.' *Middle East Journal,* vol. 17, no. 1/2, pp. 83–90; Hakim, George (1973): 'Industry.' In: Himadeh, Sa'id (ed.): *Economic Organization of Syria.* Reprint of 1973 ed., Beirut. New York: AMS, pp. 117–73; Keilany, Ziad (1973): 'Socialism and Economic Reform in Syria. *Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 61–72; Longuenesse, Elisabeth (1979): 'The Class Nature of the State in Syria: Contribution to an Analysis.' *MERIP Reports,* vol. 77, pp. 3–11; Lawson, Fred H. (1997): 'Private Capital and the State in Contemporary Syria.' *MERIP,* no. 203, pp. 8–13; 30; al-Ahsan, Syed Aziz (1984): 'Economic Policy and Class Structure in Syria: 1958–1980.'

Middle East Studies, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 301–23; Perthes, Volker (1992): 'The Syrian Private Industrial and Commercial Sectors and the State.' *Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 24, pp. 212–13; Perthes, *Political Economy*, and Perthes, Volker (2004): *Syria under Bashar al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

28. Perthes, *Political Economy*, p. 27. Syrian resources in oil, however, have remained much more limited than the role of oil revenues in e.g. Saudi Arabia or Iraq.

29. European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (no year): 'Syrian Arab Republic: Strategy Paper 2007–2013 & National Indicative Programme 2007–2010'. http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/country/enpi_csp_nip_syria_en.pdf, p. 10; BBC online (10 March 2009): 'Syrian Stock Market starts Trade'. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7934644.stm.

30. Syria counted about 6 million inhabitants in 1970, but almost 18 million in 2004. See Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (1970): *Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. Damascus: Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ; Table 1, Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (2004): *Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya.* Also available at www.cbssyr.org and http://www.cbssyr.org/General%20census/census%202004/pop-str.pdf, table for population across all governorates (no number). See also European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, *Syrian Arab Republic*, p. 12.

31. Perthes, *Syria under Bashar al-Asad*, p. 29 and p. 31, European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, *Syrian Arab Republic*, p. 12.

32. UNDP (2005): 'Poverty in Syria, 1996–2004: Diagnosis and pro-Poor Policy Considerations.' http://www.planning.gov.sy/SD08/msf/PovertInSyriaEnglishVersion.pdf, p. 27. Figures refer to 2003–4. The poverty line is defined on the basis of a household-specific method.

33. Di Bartolomeo, Anna, Thibaut Jaulin et al. (2012): 'CARIM - Migration Profile. Syria'. http://www.carim.org/public/migrationprofiles/MP_Syria_EN.pdf, p. 2f.

34. UNOCHA (20 January 2016): Syrian Arab Republic. http://www.unocha.org/syria.

35. European Commission (2015): 'Syria Crisis – ECHO Factsheet'. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/syria_en.pdf, p. 1.

36. Perthes, *Political Economy*, p. 166.

37. Koszinowski, Thomas (1985): 'Die Krise der Baʿth-Herrschaft und die Rolle Asads bei der Sicherung der Macht.' *Orient,* vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 549–71, p. 533.

38. Perthes, *Political Economy*, p. 170 and George, *Neither Bread nor Freedom*, p. 97f.

39. Maʾoz, Moshe (1973): 'Society and State in Modern Syria.' In: Milson, Menahem (ed.): *Society and Political Structure in the Arab World.* New York: Humanities Press, pp. 29–91, p. 86f.

40. Munson, Henry jr. (1988): *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East.* New Haven, London: Yale University Press, p. 85; Batatu, Hanna (1982): 'Syria's Muslim Brethren.' *MERIP Reports,* vol. 12, no. 9, pp. 12–20; 34–5, p. 14 and p. 18.

41. Drysdale, Alasdair (1981): 'The Syrian Political Elite, 1966–1976: A Spatial and Social Analysis.' *Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 3–30; Drysdale,

Alasdair (1982a): 'The Asad Regime and Its Troubles.' *MERIP,* no. 110, pp. 3–11; 36; Drysdale, Alasdair (1982b): 'The Syrian Armed Forces in National Politics: The Role of the Ethnic and Geographic Periphery.' In: Kolkowicz, Roman; Korbonski, Andrzej (eds): *Soldiers, Peasants, and Bureaucrats.* London: Allen and Unwin, pp. 52–76; Pipes, 'The Alawi Capture of Power in Syria'; and van Dam, *The Struggle for Power.* For a religious rather than political perspective, see e.g. Faksh, Mahmoud A. (1984): 'The Alawi Community of Syria: A New Dominant Political Force.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 133–52; Firro, Kais M. (2005): 'The ʿAlawis in Modern Syria: From Nuṣayrīya to Islam via ʿAlawīya.' *Der Islam,* vol. 82, pp. 1–31; and Khuri, Fuad I. (1991): 'The Alawis of Syria: Religious Ideology and Organization.' In: Antoun, Richard T. and Donald Quataert (eds): *Syria: Society, Culture, and Polity.* Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 53–6. Syria is home to Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, Turcomans, and Circassians, amongst them Sunnis, ʿAlawis, Druzes and Ismaʿilis, several Christian sects, and a small Jewish community. See van Dam, *Struggle for Power,* p. 1f. Seeing as official census data has not gathered information on the ethnic or religious composition of the Syrian population since at least 1970, estimates need to be treated with considerable caution.

42. Talhami, Ghada H. (2001): 'Syria: Islam, Arab Nationalism and the Military.' *Middle East Policy,* vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 110–27, p. 123 and Zisser, Eyal (2005): 'Syria, the Baʿth Regime and the Islamic Movement: Stepping on a New Path?' *Muslim World,* vol. 95, no. 1, pp. 43–65, p. 46.

43. Talhami, 'Syria: Islam, Arab Nationalism and the Military,' p. 123.

44. Membership with the brotherhood became punishable by death. See Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle,* p. 191; and Zisser, 'Syria, the Baʿth Regime and the Islamic Movement,' p. 48.

45. Böttcher, Annabelle (2004): 'Official Islam, Transnational Networks, and Global Politics: The Case of Syria.' In: Jung, Dietrich (ed.): *The Middle East and Palestine: Global Politics and Regional Conflict.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 125–50, p. 128.

46. Böttcher, Annabelle (1998): *Syrische Religionspolitik unter Asad.* Freiburg i. Br.: ABI (Freiburger Beiträge zu Entwicklung und Politik, 25), p. 107.

47. Talhami, 'Syria: Islam, Arab Nationalism and the Military,' p. 123; Zisser, 'Syria, the Baʿth Regime and the Islamic Movement,' p. 48.

48. Lie, Suzanne S. and Kari Vogt (2003): 'Islamization in Syria: Gender, Education and Ideology.' *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 22–41, p. 32.

49. Böttcher, *Syrische Religionspolitik,* p. 106.

50. (2005a): '"73 Proofs of Dilettantism": the Construction of Norm and Deviancy in the Responses to Mohamad Shahrour's Book al-kitāb waʾl-qurʾān: qirāʾa muʾāṣira.' *Die Welt des Islams,* vol. 45, no. 1, pp. 20–73, p. 23.

51. See Christmann, Andreas (2001): 'An Invented Piety? Subduing Ramadan in Syrian State Media.' In: Salvatore, Armando (ed.): *Muslim Traditions and Techniqes of Power.* Münster: Lit Verlag, pp. 243–63; and Early, Evelyin A. (2002): 'Syrian

Television Drama.' In: Bowen, Donna L. and Evelyn A. Early (eds): *Everday Life in the Muslim Middle East.* 2nd ed. Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (Indiana Series in Arab and Islamic Studies), pp. 322–34.

52. Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*.
53. George, *Neither Bread nor Freedom*, p. 121ff., Perthes, *Political Economy*, p. 148f.
54. George, *Neither Bread nor Freedom*, p. 108f.
55. Perthes, *Political Economy*, p. 149.
56. Munson, *Islam and Revolution*, p. 91.
57. Lobmeyer, 'Al-dimukratiyya hiya al-hall?', p. 85.
58. For his biography, see Lesch, David W. (2005): *The New Lion of Damascus: Bashar al-Asad and Modern Syria*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
59. Landis, Joshua and Joe Pace (2006): 'The Syrian Opposition.' *The Washington Quarterly,* vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 45–68, p. 47.
60. George, *Neither Bread nor Freedom*, p. 42. The 'Statement of 1,000' detailing these demands for reform was drafted by the Committees for the Revival of Civil Society, an organisation led by writer and dissident Michel Kilo. They planned to collect 1,000 signatures from civil society activists, but parts of the document were leaked before the list was complete.
61. Ibid., p. 47.
62. According to their own websites, the Revolutionary Youth Federation (Ittihad shabibat al-thawra) was founded in 1962, and the Peasants' Union in 1964 (Ittihad al-ʿamm li'l-fallahiyyin). See Ittihad shabibat al-thawra: 'al-Taʿrif bi'l-munazzama'. http://www.syrianyouth.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17&Itemid=2 and Ittihad al-ʿamm li'l-fallahiyyin: *Hawla al-ittihad.* http://alfalahen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=15&Itemid=14. Information in secondary literature varies, usually dating the process at some point between 1963 and 1967 or 1970. For (partly conflicting) accounts, see Petran, Tabitha (1972): *Syria.* London: Ernest Benn, p. 227ff.; Devlin, *The Baʿth Party*, p. 229 n.54; Seale, Patrick (1990): *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East.* London: I.B.Tauris, p. 175 n.8; and Perthes, *Political Economy*, p. 170ff.
63. It needs to be acknowledged that the term 'mass organisation' is politically charged. For example, 'demokratiyya shaʿbiyya' would be translated into 'popular democracy' rather than 'mass democracy'. I have chosen to stick to the term 'mass organisation' in line with Kasza's definition (cf. n.70 in this chapter).
64. Petran, Tabitha (1972): *Syria.* London: Ernest Benn. pp. 227–33.
65. See Hinnebusch, Raymond A. (1980): 'Political Recruitment and Socialization in Syria: The Case of the Revolutionary Youth Federation.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 143–74.
66. Perthes, *Political Economy*, p. 173ff.
67. See e.g. Shaaban, Bouthaina (1988): *Both Right and Left Handed: Arab Women Talk about their Lives*. London: Women's Press; and Rabo, Annika (1996): 'Gender, State and Civil Society in Jordan and Syria.' In: Hann, Chris and

Elizabeth Dunn (eds): *Civil Society. Challenging Western Models.* London: Routledge. pp. 155–77.

68. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens.*

69. See Baron, Beth (1994): *The Women's Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society, and the Press.* New Haven, London: Yale University Press; and Fleischmann, Ellen L. (2003): *The Nation and its New Women: The Palestinian Women's Movement, 1920–1948.* Berkeley, London: University of California Press.

70. Kasza, Gregory J. (1995): *The Conscription Society: Administered Mass Organizations.* New Haven, London: Yale University Press, p. 7.

71. Linz, Juan José (2000): *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes.* Boulder, London: Rienner, p. 70f.

72. Arendt, Hannah (2008): *Elemente und Ursprünge totalitärer Herrschaft. Antisemitismus, Imperialismus, totale Herrschaft.* 12th ed. Munich: Piper, p. 766ff.

73. Kasza, *Conscription Society*, p. 7.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Gleason, Abbott (1995): *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War.* New York: Oxford University Press, p. 13f. and p. 16 n. 12.

78. Ibid., p. 19 n. 27.

79. Often, these works overlap. For models, see e.g. Friedrich, Carl J. and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski (1961): *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*; Aron, Raymond (1968): *Democracy and Totalitarianism.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson. For an elaboration on the historic origins of totalitarianism see Arendt, Hannah (1979): *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; for comparative studies, see Geyer, Michael, and Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds) (2009): *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Neumann, Sigmund (1965): *Permanent Revolution: Totalitarianism in the Age of International Civil War.* London: Pall Mall; Curtis, Michael (1987): *Totalitarianism*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers; Jesse, Eckhard (1998): 'The two Major Instances of Totalitarianism: Observations on the Interconnection between Soviet Communism and National Socialism.' In: Siegel, Achim (ed.): *The Totalitarian Paradigm after the End of Communism.* Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, pp. 129–47.

80. Johnson, Chalmers A. (ed.) (1970): *Change in Communist Systems.* Stanford: Stanford University Press; Cohen, Stephen F. (1981): 'Bolshevism and Stalinism.' In: Menze, Ernest A. (ed.): *Totalitarianism Reconsidered.* London, New York: Kennikat Press, pp. 58–80.

81. For a summary of this debate in the United States, see Gleason, *Totalitarianism*, p. 202ff.

82. See Broszat, Martin (1981): *The Hitler State: The Foundation and Development of the Internal Structure of the Third Reich.* London: Longman; Mommsen, Theodor

(1966): *Beamtentum im Dritten Reich: mit ausgewählten Quellen zur nationalsozialistischen Beamtenpolitik.* Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt. For a detailed overview of all these critiques, see also: Grieder, Peter (2007): 'In Defence of Totalitarian Theory as a Tool of Historical Scholarship.' *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, vol. 8, no. 3/4, pp. 563–89.

83. Article 6 of the Constitution of the Baʿth Party (April 1947). Translated and quoted in Devlin, *The Baʿth Party*, p. 347.

84. Italics added. Preamble to the Party Policy on Education, Constitution of the Baʿth Party, also quoted in Devlin, *The Baʿth Party*, p. 351.

85. Article 6 §3, Constitution of the Baʿth Party, quoted in Devlin, *The Baʿth Party*, p. 347.

86. Ibid., p. 27 n. 14.

87. See e.g. Hinnebusch, *Authoritarian Power and State Formation*; Heydemann, Steven (1999): *Authoritarianism in Syria: Institutions and Social Conflict, 1946–1970*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press; Stacher, Joshua (2012): *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria*. Stanford: Stanford University Press; Haddad, Bassam (2012): *Business Networks in Syria: The Political Economy of Authoritarian Resilience*. Stanford: Stanford University Press; and Schlumberger, Oliver (ed.) (2007): *Debating Arab Authoritarianism. Dynamics and Durability in Nondemocratic Regimes*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

88. Perthes, *Political Economy*, p. 189.

89. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 70.

90. Based on ibid.

91. Friedrich, *Totalitarian Dictatorship*, p. 10.

92. Ibid.

93. See Arendt, Hannah (2008): *Elemente und Ursprünge totalitärer Herrschaft: Antisemitismus, Imperialismus, totale Herrschaft.* 12th ed. Munich: Piper; Friedrich, *Totalitarian Dictatorship*, p. 10 and pp. 130–65.

94. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 70.

95. Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*; Sottimano, Aurora (2008): 'Ideology and Discourse in the Era of Baʿthist Reforms: Towards an Analysis of Authoritarian Governmentality.' In: Sottimano, Aurora and Selvik Kjetil (eds): *Changing Regime Discourse and Reform in Syria* (= St Andrews Papers on Modern Syrian Studies, no. 1). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press, pp. 5–32, p. 30.

96. See Ben-Tzur, Avraham (1968): 'The Neo-Baʿth Party of Syria.' *Journal of Contemporary History,* vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 161–81; Torrey, Gordon H. (1969): 'The Baʿth: Ideology and Practice.' *Middle East Journal,* vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 445–70; Rabinovich, Itamar (1972): *Syria under the Baʿth 1963–66: The Army-Party Symbiosis*. Jerusalem: Israel University Press; Schmucker, Werner (1973): 'Studien zur Baath-Ideologie (I. Teil).' *Die Welt des Islams,* vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 47–80 and (1974): 'Studien zur Baathideologie: II. Der Neobaath.' *Die Welt des Islams,* vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 146–82; and Olson, Robert W. (1982): *The Baʾth and Syria, 1947–1982. The Evolution of Ideology, Party, and State: From the French Mandate to the Era of Hafiz al-Asad*. Princeton: Kingston Press. Whilst other works have

focused on Syria's political history and economy in depth, a comprehensive study outlining shifts in the Party's political thought until today, for example through publications of individual Baʿthists or Party reports, is yet to be undertaken.

97. See e.g. Böttcher, *Syrische Religionspolitik*, Christmann, 'Invented Piety?'.

98. Pierret, Thomas (2013): *Religion and State in Syria: The Sunni Ulama from Coup to Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 64ff.

99. The regime cracked down on Salafi groups in the country in particular in the aftermath of the attacks of 11 September, and intensified its intervention in religious affairs thereafter. Ibid., p. 105ff. and p. 213.

100. Salvatore, Armando (1998): 'Staging Virtue: The Disembodiement of Self-Correctness and the Making of Islam as Public Norm.' In Stauth, Georg (ed.): *Islam – Motor or Challenge of Modernity* (= Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam, 1). Hamburg/New Brunswick: Lit/Transaction, pp. 87–120, p. 91. Quoted from Pinto, Paulo G. (2004): 'The Limits of the Public: Sufism and the Religious Debate in Syria.' In: Salvatore, Armando and Dale F. Eickelman (eds): *Public Islam and the Common Good.* Leiden: Brill, pp. 181–204, p. 185.

101. Ibid., p. 185 and 187f.

102. George, *Neither Bread nor Freedom*, p. 140ff.

103. Pinto, 'The Limits of the Public,' p. 188.

104. Ibid.

105. Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*.

106. Perthes, *Syria under Bashar al-Asad*, p. 9f.

107. Perthes, *Political Economy*, pp. 133–80.

108. George, *Neither Bread nor Freedom*, pp. 30–64, Lesch, *New Lion of Damascus*, p. 92ff.

109. Ibid., p. 81.

110. Cooke, Miriam (2007): *Dissident Syria: Making Oppositional Arts Official.* Durham: Duke University Press, p. 8; George, *Neither Bread nor Freedom*, p. 121ff.

111. See for example Flock, Elizabeth (6 March 2011): 'Syria Internet Services shut down as Protesters fill Streets'. *Washington Post*, online edition. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/syria-internet-services-shut-down-as-protesters-fill-streets/2011/06/03/AGtLwxHH_blog.html; Preston, Jennifer (22 May 2011): 'Seeking to disrupt Protests, Syria cracks down on Social Media.' *New York Times*, online edition. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/23/world/middleeast/23facebook.html?_r=0.

112. To compare, 78 per cent of the United Kingdom's population had regular internet access in the same year. See World Bank (no year [a]): 'Internet Users (per 100 People)'. http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2.

113. Perthes, *Syria under Bashar al-Asad*, pp. 27–40, European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, *Syrian Arab Republic*, p. 9ff.

114. Abboud, Samer (2009): 'The Transition Paradigm and the Case of Syria.' In: Abboud, Samer and Ferdinand Arslanian (eds): *Syria's Economy and the Transition Paradigm*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press. pp. 3–31, p. 10f. For a

detailed account of economic reform and its limitations, see also Selvik, Kjetil (2008): 'It's the Mentality, Stupid: Syria's Turn to the Private Sector.' In: Sottimano, Aurora and Selvik Kjetil (eds): *Changing Regime Discourse and Reform in Syria* (= St Andrews Papers on Modern Syrian Studies, no. 1). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press, pp. 33–54.

115. Batatu, Hanna (1981): 'Some Observations on the Social Roots of Syria's Ruling Military Group and the Causes for its Dominance.' *Middle East Journal,* vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 331–2, p. 331; van Dam, *Struggle for Power*, p. 118ff. To my awareness, there is no study available that would analyse their leadership composition since Bashar al-Asad came to power.

116. Middle East Watch (1991): *Syria Unmasked: The Suppression of Human Rights by the Asad Regime*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press; Syrian Human Rights Committee (2001): 'Report on the Human Rights Situation in Syria, 1979–1999'. http://www.shrc.org/data/pdf/1275.pdf; Human Rights Watch (2007): 'No Room to Breathe: State Repression of Human Rights Activism in Syria'. http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/syria1007.pdf; Human Rights Watch, 'Syria: A Wasted Decade'. http://www.hrw.org/node/91583.

117. George, *Neither Bread nor Freedom*, pp. 74–7.

118. Kenez, Peter (1985): *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilisation, 1917–1927*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 12f. See also Schapiro, Leonard (1972): *Totalitarianism* (= Key Concepts in Political Science, 1). London: The Pall Mall Press, p. 39ff.

119. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 238.

120. Fontana, Benedetto (2010): 'Political Space and Hegemonic Power in Gramsci.' *Journal of Power*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 341–63, p. 347.

121. Martin, *Gramsci's Political Analysis*, p. 68f.

122. Bates, Thomas R. (1975): 'Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony.' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 351–66, p. 354.

123. See e.g. Arendt, Hannah (1979): *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, p. 473ff.; Neumann, Sigmund (1957): *Permanent Revolution: Totalitarianism in the Age of International Civil War.* London: Pall Mall, p. 245.

124. Indeed, Gramsci observes these developments in nineteenth century Europe. He also points out that the expansion of civil society in Russia in 1917 had been underestimated, hence explaining the difficulties following the success of the revolution. Cf. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 243 and p. 235.

125. Cf. Rupnik, Jacques (1988): 'Totalitarianism Revisited.' In: Keane, John (ed.): *Civil Society and the State.* London, New York: Verso, pp. 263–89; in the same volume: Pelczynski, Zbigniew A. (1988): 'Solidarity and "The Rebirth of Civil Society" in Poland, 1976–81,' pp. 361–80; Buchowski, Michal (1996): 'The Shifting Meanings of Civil and Civic Society in Poland.' In: Hann, Chris, and Elizabeth Dunn (eds): *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models.* London: Routledge, pp. 79–98; in the same volume: Hann, Chris (1996):

'Introduction: Political Society and Civil Anthropology,' pp. 1–26; Fine, Robert and Shirin Rai (1997): 'Understanding Civil Society: A Preface.' In: Fine, Robert and Shirin Rai (eds): *Civil Society: Democratic Perspectives.* London, Portland: Frank Cass. pp. 1–6 (referring to communism rather than totalitarianism); Geyer, Michael and Sheila Fitzpatrick (2009): 'Introduction: After Totalitarianism – Stalinism and Nazism Compared.' In: Geyer, Michael, and Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds): *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–37; Gleason, Abbott (1995): *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 172ff.

126. Since Gramsci, post-Marxist state theory has moved away from identifying the substance of the state as a graspable entity. In particular, Nicos Poulantzas and Bob Jessop developed the notion of the state expressed in social relations between actors with multiple identities. The state itself does not hold any power, which is instead located in nodes of social relations called 'centres of power' that may or may not coincide with state institutions. See for example Poulantzas, Nicos (2014): *State, Power, Socialism*. With an introduction by Stuart Hall. London, New York: Verso, p. 138f. and Jessop, Bob (2008): *State Power: A Strategic-Relational Approach*. Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press, p. 37. Peter D. Thomas stresses that the idea of state power being relational was already expressed in Gramsci's work. Likewise, Luis R. Migliaro and Pasquale Misuraca suggest a similar reading highlighting that for Gramsci, the state is 'the organisation of relations between the leaders and the led'. See Migliaro, Luis R. and Pasquale Misuraca (1982): 'The Theory of Modern Bureaucracy.' In: Showstack-Sassoon, Anne (ed.): *Approaches to Gramsci*. London: Writers and Readers, pp. 70–91 as well as Thomas, *The Gramscian Moment*, p. 226.

127. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 57f.

128. In my understanding of co-optation, I follow Johannes Gerschweski in defining it as 'as the capacity to tie strategically-relevant actors (or a group of actors) to the regime elite' in a way that these actors act as a mouthpiece of the ruling elites. See Gerschweski, Johannes (2013): 'The three Pillars of Stability: Legitimation, Repression and Co-optation in Autocratic Regimes.' *Democratization*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 20–39, p. 22.

129. Cf. Weber, Eric T. (2009): 'Social Contract Theory, Old and New.' *Review Journal of Political Philosophy*. Vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 1–24.

130. Hyams, Keith (2012): 'Political Authority and Obligation.' In: McKinnon, Catriona (ed.): *Issues in Political Theory*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. 2nd ed., pp. 10–32.

131. Femia, Joseph V. (1981): *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Conciousness, and the Revolutionary Process*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 37f.

132. Cf. Frankin, Mark N. (2004): *Voter Turnout and the Dynamic of Electoral Competition in established Democracies since 1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

133. For authoritarian systems, however, Jennifer Ghandi and Ellen Lust-Okar convincingly argue that a more differentiated assessment of the role of elections is needed, which considers that in some regimes, votes do serve as indicators for local support of individual candidates. Ghandi, Jennifer and Ellen Lust-Okar (2009): 'Elections under Authoritarianism.' *Annual Review of Political Science*, no. 12, pp. 403–22.

134. Martin, *Gramsci's Political Analysis*, p. 76ff.

135. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought*, p. 150ff.

136. Walicki demonstrated how in Poland the regime did not undergo any structural changes, but retreated from its claim to re-educate society as a whole. See Walicki, Andrzej (1996): 'Totalitarianism and Detotalitarization: The Case of Poland.' *Review of Politics,* vol. 58, no. 3, pp. 505–29, p. 516 and p. 522f.

137. Linz, Juan José (2000): *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes.* Boulder, London: Rienner, p. 18f.

138. Felice, R. de (1981): *Mussolini il duce: Il stato totalitario (1936–1940).* Torino: Einaudi, p. 3f. Quoted from Gentile, Emilio (1986): 'Fascism in Italian Historiography: In Search of an Individual Historical Identity.' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 179–208, p. 200f. In the following, I will refer to Baʿthist Syria as a totalitarian state, but under the premise of this qualification.

139. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian* Regimes, p. 4.

140. Linz, Juan J. (1970): 'An Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Spain.' In: Allard, Erik and Stein Rokkan (eds): *Mass Politics: Studies in Political Sociology.* New York: Free Press, p. 255. Quoted from Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 159.

141. Authoritarian upgrading refers to the process of authoritarian regimes adapting to the pressures of globalisation and demands for democratisation in ways which have arguably led to greater regime resilience. See Heydemann, Steven (2007): 'Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World' (= The Saban Centre for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, Analysis paper, 13). http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2007/10/arabworld.

142. On the development of Egypt's political system after Nasir, see Waterbury, John (1983): *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of two Regimes*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Beattie, Kirk J. (2000): *Egypt during the Sadat Years*. New York: Palgrave. Baker, Raymond W. (1990): *Sadat and after. Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul*. London: I.B.Tauris. Springborg, Robert (1989): *Mubarak's Egypt: Fragmentation of the Political Order*. Boulder and London: Westview Press.

143. Gleason, *Totalitarianism*, p. 37f.

144. Osborn, Robert J. (1970): *Soviet Social Policies: Welfare, Equality, and Community.* Homewood, Georgetown: The Dorsey Press, p. 17.

145. Ibid., p. 287f. Interestingly, findings such as these show parallels to criticisms by (post-)Marxists pointing out that the capitalist welfare state was not created for the sake of the workers' well-being, but in order to secure a healthy labour force (in that case to ensure the dominance of the bourgeoisie). See O'Brien, Martin and Sue Pennar (1998): *Theorising Welfare: Enlightenment and Modern Society.* London: Sage Publications, p. 62.

146. Cook, Linda J. (2010): 'Eastern Europe and Russia.' In: Castles, Francis G., Stephan Leibfried et al. (eds): *The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 671–86, p. 673. For the genesis of the Soviet welfare state, which often lacked funds to fully implement planned policies, see Hoffmann, David L. (2011): *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism, 1914–1939.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. Esp. p. 48ff.

147. For a critique of the lack of understanding of the socialist welfare state, see e.g. Chen, Sheying (2002): 'State Socialism and the Welfare State: A Critique of Two Conventional Paradigms.' *International Journal of Social Welfare,* vol. 11, pp. 228–42; Barr, Nicholas (2004): *The Economics of the Welfare State.* 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 673.

148. See for example Esping-Anderson, Gosta (1990): *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press; Titmuss, Richard (1976): *Commitment to Welfare: Welfare and Society.* London: Allen and Unwin; Barr, *Economics of the Welfare State*, and Iversen, Torben (2005): *Capitalism, Democracy, and Welfare.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

149. Kuhnle, Stein and Anne Sander (2010): 'The Emergence of the Western Welfare State.' In: Castles, Francis G., Stephan Leibfried et al. (eds): *The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 62–80, p. 62ff.

150. Haggard, Stephan and Robert R. Kaufmann (2008): *Development, Democracy and Welfare States: Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe.* Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, p. 13f.

151. Norton, Philip (2004): 'Introduction.' In: Norton, Philip (ed.): *Parliaments and Pressure Groups in Western Europe.* Oxon: Routledge, pp. xi–xii, p. xiff. and case studies.

152. Goodin, Robert E. (1988): *Reasons for Welfare: The Political Theory of the Welfare State.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

153. Haggard and Kaufmann, *Development, Democracy and Welfare States*, p. 16.

154. O'Brien and Pennar, *Theorising Welfare*, p. 8.

155. For the question of the threat of rebellion, see e.g. Ghandi, Jennifer and Adam Prezeworski (2006): 'Cooperation, Cooptation and Rebellion under Dictatorships.' *Economics & Politics*, vo. 18, no. 1, pp. 1–26, p. 2.

156. See e.g. Chatty, Dawn and Annika Rabo (1997): *Organizing Women: Formal and Informal Women's Groups in the Middle East.* New York: Berg. In Syria, fascinating research has been conducted on private and/or religious groups and networks under the Ba'th, with some accounts on state-led initiatives. See Rabo, 'Gender, State and Civil Society'; Hill, Fiona (1997): 'The Gender of

Tradition: Syrian Women and the Feminist Agenda.' In: White, Paul J. and William S. Logan (eds): *Remaking the Middle East.* Oxford, New York: Berg, pp. 129–51; Roggenthin, Heike (2002): *'Frauenwelt' in Damaskus: Institutionalisierte Frauenräume in der geschlechtergetrennten Gesellschaft.* Münster: LIT; Stolleis, Friederike (2004): *Öffentliches Leben in privaten Räumen. Muslimische Frauen in Damaskus.* Würzburg: Ergon; and Kalmbach, Hilary (2008): 'Social and Religious Change in Damascus: One Case of Female Islamic Religious Authority.' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 37–57.

157. See Kelkar, Meena A. (1995): *Subordination of Woman.* New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House; Walby, Sylvia (1990): *Theorising Patriarchy.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

158. Cf. the collections of articles in Joseph, Suad (ed.) (2000): *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East.* New York: Syracuse University Press.

159. For a very useful overview of scholarship on this topic regarding historical and empirical case-studies, see Orloff, Ann (1996): 'Gender in the Welfare State.' *Annual Review of Sociology,* vol. 22, pp. 51–78.

160. See Pateman, Carole (1989): *The Disorder of Women.* Stanford: Stanford University Press. Chapter 8 (The Patriarchal Welfare State); McIntosh, Mary (1978): 'The State and the Oppression of Women.' In: Kuhn, Anette and Ann Marie Wolpe (eds): *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production.* London: Routledge, pp. 254–89.

161. Hobson, Barbara (2002): *Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities, and the Social Politics of Fatherhood.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

162. All names of personal contacts and interviewees have been altered, and I considered it necessary to limit any personal information on my interviewees' background in order to protect their privacy.

163. Likewise, I am not specifying the location of offices in order to protect anonymity. Furthermore, I also paid a visit to offices in al-Ladhiqiyya because this had been recommended to me. Although some individuals told me they would have liked to help document the Union's history in al-Ladhiqiyya as well, I was refused permission to conduct research there.

164. Not all interviews were included in this book.

165. National activity reports outline the Union's projects, whilst national organisational reports provide background information on the goals pursued in each term and collect statistics on membership figures, office openings etc. In addition, I was given several national legal, political and financial reports, but these were too few to establish a coherent picture. As for the Union's work in individual governorates, I gathered reports issued by the administrative offices of Damascus, Damascus countryside and Aleppo, but unfortunately the sets remained incomplete and did not allow for comparison.

166. At the time of research, the most recent reports available covered the term 2004–8. Data beyond that point would have appeared in 2013 only.

Chapter 1   The Roots of Women's Educational, Social and Political Engagement in Syria

1. Ma'oz, Moshe (1973): 'Society and State in Modern Syria.' In: Milson, Menahem (ed.): *Society and Political Structure in the Arab World.* New York: Humanities Press, pp. 29–91, p. 38ff.

2. These Tanzimat included reforms of the government, administration, legal system, the army and finances with the aim of weakening local elites (Ma'oz, Moshe (1968): *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840–1861: The Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 75–101). These were enhanced after the Young Turk revolution in 1908 (Dawn, C. Ernest (1960): 'The Amir of Mecca al-Ḥusayn Ibn 'Ali and the Origin of the Arab Revolt.' *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society,* vol. 104, no. 1, pp. 11–34, p. 15ff.). 'Arabism' has been suggested as a term to denote a rising awareness of and insistence on Arab identity before the actual advent of Arab nationalism in the sense of political separatist demands. See Khalidi, Rashid (1991): 'Ottomanism and Arabism in Syria before 1914. A Reassessment.' In: Khalidi, Rashid, Lisa Anderson et al. (eds): *The Origins of Arab Nationalism.* New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 50–70, p. 62.

3. Ibid., also Longrigg, Stephen H. (1958): *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate.* London: Oxford University Press, p. 26ff.

4. Hourani, Albert H. (1946): *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay.* London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, p. 40.

5. Dawn, Ernest C. (1973): *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism*. Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press. pp. 150–55. For a critical discussion of their assumed membership composition and more background on Arabist and Arab nationalist groups, see Gelvin, James L. (1998): *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire.* Berkeley, London: University of California Press, p. 55ff.

6. Dawn, 'The Amir of Mecca,' p. 15ff. and pp. 150–55.

7. Ibid., p. 15ff.

8. Antonius, George (1969): *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement.* London: Hamish Hamilton, p. 184ff.; Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 55.

9. For Faysal's attempts to create an Arab state of Greater Syria, see Pipes, Daniel (1990): *Greater Syria: The History of an Ambition*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 25ff.; Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, p. 292ff.; Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 97f.

10. Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, p. 278f.

11. Ibid., p. 292f.

12. Russia also took part in the agreement, but focused on Eastern Anatolia seeking to gain former Ottoman territory closer to its borders. Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, p. 243ff.; Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 46. For areas exempted in the Husayn-McMahon correspondence, see ibid., p. 43f.

13. Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, p. 266ff.

14. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 53f.; see Pipes, *Greater Syria*, p. 29 n.80 for the full text.

15. Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 102ff., Pipes, *Greater Syria*, p. 28. Subsequently, Faysal became king of the British Mandate state of Iraq until his death in 1933, and Lebanon emerged as the new state of Greater Lebanon on 20 August 1920.

16. Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, p. 240ff.

17. al-Wikala al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya li'l-anbaʾ (1977): *al-Munazzamat al-shaʿbiyya fi l-qatr al-ʿarabi al-suri mundhu takwiniha wa-lighayat ʿam 1977.* Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 207f.; al-Razzaz, Nabila (1975): *Musharakat al-marʾa fi'l-hayat al-ʿamma fi Suriya: Mundhu ʾl-istiqlal 1945 wa-hatta 1975.* Damascus: Manshurat wizarat al-thaqafa wa'l-irshad al-qawmi, p. 153.

18. Ibid., p. 151f.

19. Ibid., p. 152f.

20. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year): *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya fi l-qatr al-ʿarabi al-suri.* [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 141.

21. Ibid., p. 140.

22. Diab, Henry and Lars Wahlin (1983): 'The Geography of Education in Syria in 1882. With a Translation of 'Education in Syria' by Shahin Makarius, 1883.' *Geografiska Annaler, Series B, Human Geography,* vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 105–28, p. 108f.

23. Matthews, Roderic D. and Matta Akrawi (1949): *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East.* Washington D.C.: American Council on Education, p. 351.

24. *Rapport à la Société des Nations*, 1931, quoted in Widmer, Robert (1973): 'Population.' In: Himadeh, Saʾid (ed.): *Economic Organization of Syria.* Reprint of 1973 edition, Beirut. New York: AMS, pp. 1–26, p. 11, n. 22. In 1930, an estimated 28 per cent of the population of Damascus and Aleppo were literate, 31 per cent in the ʿAlawi Territory, but only 6 per cent of the Druze and almost none of the Bedouins in the Jazira. See Björkman, W. (1941): 'Das syrische Bildungswesen und seine Probleme.' *Die Welt des Islams,* vol. 23, no. 3/4, pp. 133–55, p. 136f. At the time of his writing, Björkman stressed that the estimates available were contradictory and should be viewed critically. However, it can be seen now that they correlate with data for the 1960s and 1970s.

25. Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, p. 357. Estimate based on school attendance in Egypt.

26. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]): *Taqrir al-nashatat: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 8 adhar 1994 – 'Inna dawr fi l-bilad yaʿni al-ʿafiyya al-wataniyya. Wa yushakkil tasaʿud dawr al-marʾa dalilan ʿala itrad taqaddum al-fikr wa-irtiqaʾ al-wujudan wa'l-hiss al-watani wa'l-qawmi wa'l-insani' – min aqwal al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 4.

27. At primary level for example, taking together governmental and private schools, student numbers increased almost sixfold between 1944–5 and 1969–70. See al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 31.

28. Some private/foreign schools offered coeducational classes, whilst government schooling was separate for boys and girls. In 1944–5, less than a fifth of government schools were open to girls at all. Private/foreign schools provided education for more than 50 per cent of female students towards the end of the Mandate, mostly through Christian schools (Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, p. 353 and p. 394). For the closure of private/foreign schools, see ibid., p. 326. While Ruth Woodsmall states that the closure of French schools in 1945 'ended the direct contact of French schools', Jennifer Dueck added that they could obtain permission to reopen, but only with written permission from the Syrian authorities and with 'a national name, a Syrian head teacher, and an exclusively Arab staff' agreeing 'to adopt the official curriculum and submit their finances and teaching to national inspection.' See Woodsmall, Ruth F. (1956): *Study of the Role of Women: Their Activities and Organizations in Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Syria*. New York: International Federation of Business and Professional Women, p. 68; and Dueck, Jennifer M. (2006): 'Educational Conquest: Schools as a Sphere of Politics in French Mandate Syria, 1936–1946.' *Oxford Journals: French History*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 442–59, p. 454f.

29. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 37, quoting statistics of the Ministry of Education and the Directorate of Planning, and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 50.

30. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 23ff.

31. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 76.

32. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 21.

33. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 76f.

34. Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, p. 356f.

35. Björkman, 'Das syrische Bildungswesen,' p. 138.

36. Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, p. 343. The terminology chosen here is based on al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 42, referring to *al-taʿlim al-ʿidadi* (preparatory education) and *al-taʿlim al-thanawi* (secondary education). Matthews terms the first stage as 'intermediate' and the second as 'preparatory'. See Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, p. 343 and p. 364f. In his tables, he lists primary and intermediate data together and treats secondary schools and vocational schools offering complementary courses separately.

37. On technical schools that led to the *brevets*, see ibid., p. 374.

38. Ibid., p. 344f.

39. Ibid., p. 384ff., Björkman, 'Das syrische Bildungswesen,' p. 143.

40. Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, p. 344ff.

41. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 27 and p. 48, Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, p. 382.

42. The Syrian University originated in the Ottoman School of Medicine in Damascus (1901) and the Ottoman School of Law in Beirut (1913), but was established as such only under the French. See Rafeq, Abdul-Karim (2008): 'The Syrian University and the French Mandate (1920–1946).' In: Schumann, Christoph (ed.): *Liberal Thought in the Eastern Mediterranean: Late 19th Century until the 1960s.* Leiden: Brill, pp. 75–97, p. 75ff. It also incorporated the School of Nursing and Midwifery, see Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, p. 382.

43. Calculations based on al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya), *al-Mar'a al-'arabiyya*, p. 40, p. 42, p. 45, p. 52 and p. 60f.

44. For girls' enrolment in government schools at primary/preparatory and secondary level, see ibid., p. 40 and p. 44 as well as Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, p. 353 (girls in vocational training). See also al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya), *al-Mar'a al-'arabiyya*, p. 42ff. (girls in the higher institutes), al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 49 and al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya), *al-Mar'a al-'arabiyya*, p. 51 (female students in teachers' colleges) and the same source for intermediate institutes (p. 57) and university (p. 60f.).

45. Björkman, 'Das syrische Bildungswesen,' p. 143. For a few years during the 1930s, this was possible in al-Ladhiqiyya as well, but the programme was stopped in 1937. For female teachers, a second teachers' college in Aleppo was added to the one in Damascus in 1943 only. See Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, p. 384.

46. Björkman, 'Das syrische Bildungswesen,' p. 145, al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya), *al-Mar'a al-'arabiyya*, p. 57.

47. Sakanini, Widad (1986): *Sabiqat al-'asr: wa'iyan wa-sa'iyan wa-fanniyan.* Damascus: al-Nadwa al-thaqafiyya al-nisa'iyya fi Dimashq, p. 23f.

48. al-Razzaz dates the establishment of both to 1918, while an unknown biographer of Mari 'Ajami quotes 1920. By contrast, Moubayed states that Nur al-Fayha' was set up in 1919. See al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 123; Anon. (2008a): 'Mari 'Ajami.' In: Salih, Nabil (ed.): *Nisa' Suriya.* [no place]: al-Hay'a al-suriyya li-shu'un al-usra, vol. 1, pp. 11–24, p. 21; Moubayed, Sami (2006): *Steel and Silk: Men and Women who Shaped Syria 1900–2000.* Seattle: Cune Press, p. 360.

49. Sakakini, *Sabiqat al-'asr*, p. 23.

50. Khoury, Philip S. (1987): *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism 1920–1945.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 96.

51. Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 127f., Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 172.

52. Ibid., p. 195.

53. Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 196f.

54. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 128f.

55. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, p. 378f.

56. Originally, her family was from Hamah, see Anon., 'Mari ʿAjami,' p. 11. Sakakini states she passed away in 1969, see Sakakini, *Sabiqat al-ʿasr*, p. 39.

57. Ibid., Anon., 'Mari ʿAjami,' p. 19. By contrast, Moubayed states she graduated from this school, see Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 95f. However, if she had not obtained a degree in nursing, this would help explain her later choice of becoming a teacher.

58. Ibid.

59. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 123 and Anon., 'Mari ʿAjami,' p. 21. The year of closure is not specified.

60. *Statute of the Jamʿiyyat dawhat al-adab, 1928,* p. 1. Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, Qism awraq al-dawla, Wathaʾiq al-dawliyya, Wizarat al-maʿarif, waw mim 40/30.

61. Ibid.

62. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 124ff.

63. Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, p. 353. Out of these, eight were public, seven private and 14 foreign schools.

64. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 125f.

65. *Photograph: The Dawhat al-adab, 1947.* Photograph displayed in a GUSW exhibition, wahdat Zahira, Baramkeh, Damascus (12 May 2010).

66. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 124ff., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 143; al-Husni al-Jazaʾiri, al-Amira Badiʿa (2008): 'ʿAdila Bayyhum.' In: Salih, Nabil (ed.): *Nisaʾ Suriya.* [no place]: al-Hayʾa al-suriyya li-shuʾun al-usra, pp. 25–36, p. 27. One year later, Fatima Afaqat, the wife of Muhammad Basha al-ʿAzm, successfully submitted a request for a licence on behalf of the Dawha. See the *Letter from the Ministry of the Interior granting permission for the establishment of Dawhat al-adab, 25 February 1929.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, Qism awraq al-dawla, al-Dakhiliyya, dal 7/9. In founding the Dawha, ʿAdila Bayyhum was joined by Widad al-Quwatli, Khayriyya Rida Saʿid, Rafiqa al-ʿAzm al-Bukhari, Furlan Mardam Bek, and Widad al-Hajjar. See Taqi al-Din, Naʿimat: 'Madrasat dawhat al-adab al-khassa'. http://www.douht-adab.com/index.php?inid=1&id=204.

67. Moubayed and Husni al-Jazaʾiri cite 1900, while Sakakini quotes 1902. See Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 430; al-Husni al-Jazaʾiri, 'ʿAdila Bayyhum,' p. 25; Sakakini, *Sabiqat al-ʿasr*, p. 122ff.

68. Sakakini, *Sabiqat al-ʿasr*, p. 122. For her family background in Beirut, see al-Husni al-Jazaʾiri, 'ʿAdila Bayyhum,' p. 27.

69. Ibid. In these activities, ʿAdila Bayyhum worked closely with Ibtihaj Qaddura, Umm Zahiyya Qaddura and Widad and Salwa Mahumsani. Ibtihaj (1892–1967) was the daughter of Adib Qaddura. The paternal side of her family was a Sunni family of doctors, while her mother came from the Aybash family in Damascus. Ibtihaj had founded the Jamʿiyyat al-maqasid al-khayriyya al-islamiyya (Society for Islamic Charity) in Beirut in 1878. Umm Zahiyya

Qaddura was the wife of one of Ibtihaj's brothers. See ibid., p. 69ff. No details are available for Widad and Salwa Mahumsani.

70. Ibid., p. 124 and Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 431. For the ancestry of the Jaza'iri family, see Schatkowski Schilcher, Linda (1985): *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, p. 215f.

71. Thurayya's maternal grandfather is not named, but is said to have been a rich merchant in Aleppo. Her paternal grandfather, known under the name of Hafiz Effendi, served as the personal Imam of Sultan ʿAbd al-Hamid. However, Thurayya had no contact with her original paternal family until after her own marriage. See al-Bayni, ʿAziza (2008): 'Thurayya al-Hafiz.' In: Salih, Nabil (ed.): *Nisaʾ Suriya.* [no place]: al-Hayʾa al-suriyya li-shuʾun al-usra, pp. 75–84, p. 75 and p. 77.

72. Her father was hanged in Beirut in 1916. See Shaaban, Bouthaina (1988): *Both Right and Left Handed: Arab Women Talk about their Lives*. London: Women's Press, p. 48.

73. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 120.

74. al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 76.

75. Ibid., p. 77. al-Sarraj (born in 1910) was a Sunni lawyer in Damascus who, like al-Shihabi, had studied in France. According to Khoury, he descended from a family of religious dignitaries from Hamah, and in the 1930s became a leading member of the fascist-style youth movement of the National Bloc, the Steel Shirts. See Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, p. 422 and p. 473.

76. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 184. For a detailed outline of the ʿAzm families' network and role in Ottoman Syria, see Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, p. 27ff.

77. Amongst them were Fawzi al-ʿAzm (1880–1934), a high-ranking Ottoman official before 1908 and his son Khalid al-ʿAzm (1903–65) who was repeatedly elected to parliament from the 1940s onwards but fled Syria after the Baʿthist coup of 1963. ʿAbd al-Qadir al-ʿAzm (1881–1952) was a civil servant in the Ottoman administration, but co-founded the Arab nationalist al-Istiqlal (Independence) Party under King Faysal. Later he supported the French, under whose rule he pursued a career in Syrian academia, eventually leaving politics in 1949. For their biographies, see Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 98f., p. 186f. and p. 428.

78. al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 78.

79. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 129f. Graduates of the teachers' colleges had founded their own society in 1928, the Jamʿiyyat kharijat dur al-muʿallimat (Society for Graduates from the Women's Teachers' Colleges). See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 142.

80. Diyab, Amina (2008b): 'Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah.' In: Salih, Nabil (ed.): *Nisaʾ Suriya.* [no place]: al-Hayʾa al-suriyya li-shuʾun al-usra, vol. 1, pp. 191–202, p. 191f.

81. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 129f.

82. Ibid., p. 130.

83. Diyab, 'Su'ad al-'Abd Allah,' p. 192.

84. Weinryb, Bernhard D. (1947): 'Industrial Development in the Near East.' *The Quartely Journal of Economics,* vol. 61, no. 3, pp. 471–99, p. 481, and Hakim, George (1973): 'Industry.' In: Himadeh, Sa'id (ed.): *Economic Organization of Syria.* Reprint of 1973 ed., Beirut. New York: AMS, pp. 117–73, p. 119 n.6.

85. Longuenesse, Elisabeth (1996): 'Labor in Syria: The Emergence of New Identities.' In: Goldberg, Ellis Jay (ed.): *The Social History of Labour in the Middle East.* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 99–129, p. 100.

86. Weinryb, 'Industrial Development,' p. 481.

87. Reilly, James A. (1995): 'Women in the Economic Life of Late-Ottoman Damascus.' *Arabica,* vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 79–106, p. 92f.

88. Ibid., p. 94.

89. Ibid., p. 97f.

90. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 83.

91. Ibid., p. 124, Sakakini, *Sabiqat al-'asr*, p. 123, Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 361, al-Husni al-Jaza'iri, ''Adila Bayyhum,' p. 27.

92. Zachs, Fruma (2013): 'Muḥammad Jamīl Bayhum and the Woman Question: Between Social and Political Rights.' *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 50–76, p. 61f. Muhammad Jamil Bayyhum (1887–1978) was among the most prominent historians in the region advocating education for women in the early twentieth century. Coming from a rich Sunni mercantile family in Beirut, he combined his writings with various political positions and social activities. For further details, see the same article by Zachs.

93. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 361. According to Moubayed, Thurayya al-Hafiz was involved in establishing the Jam'iyyat yaqazat al-mar'a al-shamiyya as well. However, none of the short biographies include this information.

94. In this, she was again joined by Ibtihaj Qaddura. See ibid., p. 430, al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 122, and Sakakini, *Sabiqat al-'asr*, p. 122. Moubayed and al-Razzaz disagree as to when the society was established (1918/1916), and Moubayed also mentions a certain Salma al-Sayyigh as having been involved in the club.

95. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 124.

96. Ibid., p. 91.

97. Ibid., p. 85. For other estimates, see al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya), *al-Mar'a al-'arabiyya*, p. 94.

98. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 84f.

99. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 124, al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year), *al-Mar'a al-'arabiyya*, p. 143.

100. Commins, David Dean (2004): *Historical Dictionary of Syria.* 2nd ed. Oxford: Scarecrow Press, p. 126.

101. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 86f.

102. al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 79f.

103. Ibid., p. 80. She did so together with Zahra al-ʿAbid, with whom she also maintained the Halqa zuharaʾ al-adabiyya, and a certain Fayis al-Shihabi.

104. Amongst these were the Jamʿiyyat al-marʾa al-ʿarabiyya fi Dayr al-Zur (Society for the Arab Woman in Dayr al-Zur, 1959) and the Jamʿiyyat himayat al-ahdath liʾl-banat (Society for the Protection of Young Female Convicts, unknown place and date). See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 143f. The Society for the Arab Woman maintained branches in several governorates (see Appendix D).

105. In Aleppo, the Jamʿiyyat kafala al-tufula (Society for the Protection of Childhood, 1961) took care of abandoned babies until they were old enough to enter orphanages. Similarly, the Jamʿiyyat riʿayat al-tufula (Society for the Care of Childhood, no date) in al-Ladhiqiyya was dedicated to children. By contrast, the Jamʿiyyat riʿayat al-ʿajuza waʾl-musinnin (Society for the Care of the Elderly, no date) and the Jamʿiyyat al-riʿaya al-ijtimaʿiyya (Society for Social Welfare, 1962) looked after the elderly, the latter setting up a home for the medical and pastoral care of both elderly men and women. Both were based in Aleppo. See ibid.

106. Amongst these are the Jamʿiyyat al-mubarra al-khayriyya (Society for Charitable Benevolence in Damascus, 1953), the Jamʿiyyat nur al-ihsan (Society of the Light of Benevolence, 1953) and the Jamʿiyyat sayyidat al-hinan (the Society of the Ladies of Compassion, 1942), both in Aleppo. See ibid., p. 142ff. and al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 127 and p. 130.

107. Ibid., p. 122f.

108. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 120 n.9.

109. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 360.

110. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 105f. Judging from a photograph from the 1940s, the Red Crescent is indeed still active today. Photograph: *Photograph: Ladies of the Women's Union at the Red Crescent, Damascus 1948.* Photograph displayed in a GUSW exhibition, wahdat Zahira, Baramkeh, Damascus (12 May 2010).

111. al-Jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-muttahida (no year): *Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya bi-Dimashq/Federation of Women's Associations of Damascus {Arabic and English}.* [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 11, al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 126 and p. 155. See also 'Formation of Women's Unions'.

112. Ibid., p. 157; al-Jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-muttahida, *Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya bi-Dimashq*, p. 14.

113. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 127, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 143.

114. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 131.

115. No date is available for the latter. See al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 79f. and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 145. According to this source, both societies were linked to the Jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾ al-ʿarab al-qawmiyyat (Society of Arab

Nationalist Women) established in 1943. No further details on this society could be found.

116. Maghut, Asama (2007): 'Hiwar ma' al-rafiqa Nadira Sanadiqi, ra'isat rabita al-nisa' al-suriyyat li-himayat al-umuma wa'l-tufula.' Originally published in *Sawt al-sha'b*, 17 February 2007. *Sawt al-mar'a*, no. 1, pp. 9–17, p. 11.

117. Yaziji, Nawwal (2008): 'Najah Sa'ati.' In: Salih, Nabil (ed.): *Nisa' Suriya.* [no place]: al-Hay'a al-suriyya li-shu'un al-usra, vol. 1, pp. 129–41, p. 134.

118. Ibid., p. 129ff.

119. Ibid., p. 132f.

120. Ibid., p. 136ff. In Moscow, Najah lived under the false identity of Nada Hanin, wife of Antoine Hanin, of Lebanese nationality. Researching political economy, she became the first Syrian woman to complete a PhD at a Russian university.

121. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 132f.

122. It is not specified which societies were involved in offering training in shooting, see al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year), *al-Mar'a al-'arabiyya*, p. 168; al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 131 and p. 157.

123. *Permission by the Ministry of the Interior for the establishment of the Women's Sub-Committee for Civil Defence, 2 May 1956.* Dar al-watha'iq al-tarikhiyya, Qism awraq al-dawla, Watha'iq al-dawla, Wizarat al-dakhiliyya, dal/151/5. According to al-Razzaz, this enabled women to reclaim the right to military training. However, it is not clear when that right was first obtained or why it had been withdrawn. See al-Jumhuriyya al-'arabiyya al-muttahida, *Ittihad al-jam'iyyat al-nisa'iyya bi-Dimashq*, p. 26.

124. Watenpaugh, Keith David (2006): *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class*. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, p. 291ff. Cf. *Photograph: Girl Scouts in Damascus, 1949.* Photograph displayed in a GUSW exhibition, wahdat Zahira, Baramkeh, Damascus (12 May 2010) and *Photograph: Girl Scouts in Damascus, 1950.* Photograph displayed in a GUSW exhibition, wahdat Zahira, Baramkeh, Damascus (12 May 2010).

125. Sakakini, *Sabiqat al-'asr*, p. 9.

126. Heyden-Rynsch, Verena von der (1992): *Europäische Salons: Höhepunkte einer versunkenen weiblichen Kultur.* Munich: Artemis & Winkler, p. 57ff.

127. Sakakini, *Sabiqat al-'asr*, p. 9. See also Zachs, Fruma and Sharon Halevi (2009): 'From *difa' al-nisā'* to *mas'alat al-nisā'* in Greater Syria: Readers and Writers debate Women and their Rights, 1858–1900.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 41, pp. 615–33, p. 620.

128. Ibid., p. 41. Another Syrian women's magazine entitled *al-Mar'a* was issued by Nadima al-Munqari (1904–91) starting in 1930–1, and again after a short interruption from 1947 onward. Cf. Anon. (2008b): 'Nadima al-Munqari.' In: Salih, Nabil (ed.): *Nisa' Suriya.* [no place]: al-Hay'a al-suriyya li-shu'un al-usra, vol. 1, pp. 37–48, p. 38ff.

129. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 473.

130. Anon. 'Mari ʿAjami,' p. 21. She also contributed to Nazik al-ʿAbid's magazine *Nur al-Fayhaʾ*. See Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 474.

131. Ibid., p. 473.

132. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 208ff.

133. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 123.

134. For their biographies, see Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 557f., p. 498f., p. 545f., and p. 485f.

135. Anon., 'Mari ʿAjami,' p. 21.

136. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 473.

137. Diyab, Amina (2008a): 'Jihan al-Musuli.' In: Salih, Nabil (ed.): *Nisaʾ Suriya.* [no place]: al-Hayʾa al-suriyya li-shuʾun al-usra, vol. 1, pp. 49–60, p. 53f. Other founding members were Falak Diyab, Rima Kurd ʿAli, Nahla Wasafi al-Jabi, Badiʿa al-Awrafali, Naʿima Diyab, and Suʿad al-Halabi, about whom no further detail is available. See also the Club's internal regulations: al-Musuli, Jihan et al (no year): *Nizam jamʿiyyat al-nadwa al-thaqafiyya al-nisaʾiyya.* [no place]: [publisher unknown].

138. Diyab, 'Jihan al-Musuli,' p. 53.

139. Ibid., p. 50f.

140. Ibid., p. 58f.

141. al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 80f.

142. The League of National Action was based in Syria, but linked various nationalist parties across the region. See Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, p. 400ff. and p. 418. For Jabri and other participants, Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 544f., al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 81. Maqbula al-Shallaq later became involved in Bayyhum's Jamʿiyyat yaqazat al-marʾa al-shamiyya, see Futuh, ʿAysi (5 January 2010): *ʿUmar Rida Kahala muʾallif muʿajjam 'Aʿlam al-nisaʾ*. al-Baʿth, online edition. http://www.albaath.news.sy/user/?act=print&id=739&a=67981. She is said to have been the first woman to enter a Syrian university in 1941. See Shaaban, *Both Right and Left Handed*, p. 40ff.

143. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 496ff.; al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 79.

144. Ibid., p. 81. al-Barada is named after the main river in Damascus.

145. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 144.

146. al-Wikala al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya liʾl-anbaʾ, *al-Munazzamat al-shaʿbiyya*, p. 208.

147. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 430.

148. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 164. Although these events almost parallel women's demonstrations during the 1919 revolution in Egypt, the sources make no mention of a link between the two.

149. Ibid., p. 63, n.179. For al-ʿAbid's involvement, see Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 360.

150. Patrick, Andrew (2011): 'Reading the King–Crane Commission of 1919: Discourses of Race, Modernity, and Self-Determination in Competing American Visions for the Post-Ottoman Middle East.' The University of Manchester: unpublished PhD thesis, p. 66.

151. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 151. The American King–Crane Commission was set up following the failure to reach an agreement on the Middle East at the Versailles Conference. Consulting local opinion on their wishes for a future government, the Commission travelled throughout the region for several months. However, its findings, suggesting a monarchy for Syria, including Lebanon and Palestine, under an American Mandate, and a separate British Mandate for Iraq, were ignored. See Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 52.

152. ʿAzraʾil is the Arabic name for the archangel Gabriel. Unfortunately, the source does not explain why this name was chosen.

153. These were Jamil Mardam Bek (1893–1960) and Lutfi al-Haffar (1891–1968) in Damascus, Saʿd Allah al-Jabiri (1893–1947) and Ibrahim Hananu (1869–1935) in Aleppo, as well as Hashim al-Atassi (1873–1960) in Hums. For their biographies, see Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 290ff., p. 235f., p. 255ff., p. 376f. and p. 169ff.

154. al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 76.

155. Diyab, 'Jihan al-Musuli,' p. 52.

156. For an overview of women's demonstrations especially in the 1930s and 1940s, see Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 186ff. and p. 233f.

157. For his life, see Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, p. 131, p. 269 and p. 376 as well as Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 229.

158. al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 76.

159. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, p. 406.

160. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 431.

161. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 147 n.19 and p. 275.

162. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 473.

163. Amongst those in support of the proposal were Ibrahim al-Khatib from the Lebanese territories and Shaykh Saʿid Murad from Gaza. Cf. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 118ff., and also Thompson, Elizabeth (2011): 'Le mouvement féminin et l'essor de l'État-providence colonial en Syrie (1920–1946).' *CLIO. Histoire, femmes et sociétés*, vol. 33, pp. 107–24, p. 106. I would like to thank Prof Elizabeth Thompson for permission to quote a draft version of this article. Saʿd Allah al-Jabiri (1893–1947), who later belonged to the National Bloc, also voiced his support. See Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 255.

164. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 118.

165. Ghanem, Muna, Samuel Abboud et al. (no year): 'Women and the People's Assembly in the Syrian Arab Republic: A Research conducted in Cooperation with UNIFEM & SCFA'. http://www.unifem.org.jo/pages/articledetails.aspx?pid=666&aid=743, p. 13.

166. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 124f., Sullivan, Earl L. (1986): *Women in Egyptian Public Life.* New York: Syracuse University Press, p. 33.

167. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 144.

168. Ibid., p. 144 n.7.

169. White, Benjamin Thomas (2010): 'Addressing the State: The Syrian ʾUlamāʾ Protest Personal Status Law Reform, 1939.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 42, pp. 11–12, p. 11.

170. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 267ff.

171. Ibid., p. 261ff.

172. Ibid., p. 267ff.

173. Ibid., p. 127f.

174. Ibid., p. 136.

175. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 431.

176. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 242. A women's group in Hamah petitioned the government for official permission to unveil in June of the same year.

177. Ibid., p. 273.

178. Quoted in ibid., p. 274.

179. al-Jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-muttahida, *Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya bi-Dimashq*, p. 16, Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 432.

180. al-Jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-muttahida, *Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya bi-Dimashq*, p. 22.

181. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 166.

182. See Tachau, Frank (1994): *Political Parties of the Middle East and North Africa.* London: Mansell.

183. For an exemplary analysis for Aleppo, see Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, chapter 9; on Syria and Lebanon, see Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 192f. Similarly, populist paramilitary national defence committees had been set up throughout the region during Faysal's rule, coordinated by the Higher National Committee. See Gelvin, James L. (1994): 'The Social Origins of Popular Nationalism in Syria: Evidence for a New Framework.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 645–61.

184. Tachau, *Political Parties*, p. 500.

185. The Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon was established in 1925, whilst the Muslim Brotherhood was formed in 1945–6 Ibid., p. 503 and p. 505. For more information, see Reissner, Johannes (1980): *Ideologie und Politik der Muslimbrüder Syriens: Von den Wahlen 1947 bis zum Verbot unter Adīb aš-Šīšaklī 1952*. Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz; Ismael, Tareq Y. and Jacqueline S. Ismael (1998): *The Communist Movement in Syria and Lebanon.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

186. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 160.

187. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 242f.

188. Sakakini, *Sabiqat al-ʿasr*, p. 123. The information provided by the sources on the formation of women's unions, i.e. clusters of several women's societies, is problematic due to the fact that in Arabic, the names of societies are at times used inconsistently, as are their English translations in English sources. Thompson refers to an earlier Women's Union in Syria and Lebanon. Focusing

on cultural and social issues, it registered with the French in 1927 and held conferences in Beirut in 1927, 1928 and 1930. Yet she also states that both sub-unions continued to work separately (cf. ibid., p. 141ff.). Thompson added that the Syrian part of the union was led by Jazaʾiri, ʿAbid and Hafiz. See Thompson, 'Le mouvement féminin,' p. 112f. Moubayed also mentions a Syrian/Lebanese Union set up by ʿAbid, but dates it to 1924; cf. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 360. It is not yet clear which societies were included in this Union, and which of these were Syrian. The Syrian sources that were available to me make no mention of these Unions.

189. al-Husni al-Jazaʾiri, ''Adila Bayyhum,' p. 28.

190. Other sources report a Lebanese–Syrian women's conference held in Beirut in 1928, as well as other eastern women conferences attended by Syrian participants in Damascus (1930) and Teheran (1932) where the status of women and their role in society was discussed. None of these conferences is mentioned in the Syrian biographies. For a comprehensive overview of differing accounts in other sources, see Dusend, Sarah (2010): *Solidarische Vernetzung, gesellschaftlicher Fortschritt und die Rolle der Frau: Die Debatten und Ergebnisse des Kongresses der orientalischen Frauen in Teheran 1932.* Schenefeld: EB (Bonner Islamwissenschaftliche Hefte, 15). Chapter 4. For individual women's roles during the 1938 conference, see *List of positions of responsibilities, Eastern Women's Conference in Cairo 1938.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, al-Qism al-khass: Nabih al-ʿAzmah, 14/421.

191. *Members of the women's conference in Cairo, 1936 {1938}.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, [framed photograph, no reference].

192. *Resolutions of the Eastern Women's Conference for the Defence of Palestine, 27 November 1938.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, al-Qism al-khass: Nabih al-ʿAzmah, 14/440.

193. *List of participants, Eastern Women's Conference Cairo 1938 (Syrian delegation).* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, al-Qism al-khass: Nabih al-ʿAzmah, 4/429; for photographs, see *Participants in the women's conference in Cairo 1938. Among them the Syrian delegation comprising Buhayra al-ʿAzmah, ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri, Fatina al-ʿAzmah, and Thurayya al-Hafiz.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, [framed photograph, no reference]; *Members of the women's conference in Cairo, 1936 {1938}.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, [framed photograph, no reference]; and *Members of the women's conference in Cairo, 1936 {1938}, among them ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri and Thurayya al-Hafiz.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, [framed photograph, no reference]. Women's titles listed them as wives or daughters at a time when women could only leave the country with their male guardian's consent.

194. The identity of the wife of Amir Muhy al-Din Basha ʿAbd al-Qadir is not clear. A woman named Naʿima ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Maghribi had played a role in Bayyhum's Jamʿiyyat yaqazat al-marʾa al-shamiyya at its foundation in 1928, but it cannot be established whether or not she is the person mentioned above.

195. Futuh, *ʿUmar Rida Kahala muʾallif muʿajjam ''Aʿlam al-nisa''.*

196. Unfortunately, many signatures are illegible, but amongst them was also at least one Lebanese woman activist, namely Ibtihaj Qaddura with whom ʿAdila Bayyhum had cooperated in various societies back in Beirut. See *Women request a Committee for the Defence of Palestine in Syria, 10 June 1938.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, al-Qism al-khass: (reference missing) 418.

197. *The President of the Committee for the Defence of Palestine in Syria, Nabih al-ʿAzmah, on the Formation of the Women's Branch, June 1938.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyyah, al-Qism al-khass: Nabih al-ʿAzmah, 14/416. For more information on Nabih Bek al-ʿAzmah and his contacts with the National Bloc including Faris al-Khury and Fakhri al-Barudi, see Khoury (1985), p. 325 and p. 346 n. 17 as well as Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 193f.

198. *Letter by the women's committee for the Defence of Palestine – list of delegates to attend the 1938 conference in Cairo, 26 September 1938.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyyah, al-Qism al-khass: Nabih al-ʿAzmah, 1/50.

199. For more information on his biography, see Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 277ff.

200. Following photograph: *Participants in the women's conference in Cairo 1938. Among them the Syrian delegation comprising Buhayra al-ʿAzmah, ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri, Fatina al-ʿAzmah, and Thurayya al-Hafiz.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, [framed photograph, no reference]. Buhayra al-ʿAzmah is seated on the left, ʿAdila Bayyhum al-Jazaʾiri is the second on the right (unlike marked in the photo); Fatina al-ʿAzmah is the second woman standing to the right, and Thurayya al-Hafiz the third from the left.

201. Sakakini, *Sabiqat al-ʿasr*, p. 123.

202. Ibid.; al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 126.

203. Diyab, 'Jihan al-Musuli,' p. 55.

204. al-Jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-muttahida, *Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya bi-Dimashq*, p. 36ff.; al-Husni al-Jazaʾiri, "Adila Bayyhum,' p. 29. The latter makes no mention of the last two societies. If no founders are mentioned, they are unknown based on the sources available.

205. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, p. 265.

206. Diyab, 'Jihan al-Musuli,' p. 55; al-Jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-muttahida, *Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya bi-Dimashq*, p. 11ff. The period between 1939 and 1943 saw five presidents come and leave office, with no leeway for effective politics.

207. Ibid., p. 16, Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 432.

208. al-Husni al-Jazaʾiri, "Adila Bayyhum,' p. 31; al-Jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-muttahida, *Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya bi-Dimashq*, p. 26; *Permission by the Ministry of the Interior for the establishment of the Women's Sub-Committee for Civil Defence, 2 May 1956.* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, Qism awraq al-dawla, Wathaʾiq al-dawla, Wizarat al-dakhiliyya, dal/151/5.

209. Ibid.

210. al-Husni al-Jazaʾiri, "Adila Bayyhum,' p. 30ff.

211. Syrian members of the office were also Qamr Qazʿun as general secretary and Rima Kurd ʿAli, responsible for media, see Diyab, 'Jihan al-Musuli,' p. 55.

No details are available about Qamr Qazʿun. According to Diyab, Rima Kurd ʿAli had also been present during the 1938 delegation to Cairo. Although she is not listed amongst the participants, she might have joined at short notice.

212. Unfortunately, the source provides no details in this respect. See al-Jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-muttahida, *Ittihad al-jamʿiyyat al-nisaʾiyya bi-Dimashq*, p. 3ff. and p. 32.

213. Ibid., p. 34.

214. ʿAdila Bayyhum is shown on a photograph casting her vote together with the wife of Shukri al-Quwatli during the plebiscite. See ibid., p. 29.

215. Diyab, 'Jihan al-Musuli,' p. 56, al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-marʾa*, p. 163. In a first step, Jihan al-Musuli, Amima Sawwah, Malik Kibbara, and Fatima al-Shallaq had been elected, but only Jihan al-Musuli and Widad al-Azhari were appointed eventually. Fatima al-Shallaq was the wife of Ibrahim Zakariyya of Damascus, a former commissioner of Damascus and leading figure in the country's scout movement. See al-Majdhub, Muhammad Samir (1 March 2010): 'al-Qaʾida Fatima al-Shallaq min murshidat Suriyya fi dhimmat Allah'. http://www.scoutsarena.com/muntada/showthread.php?25663-%C7%E1% DE%C7%C6%CF%C9-%DF%C7%D8%E3%C9-%C7%E1%D4%E1% DE-%E3%E4-%E3%D1%D4%CF%C7%CA-%D3%E6%D1%ED%C9-% DD%ED-%D0%E3%C9-%C7%E1%E1%E5. There is no background information available on the other women. For the council in general, see Seale, *Struggle for Syria*, p. 58f.

216. Diyab, 'Jihan al-Musuli,' p. 57f.

Chapter 2   Mass Organisations in Baʿthist State Building and the Establishment of the Union

1. See Introduction.

2. Devlin, John F. (1979): *The Baʿth Party: A History from Its Origins to 1966.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 238f.

3. For a full list of members, see Drysdale, Alasdair (1982b): 'The Syrian Armed Forces in National Politics: The Role of the Ethnic and Geographic Periphery.' In: Kolkowicz, Roman; Korbonski, Andrzej (eds): *Soldiers, Peasants, and Bureaucrats.* London: Allen and Unwin, pp. 52–76, p. 64.

4. Devlin, John F. (1991): 'The Baath Party: Rise and Metamorphosis'. *The American Historical Review*, vol. 96, no. 5, pp. 1396–407, p. 1399. The highest command of the party was the so-called National Command at pan-Arab level, which used to be composed of elected representatives of all regional branches. Hence in Baʿthist terminology, national (*qawmi*) refers to the pan-Arab level, whilst regional (*qatri*) congresses or party branches refer to those in individual countries. Since the 1966 split with Iraq, both created two competing National Commands.

5. Devlin, *The Baʿth Party*, p. 250.

6. Ibid., p. 248.

7. Ibid., p. 243.

8. Ibid., p. 249.

9. Ibid., p. 283.

10. Ibid., p. 12f. Michel ʿAflaq himself dated the establishment of the Party to 1940. While ʿAflaq's and Bitar's writings appeared regularly after their return from Paris in 1932 under the titles al-Ihya' al-ʿarabi (Arab Revival) or al-baʿth al-ʿarabi (Arab Awakening), their account of the Party's origins compete with those of followers of Zaki al-Arzuzi from Ladhiqiyya who had established a group also named al-Baʿth al-ʿarabi in 1940. Students of one group often also attended meetings of the other, rendering it likely that both influenced each other. For details on this debate, see ibid., p. 7, Kaylani, Nabil M. (1972): 'The Rise of the Syrian Baʿth, 1940–1958: Political Success, Party Failure.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 3–23, p. 4.

11. Devlin, *The Baʿth Party*, p. 12.

12. Ibid., p. 57, Kaylani, 'The Rise of the Syrian Baʿth', p. 7f.

13. Devlin, *The Baʿth Party*, p. 201.

14. Ibid., p. 132.

15. Ibid., p. 135f.

16. Ibid., p. 160f. For a more detailed list of Congresses, their main points of discussion, and members in the National and Regional Commands until 1966, see Devlin, *The Baʿth Party*, Appendix A (p. 327ff.) and B (p. 333ff.).

17. Ibid., p. 197.

18. Ibid., p. 201.

19. Ibid., p. 14 and p. 33. This was the remaining group of al-Arzuzi, by the time led by Wahib al-Ghanim after al-Arzuzi had ceased his political activities for personal reasons.

20. Ibid., p. 34.

21. Ibid., p. 181.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., p. 286.

24. Ibid., p. 287.

25. Ibid., p. 294.

26. Batatu, Hanna (1981): 'Some Observations on the Social Roots of Syria's Ruling Military Group and the Causes for its Dominance.' *Middle East Journal,* vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 331–2, p. 333.

27. Hourani, Albert H. (1946): *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay.* London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, p. 98.

28. Viennot, Jean-Pierre (1964): 'La Baʿth entre la Théorie et la Praqtique.' *Orient,* vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 13–27, p. 15; Torrey, Gordon H. (1969): 'The Baʿth: Ideology and Practice.' *Middle East Journal,* vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 445–70, p. 450.

29. Ibid., p. 447.

30. Zisser, Eyal (2005): 'Syria, the Baʿth Regime and the Islamic Movement: Stepping on a New Path?' *Muslim World,* vol. 95, no. 1, pp. 43–65, p. 45;

Christmann, Andreas (2005b): 'Syrien.' In: Ende, Werner and Steinbach, Udo (eds): *Der Islam in der Gegenwart.* 5th ed. Munich: C. H. Beck, pp. 510–16, p. 510.

31. Kaylani, 'The Rise of the Syrian Ba'th', p. 7.
32. Schmucker, Werner (1973): 'Studien zur Baath-Ideologie (I. Teil).' *Die Welt des Islams,* vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 47–80, p. 54.
33. Ibid., p. 55f.
34. Ibid., p. 58 and p. 61.
35. Ibid., p. 63f.
36. Ibid., p. 72 and p. 78 and Kaylani, 'The Rise of the Syrian Ba'th', p. 6.
37. Gelvin, James L. (1998): *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire.* Berkeley, London: University of California Press, p. 82f.
38. In fact, to my knowledge, the religiosity of both Sunni and minority elements amongst the Syrian military and population at large at the time has not yet been explored.
39. For the role of ethnicity, amongst others see Batatu, 'Some Observations;' Drysdale, Alasdair (1979): 'Ethnicity in the Syrian Officer Corps: A Conceptualization.' *Civilisations,* vol. 29, no. 3/4, pp. 359–74; Drysdale, Alasdair (1981): 'The Syrian Political Elite, 1966–1976: A Spatial and Social Analysis.' *Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 3–30; Drysdale, Alasdair (1982b): 'The Syrian Armed Forces in National Politics: The Role of the Ethnic and Geographic Periphery.' In: Kolkowicz, Roman; Korbonski, Andrzej (eds): *Soldiers, Peasants, and Bureaucrats.* London: Allen and Unwin, pp. 52–76; and van Dam, Nikolaos (2011): *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society under Asad and the Ba'th Party.* 3rd ed. London, New York: I.B.Tauris.
40. Devlin, *The Ba'th Party,* p. 283.
41. Ibid., p. 290ff.
42. Ibid., p. 296.
43. Ibid., p. 302.
44. Ibid. Whilst various other authors following this naming, Schmucker applies the term 'Neobaath' to the corrective movement under Asad starting in 1970 only. See Schmucker, Werner (1974): 'Studien zur Baathideologie: II. Der Neobaath.' *Die Welt des Islams,* vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 146–82.
45. One of the best-known results of this cooperation is the Euphrates dam. Cf. Levy, Avigdor (1973): 'The Syrian Communists and the Ba'th Power Struggle, 1966–1970.' In: Confino, Michael; Shamir, Shimon (eds): *The USSR and the Middle East.* Jerusalem: Israel University Press, pp. 395–417, p. 397.
46. Ramet, Pedro (1990): *The Soviet–Syrian Relationship since 1955. A troubled Alliance.* Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, p. 42.
47. Levy, 'The Syrian Communists,' p. 410.
48. Munson, Henry jr. (1988): *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East.* New Haven, London: Yale University Press, p. 88; Seale, Patrick (1986): *The Struggle for*

Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945–1958. 2nd ed. London: I.B. Tauris, p. 162ff.

49. al-Ahsan, Syed Aziz (1984): 'Economic Policy and Class Structure in Syria: 1958–1980.' *Middle East Studies,* vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 301–23, p. 318.

50. Lawson, Fred H. (1982): 'Social Bases for the Hamah Revolt.' *MERIP,* no. 110, pp. 24–8, p. 3.

51. Hinnebusch, Raymond A. (1993): 'State and Civil Society in Syria.' *Middle East Journal,* vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 243–57, p. 246.

52. Keilany, Ziad (1973): 'Socialism and Economic Reform in Syria.' *Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 61–72, p. 66.

53. Petran, Tabitha (1972): *Syria.* London: Ernest Benn, p. 174f. and p. 178.

54. Ibid., p. 178f.

55. Munson, *Islam and Revolution*, p. 91. For more information on the Alawi rise to power within the Ba'th, see Batatu (1981); Faksh, Mahmoud A. (1984): 'The Alawi Community of Syria: A New Dominant Political Force.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 133–52; Firro, Kais M. (2005): 'The 'Alawis in Modern Syria: From Nuṣayrīya to Islam via 'Alawīya.' *Der Islam,* vol. 82, pp. 1–31; Haklai, Oded (2000): 'A Minority Rule over a Hostile Majority: The Case of Syria.' *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics,* vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 19–50; Khuri, Fuad I. (1991): 'The Alawis of Syria: Religious Ideology and Organization.' In: Antoun, Richard T. and Donald Quataert (eds): *Syria: Society, Culture, and Polity.* Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 53–6; Nimier, Alain (1987): *Les Alawites.* Paris: Asfar; Pipes, Daniel (1989): 'The Alawi Capture of Power in Syria.' *Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 429–50; and van Dam, *Struggle for Power.*

56. Munson, *Islam and Revolution*, p. 85; Batatu, Hanna (1982): 'Syria's Muslim Brethren.' *MERIP Reports,* vol. 12, no. 9, pp. 12–20; 34–5, p. 14 and p. 18.

57. Ibid., p. 15.

58. Munson, *Islam and Revolution*, p. 85ff. One of the peaks of such opposition occurred in April 1967, when an army magazine published an article stating that 'God, religion, feudalism, capitalism, imperialism and all the values that controlled ancient society are no more than mummies for the museum of history.' Ibid., p. 86f.

59. Petran stresses that the neo-Ba'thist radicalism was directed against the urban rich rather than the rich as such. For example, he points out that many of the leading officers were not from amongst the rural poor and some even came from landowning families. See Petran, *Syria*, p. 182f.

60. al-Ahsan, 'Economic Policy', p. 320.

61. Petran, *Syria*, p. 195ff.

62. Trentin, Massimiliano (2009): 'Modernization as State Building: The Two Germanies in Syria, 1963–1972.' *Diplomatic History*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 487–505, p. 496.

63. Devlin, *The Ba'th Party*, p. 212f.

64. Ben-Tzur, Avraham (1968): 'The Neo-Baʿth Party of Syria.' *Journal of Contemporary History,* vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 161–81, p. 171ff.

65. Original title: *Baʾd al-muntalaqat al-nazariyya*. See ibid., p. 173f.

66. Arab Socialist Baʿth Party (1974): *Some Theoretical Principles: Approved by the Six{th} National Congress, October 1963.* Beirut: Dar al-Taliyya, p. 54f. All references provided here are referring to the original version (in translation), which was later made accessible to Party members only in an abbreviated form. For a discussion of omissions in the later version especially with respect to Yasin al-Hafiz's original rejection of the military, see Ben-Tzur, 'Neo-Baʿth,' p. 173ff.

67. Arab Socialist Baʿth Party, *Some Theoretical Principles*, p. 54f.

68. Ibid., p. 66.

69. Ibid., p. 68.

70. Ibid., p. 38.

71. Ibid., p. 69.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., p. 66f.

74. Ibid., p. 65.

75. Ibid., p. 69.

76. Ibid., p. 43 and p. 50.

77. Ibid., p. 7.

78. Ibid., p. 9f.

79. Ibid., p. 7.

80. Devlin, *The Baʿth Party*, p. 35 n.43.

81. Ginat, Rami (2005): *Syria and the Doctrine of Arab Neutralism: From Independence to Dependence.* Brighton, Portland: Sussex Academic Press, p. 120.

82. Priestland, David (2007): *Stalinism and the Politics of Mobilization: Ideas, Power, and Terror in Inter-War Russia. Oxford:* Oxford University Press, p. 62. For exceptions to this view, see ibid, p. 106f.

83. Ibid., p. 58.

84. Ibid., p. 63ff.

85. Ibid., p. 85ff.

86. Ibid., p. 58 and p. 87.

87. Ibid., p. 89f.

88. Ibid., p. 102ff.

89. Ibid., p. 126ff.

90. Harding, Neil (1977): *Lenin's Political Thought: Theory and Practice in the Socialist Revolution.* New York: St Martin's Press. 2 vols. Vol. 2, p. 259f.

91. Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich (1964): *Collected Works.* Moscow: Progress Publishers. Vol. 32, pp. 19–42.

92. Priestland, *Stalinism*, p. 238.

93. Stalin, Joseph V. (1953): *Problems of Leninism.* Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, p. 164f.

94. Harper, Paul (1969): 'The Party and the Unions in Communist China.' *The China Quarterly, no.* 37, pp. 84–119, p. 85ff.

95. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, p. 165f.

96. Ibid., p. 170f.

97. Ibid., p. 174.

98. Ibid., p. 168.

99. Fisher, Ralph Talcott (1959): *Pattern for Soviet Youth: A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918–1954.* New York: Columbia University Press, p. 2.

100. Ibid., p. 10f.

101. Ibid., p. 12f.

102. Ibid., p. 47ff.

103. Ibid., p. 75 and p. 112; p. 31 for age regulations in 1920.

104. Kasza, Gregory J. (1995): *The Conscription Society: Administered Mass Organizations.* New Haven, London: Yale University Press, p. 28 and p. 29 n.8.

105. Fisher, *Pattern for Soviet Youth*, p. 67 and p. 135 for the early period.

106. Stites, Richard (1978): *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860–1930.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 331.

107. Farnsworth, Beatrice (1980): *Aleksandra Kollontai: Socialism, Feminism, and the Bolshevik Revolution.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 180ff.

108. Ibid., p. 307f.; Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia*, p. 341.

109. Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia*, p. 342.

110. Ibid., p. 335.

111. Buckley, Mary (1989): *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 66.

112. Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia*, p. 339.

113. Ibid., p. 345. For a short period of time, it was replaced by *zhensektory*, women's sections in the Communist Party. After Stalin, the Soviet Women's Committee was charged with creating propaganda on the achievements of communism for Soviet Women, while Krushchev's *zhensovety* or women committees were to disseminate Party politics at the local level. See Racioppi, Linda and Katherine O'Sullivan (1995): 'Organizing Women before and after the Fall: Women's Politics in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia.' *Signs*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 818–50, p. 821.

114. Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union*, p. 34ff.

115. Ibid., p. 39ff.; Lapidus, Gail Warshofsky (1978): *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development, and Social Change.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, p. 51; Shreeves, Rosamund (1992): 'Sexual Revolution or 'Sexploitation'? The Pornography and Erotica Debate in the Soviet Union.' In: Rai, Shirin, Hilary Pilkington et al. (eds): *Women in the Face of Change: The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China.* London, New York: Routledge, pp. 130–46, p. 132. Also, the situation of women across the Soviet territories differed considerably. Muslim women were perceived as particularly disadvantaged. See Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union*, p. 68 and p. 71.

116. Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society*, p. 42 and p. 83.

117. Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia*, p. 299.

118. Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society*, p. 42.

119. Evans Clements, Barbara (1991): 'Later Developments: Trends in Soviet Women's History, 1930 to the Present.' In: Evans Clements, Barbara, Barbara Alpern Engel et al. (eds): *Russia's Women: Accomodation, Resistance, Transformation.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, pp. 267–78, p. 274.

120. Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia*, p. 345.

121. Racioppi and O'Sullivan, 'Organizing Women before and after the Fall,' p. 821.

122. Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union*, chapter 3.

123. Evans Clements, 'Later Developments: Trends in Soviet Women's History,' p. 275. For example, abortion became illegal again under Stalin (1936), but was re-legalised under Khrushchev in 1955. See Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union*, p. 156ff.

124. For the spread of mass organisations in general, see Kasza, *Conscription Society*.

125. Grazia, Victoria de (1992): *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, p. 30.

126. Koonz, Claudia (1988): *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics.* London: Methuen, p. 143f.

127. Kasza, *Conscription Society*, p. 76ff. and p. 87 n.74.

128. See de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, p. 265 and Willson, Perry R. (2002): *Peasant Women and Politics in Fascist Italy: The Massaie Rurale.* London, New York: Routledge, p. 21 (Italy); Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, p. 143f., (Germany) and Havens, Thomas R. (1975): 'Women and War in Japan, 1937–1945.' *The American Historical Review,* vol. 80, no. 4, pp. 913–43, p. 914ff. (Japan).

129. See Willson, *Peasant Women and Politics in Fascist Italy*, p. 24; Grand, Alexander de (1976): 'Women under Italian Fascism.' *The Historical Journal,* vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 947–68, p. 952ff.; de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, p. 35 (Italy), and Wilson, Sandra (2006): 'Family or State? Nation, War and Gender in Japan, 1937–1945.' *Critical Asian Studies,* vol. 38, no. 2, pp. 209–38, p. 215 n. 28 (Japan). For a detailed study of another the Italian mass organisation for leisure, see Grazia, Victoria de (1981): *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

130. Kirkpatrick, Clifford (1939): *Women in Nazi Germany.* London: Jarrolds, p. 93. For the anti-employment campaign, see Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, p. 145, and Kirkpatrick, *Women in Nazi Germany*, p. 59f. and p. 137ff.

131. Hecker, Iris: *Frauenbilder des Nationalsozialismus: Beitrag zur historisch-politischen Bildung.* 2010th ed. (ebook): Grin, p. 14.

132. Layton, Geoff (2005): *Germany: The Third Reich 1933–1945.* London: Hodder Education, p. 1913.

133. de Grand, 'Women under Italian Fascism,' p. 952ff.

134. Anon. (1994): 'Minutes of the First Conference, Session IV, 24th September 1947.' In: Veca, Salvatore (ed.): *The Cominform: Minutes of the Three Conferences 1947, 1948, 1949.* Milano: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, pp. 165–200, p. 185; Ramet, Sabrina P. (1999): 'In Tito's Time.' In: Ramet, Sabrina P. (ed.): *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States.* Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 89–105, p. 93ff.

135. Weber, Gerda (1993): 'Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands (DFD).' In: Broszat, Martin, Hermann Weber et al. (eds): *SBZ Handbuch: Staatliche Verwaltung, Parteien, gesellschaftliche Organisationen, und ihre Führungskräfte in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands, 1945–1949.* 2nd ed. Munich: Oldenbourg, pp. 691–713, p. 691 and p. 699.

136. Davin, Delia (1976): *Woman-work: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 52.

137. Azicri, Max (1988): 'Women's Development through Revolutionary Mobilization.' In: Horowitz, Irving L. (ed.): *Cuban Communism.* 6th ed. New Jersey: Transaction Books, pp. 360–85, p. 362 and p. 365 n. 16.

138. Kasza does not consider any of the Yugoslav women's organisations as a mass organisation, although he points out that his list is selective (Kasza, *Conscription Society*, p. 2). This might be due to the fact that societies under its umbrella continued to work relatively independently. See also Anon., 'Minutes of the First Conference,' p. 185; Ramet, 'In Tito's Time,' p. 93ff.; Dobos, Manuela (1983): 'The Women's Movement in Yugoslavia: The Case of the Conference for the Social Activity of Women in Croatia, 1965–1974.' *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies,* vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 47–55. (Yugoslavia/Croatia); Davin, *Woman-work*, p. 52. (China) and Azicri, 'Women's Development,' p. 362 and p. 365 n. 16 (Cuba). In China, independent groups were re-admitted in the 1980s, see Ma, Qiusha (2005): *Non-Governmental Organizations in Contemporary China: Paving the Way to Civil Society?* London, New York: Routledge, p. 126.

139. See Ramet, 'In Tito's Time,' p. 93ff. (Yugoslavia), Weber, 'Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands (DFD),' p. 698ff. (East Germany); Zheng, Wang (2005): ''State Feminism'? Gender and Socialist State Formation in Maoist China.' *Feminist Studies,* vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 519–51, p. 521 and p. 530f. (China), and Harris, Colette (1995): 'Socialist Societies and the Emancipation of Women: The Case of Cuba.' *Socialism and Democracy,* vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 91–113, p. 93f. (Cuba).

140. The Italian and German fascist organisations were in place until the end of the war, but the Japanese Association lasted for only three years. The East German Federation existed until 1989, whilst the Chinese and Cuban organisations are still in place. For membership, see de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, p. 265 (Italy); Stephenson, Jill (1981): *The Nazi Organisation for Women.* London: Croom Helm, p. 18f. and Kompisch, Kathrin (2008): *Täterinnen: Frauen im Nationalsozialismus.* 2nd ed. Köln: Böhlau, p. 58 n. 99

(Nazi Germany); Wilson, 'Family or State?' p. 214 and p. 231 (Japan); Anon., 'Minutes of the First Conference,' p. 185; Ramet, 'In Tito's Time,' p. 93ff. (Yugoslavia); Azicri, 'Women's Development,' p. 362 and p. 365 n. 16 (estimate for Cuba dating from 1978). No membership figures are available for East Germany and China.

141. For a translation of the Party constitution, see Devlin, *The Ba'th Party*, appendix D.

142. Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, *Some Theoretical Principles*, p. 81.

143. Ghanem, Abboud et al., *Women and the People's Assembly*, p. 15f.

144. al-Razzaz, Nabila (1975): *Musharakat al-mar'a fi'l-hayat al-'amma fi Suriya: Mundhu 'l-istiqlal 1945 wa-hatta 1975*. Damascus: Manshurat wizarat al-thaqafa wa'l-irshad al-qawmi, p. 166.

145. al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year): *al-Mar'a al-'arabiyya fi l-qatr al-'arabi al-suri*. [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 147.

146. The women nominated to the Assembly were Su'ad al-'Abd Allah, Najah Sa'ati, Wasima Safarjalani, 'A'isha al-Dabbagh, Hayat al-Dawalibi, Furat Tlimat, Shukriyya 'Abd al-Ghani and Nabila al-Razzaz in 1965, as well as 'Adila Bayyhum, Luris 'Azar, Ummayya al-Khayyir and Jacqueline Bitar in 1966. See Ghanem, Abboud et al., *Women and the People's Assembly*, p. 15 n. 13f.

147. Ibid., p. 15f.

148. This might be due to the tendency of the few Syrian sources available to focus on Damascus.

149. Diyab, 'Su'ad al-'Abd Allah,' p. 192.

150. Ibid., p. 193.

151. Yaziji, 'Najah Sa'ati,' p. 138.

152. al-Tayyibi, Hana (2008): 'Luris 'Azar.' In: Salih, Nabil (ed.): *Nisa' Suriya*. [no place]: al-Hay'a al-suriyya li-shu'un al-usra, vol. 1, pp. 153–63, p. 153.

153. Ibid., p. 154f. No further information is available on 'Atifa al-Jabiri and Jamila Ibrahim.

154. Ibid., p. 156.

155. Ibid., p. 161.

156. Ibid., p. 162.

157. Ibid., p. 161.

158. al-Tayyibi, 'Luris 'Azar', p. 159.

159. EM: *Interview with Maryam*. April 2010, Aleppo.

160. al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973): *Taqrir al-mu'tamar al-'amm al-awwal li'l-ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i al-mun'aqad fi Dimashq bayna 10–14/12/1973*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. [12].

161. Diyab, 'Su'ad al-'Abd Allah,' p. 194.

162. Ibid., p. 194f.

163. al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 137.

164. Trentin, 'Modernization as State Building,' p. 503.

165. Diyab, 'Su'ad al-'Abd Allah,' p. 195.

166. Anon. (no year [a]): *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. §1.1hāʾ.

167. Diyab, 'Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah,' p. 195, *Photograph: Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah as the chairwoman of the 'Women's Union', 1966 (2).* Dar al-wathaʾiq al-tarikhiyya, al-Qism al-basri: al-Shakhsiyyat-siyasiyya, Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah 2 (3102).

168. Syria was now subdivided into 14 governorates: Damascus, Damascus countryside, Qunaytra, Diraʿa, and al-Suwaydaʾ in the south; Hums and Hamah in the interior; Dayr al-Zur and al-Hasaka in the east and north-east bordering Iraq and Turkey; al-Raqqa, Aleppo and Idlib bordering Turkey only; al-Ladhiqiyya and Tartous in the west along the coast. See Appendix A map 2.

169. For the early establishment period, see: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [12f.]; Introduction to legal decree no 121, Anon. (1967): *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya.* [no place]: [publisher unknown]; al-Wikala al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya li'l-anbaʾ (1977): *al-Munazzamat al-shaʿbiyya fi ʾl-qatr al-ʿarabi l-suri mundhu takwiniha wa-lighayat ʿam 1977.* Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 202; and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 147.

170. Diyab, 'Suʿad al-ʿAbd Allah,' p. 196.

171. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: al-Maktab al-idari, farʿ Halab (no year): *Taʾrikh al-masira al-nadaliyya li'l-marʾa fi munazzamat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 1967–2000.* Aleppo: [publisher unknown], p. 10.

172. Ibid.

173. EM: *Interviews with Amina and Khulud* (separately). April 2010, Aleppo.

174. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: al-Maktab al-idari, farʿ Halab (no year), *Taʾrikh*, p. 10.

175. EM: *Interview with Khulud.* April 2010, Aleppo.

176. EM: *Interviews with Amina and Khulud* (separately). April 2010, Aleppo. No interviewee mentioned Thurayya Muhy al-Din, and the question of Party membership was rarely touched upon.

177. EM: *Interview with Amina*. April 2010, Aleppo.

178. Yaziji, 'Najah Saʿati,' p. 138.

179. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-suri (Lajnat al-dirasat al-markaziyya) (no year), *al-Marʾa al-ʿarabiyya*, p. 148; al-Wikala al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya li'l-anbaʾ, *al-Munazzamat al-shaʿbiyya*, p. 210f.

180. The original decree is Anon. (1967): *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]. To this, the orginal version of the internal regulations (*nizam dakhili*) was added at an unknown date (Anon. (no year [a]): *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]). However, its contents identify it as such. It was replaced with law no 33 on 22 December 1975 (text in al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*

al-mun'aqad bi-ta'rikh 03/01/1976. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. pp. 19–33). Another amended version was issued by legal decree no 3 on 5 February 1984. The author does not possess a copy of this decree though. Based on a circular by the National Command (*al-qiyada al-quturiyya*), the last amendment came into force by decision no 694 of the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour on 26 August 1986; see al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (1987): *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili.* Damascus: Matabi' dar al-ba'th.

181. al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-mu'tamar al-'amm al-awwal,* p. [13]. Later, the headquarters were moved to Abu Rumana.

182. al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i fi l-qatr al-'arabi al-suri: al-Maktab al-tanfidhi, maktab al-i'lam al-markazi (1969): 'Hasad al-'am al-awwal.' *al-Mar'a al-'arabiyya,* vol. 2, no. 14, pp. 10–15, p. 12.

183. The source dates the administrative office of Tartous on 20 November 1968. This is probably a typing error considering almost all administrative offices were opened in the two periods specified above, at three particular dates. For the same reason, it could be assumed the office in Dira'a was opened on 20 November 1967 as well. See ibid., p. 13ff.

184. According to the source, the administrative office in al-Hasaka was opened on 9 December 1976. However, since the article was published in 1969, this is likely to be a typing error as well. See ibid., p. 12ff.

185. Ibid., p. 14f. The source quotes Idlib twice, and with different contents regarding its activities. While this appears to be a mistake and one of the entries must be referring to a different governorate, no dates are provided for either of the two.

186. *al-Mar'a al-'arabiyya* quotes the administrative office in Hamah as having been opened on 22 January 1967. See ibid., p. 13. However, this would have predated even the executive office in Damascus. Yet the 1973 report states that all administrative offices had been set up between 1967 and 1968, with the only exception being Damascus countryside (*al-atraf,* later to be called *rif* Dimashq), the office of which was founded in 1969; see al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-mu'tamar al-'amm al-awwal,* p. [13]. Hence it is concluded that the office in Hamah was set up in either 1967 or 1968.

187. EM: *Interview with Amr.* March 2010, Aleppo. Raymond Hinnebusch earlier confirmed such a parallel structure for other mass organisations from the 1980s onwards. See Hinnebusch, 'State and Civil Society in Syria,' p. 167 and Hinnebusch, Raymond A. (2001): *Syria: Revolution from Above.* London, New York: Routledge, p. 80. Around 1971, the smallest Party unit was the *halaqa* (the circle), comprising three to five members. The *firqa* was a group of three to five circles, two to five of which were subordinated to *al-shu'ba* (the section). The sections are led by the *far',* the branch, of which there is one per governorate and which are directed by the regional congress. See Mahr, Horst

(1971): *Die Baath-Partei: Portrait einer panarabischen Bewegung.* Munich, Vienna: Günter Olzog Verlag, p. 122f.

188. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi l-qatr al-ʿarabi al-suri: al-Maktab al-tanfidhi, maktab al-iʿlam al-markazi (1969), 'Hasad al-ʿam al-awwal,' p. 10.

189. Hinnebusch, Raymond A. (1980): 'Political Recruitment and Socialization in Syria: The Case of the Revolutionary Youth Federation.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 143–74, p. 144.

190. Kasza, *Conscription Society*, p. 21 Table 5. As for his diagram indicating that the idea of mass organisations disseminated from the Soviet Union to Syria through Egypt, see the later section on the Afro–Asian movement. Levy too stresses Soviet origins of Syrian state-formation under the Baʿth. See Levy, 'The Syrian Communists,' p. 396.

191. As Sloat has pointed out, mass organisations for women were indeed set up in most Soviet Bloc states after World War II as well (quoted in Haskova, Hana (2005): 'Czech Women's Civic Organising under the State Socialist Regime, Socio-economic Transformation and the EU Accession Period.' *Czech Sociological Review,* vol. 41, no. 6, pp. 1077–110, p. 1080). Their emergence has not been analysed here because these states' foreign policy relations prior to 1966 were moulded by their dependence on the Soviet Union, and will hence not be analysed separately below. Yugoslavia and the GDR are regarded as exceptions due to Tito's significance for the Baʿth and the GDR's privileged position; the Soviet Union was more willing to grant the GDR a free hand in its foreign relations due to its geo-political location, and the GDR was particularly active in Syria prior to the period in question. As for Cuba, Syria established diplomatic relations in 1965, but the cooperation between both states only became visible during the 1973 War, with Cuba lending Syria logistical aid. Later, Cuban advisors became particularly active in reforming Syria's health system. See Stäheli, Martin (2000): *Die syrische Außenpolitik unter Präsident Hafiz al-Assad.* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, p. 235f.; Ramet, *The Soviet-Syrian Relationship since 1955*, p. 97. The lack of earlier records suggests that Cuban–Syrian cooperation mainly occurred after the period in question here, rendering the Cuban experience unlikely to have served as an early model for Syrian mass organisations.

192. The Soviet Union was amongst the first states to acknowledge Syrian independence as early as 1944. See Ro'i, Yaacov (1974): *From Encroachment to Involvement: A Documentary Study of Soviet Policy in the Middle East, 1945–1973.* London: Wiley and Sons, p. 28. See also Ginat, Rami (1996): 'Soviet Policy towards the Arab World, 1945–48.' *Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 321–35, p. 323 for military aid and educational experts. Both countries agreed on an arms deal in 1954. See Ginat, Rami (2000): 'The Soviet Union and the Syrian Baʾth Regime: From Hesitation to Rapprochement.' *Middle East Studies,* vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 150–71. n. 29 and Karsh, Efraim (1988): *The Soviet Union and Syria: The Asad Years.* London, New York: Routledge, p. 3. There followed an economic and technical agreement in 1957, see ibid., p. 4.

In the fields of culture and education, another agreement had been concluded in 1956, and the Soviet Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with the Countries of the Arab East in Syria was established two years later. See Dawisha, Karen (1975): 'Soviet Cultural Relations with Iraq, Syria and Egypt 1955–70.' *Soviet Studies*, vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 418–42, p. 425f.

193. Ramet, *The Soviet–Syrian Relationship since 1955*, p. 33f.

194. Ibid.

195. Ibid., p. 35.

196. Ibid., p. 38.

197. Ibid., p. 40 n. 114.

198. Shichor, Yitzhak (1979): *The Middle East in China's Foreign Policy 1949–1974.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 104.

199. Ibid., p. 83 n. 44.

200. Emerging from the civil war, the People's Republic of China struggled for international recognition in the 1950s. It reached a trade agreement with Syria in 1955, the latter officially acknowledging the People's Republic of China one year later. See ibid., p. 47. In 1957, China pledged to support Syria in the event of an American attack, believed to be pending. Ibid., p. 89f. In the same year, a Syrian–Chinese friendship association was founded in Damascus, as well as in Beijing shortly thereafter, and both countries increased their mutual trade. Ibid., p. 75. After the break-up of the UAR, China resumed relations with Syria in 1962. See ibid., p. 114.

201. Ibid., p. 110f.

202. Ibid., p. 114 and p. 124.

203. Freedman, Robert O. (1991): *Moscow and the Middle East: Soviet Policy since the Invasion of Afghanistan.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 27.

204. Levy, 'The Syrian Communists,' p. 396f.

205. Rabinovich, Itamar (1972): *Syria under the Ba'th 1963–66: The Army-Party Symbiosis.* Jerusalem: Israel University Press, p. 207; Ginat, 'The Soviet Union and the Syrian Ba'th Regime,' p. 159.

206. Ibid., p. 163.

207. Ibid., p. 160.

208. Ibid. Bakdash's return had been one of the conditions for Soviet credit for the Euphrates project. See Ramet, *The Soviet–Syrian Relationship since 1955*, p. 38.

209. Ismael, Tareq Y. and Jacqueline S. Ismael (1998): *The Communist Movement in Syria and Lebanon.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, p. 155.

210. Ramet, *The Soviet–Syrian Relationship since 1955*, p. 42. Thus, economic aid outweighed military aid. Most notably, the Soviet Union sponsored the construction of the Euphrates Dam. Originally, West Germany had promised vital credits, but the second Ba'th regime pointedly withdrew from the agreement after diplomatic relations had been halted in 1965. See Trentin, 'Modernization as State Building,' p. 499f.

211. Levy, 'The Syrian Communists', p. 397f., Ginat, 'The Soviet Union and the Syrian Ba'th Regime,' p. 163 and p. 167.

212. Ramet, *The Soviet–Syrian Relationship since 1955*, p. 240ff. Regardless of the question of diplomatic recognition, trade relations had been established in 1955. See Stäheli, *Die syrische Außenpolitik*, p. 243. For the competition between the two Germanies, see Trentin, 'Modernization as State Building'.

213. Ramet, *The Soviet–Syrian Relationship since 1955*, p. 243.

214. *Abteilung Internationale Beziehungen im ZK der SED – Syrien, 1965–1971.* SAPMO BArch, DY 30 IV A2/20/874.

215. *Vereinbarung zur Zusammenarbeit der SED mit der Regionalleitung der Arabischen Sozialistischen Baath-Party Syriens (Entwurf), 1971.* SAPMO BArch, DY 30 IV A2/2.023/105. For a more detailed insight into GDR mass organisations, see Fulbrook, Mary (1995): *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR, 1949–1989.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

216. Ginat, *Syria and the Doctrine of Arab Neutralism*, p. 127f.

217. Ibid., p. 217f.

218. Kimche, David (1973): *The Afro-Asian Movement: Ideology and Foreign Policy of the Third World.* Jerusalem: Israel University Press, p. 4.

219. Ibid., p. 34.

220. Ibid., p. 36 and p. 92.

221. Ibid., p. 90f.

222. Ibid., p. 135f.

223. Ibid., p. 138.

224. Ginat, *Syria and the Doctrine of Arab Neutralism*, p. 225ff.

225. al-Husni al-Jaza'iri, ''Adila Bayyhum,' p. 32.

226. Ibid.

227. Prashad, Vijay (2007): *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World.* New York, London: New Press, p. 53.

228. By this time, the movement was mainly supported by Egyptian, Chinese and Soviet funds; see Kimche, *The Afro-Asian Movement*, p. 136 n. 28.

229. al-Husni al-Jaza'iri, ''Adila Bayyhum,' p. 32.

230. Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, p. 57 n. 25.

231. I would like to thank Prof Laura Bier for providing me with this source. See Anon. (1961): *The first Afro-Asian Women's Conference, Cairo 14–23 January 1961.* Cairo: Amalgamated Press of Egypt, p. 70f.

232. Another trip led her to India, see al-Husni al-Jaza'iri, ''Adila Bayyhum,' p. 33.

233. As for Algeria, see Metz, Helen C. (1994): *Algeria: A Country Study.* Washington D.C.: Federal Research Division, p. 215. Libya and South Yemen embraced socialism only after the period in question. The same is true for Iraq where the new Ba'thist regime set up the Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i al-iraqi (General Union of Iraqi Women) after assuming power in 1968. Whilst needing further study, the earlier emergence of women's societies and a Communist Party women's organisation as well as the evolvement of this Ba'thist mass organisation for women seems to strongly resemble Syrian developments. See Ismael, Jacqueline S. and Shereen T. Ismael (2000): 'Gender

and State in Iraq.' In: Joseph, Suad (ed.): *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East.* New York: Syracuse University Press, pp. 185–211, p. 192ff.

234. Yinong, Jin (2001): 'The All-China Women's Federation: Challenges and Trends.' In: Hsiung, Ping-Chun, Maria Jaschok et al. (eds): *Chinese Women Organizing: Cadres, Feminists, Muslims, Queers.* Oxford, New York: Berg, pp. 123–40, p. 753f.

235. With respect to the reproduction of structures, Pierre Bourdieu introduced his concept of *habitus*. Bourdieu defines *habitus* as 'a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitively diversified tasks.' (Bourdieu, Pierre (1977): *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 82). *Habitus* refers to social practices that are both shaped by and are also constantly reproducing structures in fields such as the economy or culture. Through the interaction of different fields as well as the agency of individuals or groups, structures can also be transformed. Organisational theory has suggested that not only individuals, but also organisations can exhibit *habitus*. See e.g. Emirbayer, Mustafa and Victoria Johnson (2008): 'Bourdieu and Organizational Analysis.' *Theory and Society*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 1–44 and Vaughan, Diane (2008): 'Bourdieu and Organizations: The Empirical Challenge.' *Theory and Society*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 65–81.

236. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 361.

237. al-Husni al-Jazaʾiri, ''Adila Bayyhum,' p. 33.

238. Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 432, al-Husni al-Jazaʾiri, ''Adila Bayyhum,' p. 35.

239. al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 82f., Moubayed, *Steel and Silk*, p. 498.

240. al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 80.

241. Ibid., p. 84.

242. Ibid., p. 83.

243. Diyab, Amina (2008a): 'Jihan al-Musuli.' In: Salih, Nabil (ed.): *Nisaʾ Suriya.* [no place]: al-Hayʾa al-suriyya li-shuʾun al-usra, vol. 1, pp. 49–60, p. 58.

Chapter 3   Union Membership and Mobilisation (1967–2008)

1. Kasza, Gregory J. (1995): *The Conscription Society: Administered Mass Organizations.* New Haven, London: Yale University Press, p. 38 n.23 and p. 39 n. 34.

2. EM: *Interview with Hanna*. August 2009, Aleppo.

3. EM: *Interview with Amina*. April 2010, Aleppo.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. See Anon. (1967): *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 10 §4.

7. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-munʿaqad bi-taʾrikh 03/01/1976*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 34f.

8. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-munʿaqad fi Dimashq bayna 10–14/12/1973*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. [19].

9. Ibid., as well as al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 36.

10. Ibid., p. 35.

11. Ibid., p. 36.

12. Ibid., p. 34.

13. Ibid., p. 1.

14. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [56].

15. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a): *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi majal maktab al-tanzim iʿtibaran min 03/01/1976 wa-lighayat 19/01/1980*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 7. Throughout the sources available, this process is termed *tathqif*.

16. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]): *Taqrir al-nashatat li'l-dawra al-intikhabiyya (80–83) al-muqaddam li'l-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-rabiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq 8 adhar 1984*. [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 4 lit.

17. Appendix B Table 1. There are no membership figures available between 1967 and 1973.

18. Appendix B Table 2.

19. Appendix B Table 3 part 1.

20. Appendix B Table 3 part 3.

21. However, it cannot be established why between 1999 and 2003, real membership recruitment was reported lower than it actually was. This might reflect errors in the original figures. Statistics regarding members who left the organisation were not included in the reports.

22. For ease of overview, only term figures are provided in Appendix B.

23. Appendix B Table 4 part 2 (planned increase) and Table 5 (real increase).

24. Appendix B Table 6 part 2.

25. Appendix B Table 6 part 4.

26. Appendix B Table 4 part 2.

27. Appendix B Table 6 part 1.

28. Appendix B Table 6 part 3.

29. Appendix B Table 6 part 3. However, Tartous lost members in the following term.

30. EM: *Interview with Badriyya*. May 2010, Damascus.

31. Seale, Patrick (1990): *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East.* London: I.B.Tauris, p. 421ff.

32. Ibid., p. 437f.

33. EM: *Interview with Badriyya*. May 2010, Damascus.

34. Considering that in the Union, the governorate of Aleppo, home to Syria's second largest city, Hamah, and the predominantly rural governorates of al-Hasaka and Qunaytra were affected to similar extents, it can be deduced that support for Hafiz or Rifaʿat did not follow urban–rural divisions.

35. For groups assigned, see appendix B Table 7 parts 1+2.

36. Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (1988): *Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. Damascus: Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ, p. 6.

37. Appendix B Table 7 part 3.

38. See also appendix B Table 8.

39. See also appendix B Table 13.

40. These years are chosen as points of reference on the basis of national censuses. For the time of the first Baʿthist census in 1970 no corresponding Union data on membership education is available.

41. Appendix B Table 13 and 14.

42. Ibid.

43. Appendix B Table 15.

44. These differences are more apparent when looking at the data per term as shown in the individual tables. For example, between 1980 and 1983, the fewest newly recruited members who were illiterate were in al-Ladhiqiyya (4.8 per cent), while in al-Raqqa, more than a third of new members could neither read nor write, with similarly high figures in Dayr al-Zur. Appendix B Table 16 part 1.

45. Ibid. This trend shows some remarkable exceptions though, e.g. Hamah and Diraʿa (groups 3 and 4) exhibit educational trends similar to Damascus (group 1).

46. Appendix B Table 16 part 2.

47. Appendix B Table 17.

48. The Union counted all women who did not work outside the house as housewives. See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi li'l-dawra al-intikhabiyya bayna ʿam 1984–1989 al-muqaddam li'l-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 6.

49. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 15.

50. Ibid., p. 17. See also al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – ʿal-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʾid Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 9; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi li'l-dawra al-intikhabiyya bayna ʿam 1980–1983 al-Muqaddam li'l-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-rabiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi.* Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 5; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 2, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis li'l-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994.* Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 6.

51. *Appendix B Table 17*.
52. Ibid.
53. The alternative occupational statistics list a very detailed account of several dozen occupations, which however still do not coincide with the categories used in Union statistics.
54. In this case the 1981 census predates the first available professional Union data by three years (1984–8). Hence a comparison can serve as a rough indicator only.
55. *Appendix B Table 18 part 1*.
56. *Appendix B Table 18 part 2*.
57. *Appendix B Table 19 part 1*.
58. *Appendix B Table 19 part 2*.
59. *Appendix B Table 20*.
60. *Appendix B Table 21*.
61. Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, p. 5.
62. Ibid., p. 3f. §1 and §4.
63. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987): *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*. Damascus: Matabiʿ dar al-baʿth. §45.6.
64. See e.g. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 1, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980b): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thalith li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-munʿaqad fi Dimashq fi l-fatra al-waqiʿa ma bayna 19–24/01/1980*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 2.
65. The terminology differs from that noted elsewhere; for example, Batatu found a distinction between a full Party member (*ʿadu ʿamil*) and a supporting member (*ʿadu ansar*). See Batatu, Hanna (1999): *Syria's Peasantry, the Descendants of its Lesser Rural Notables, and their Politics.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 179. Full members hold wider responsibilities than affiliated members; for example, only full members can assume an active role, participate in internal elections, or run as candidates for elections.
66. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 35 Table 5 and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – 'al-Marʾa hiya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya wa'l-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 63 Table 19.
67. *Appendix B Table 22 part 1*.
68. *Appendix B Table 23*.
69. *Appendix B Table 24 part 1*.
70. *Appendix B Table 24 part 3*.
71. The fact that the real figures for this term are higher than the reported might indicate that Party members were also won amongst existing members. However, seeing as the same problem occurred with respect to general membership, it is more likely to reflect a problem in the original data.
72. *Appendix B Table 25 part 2*.

73. Appendix B Table 26.
74. Appendix B Table 27 part 2.
75. Appendix B Table 27 part 4.
76. Appendix B Table 25 part 2.
77. Appendix B Table 27 part 1 + 3.
78. Appendix B Table 27 part 1 + 3.
79. Appendix B Table 27 part 5.
80. Appendix B Table 28.
81. Appendix B Table 29 parts 1 + 2.
82. It is possible that prior to 1986 the situation was different in that not all non-full Party members were affiliated members, but due to a lack of data this cannot be established.
83. Appendix B Table 30.
84. Appendix B Table 31.
85. Batatu, *Syria's Peasantry*, p. 177.
86. See my remarks in the introduction.
87. However, the national censuses hold no information on confession.
88. Grazia, Victoria de (1992): *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, p. 265 (Italy); Stephenson, *The Nazi Organisation for Women*, p. 18f. and Kompisch, *Täterinnen*, p. 58 n. 99 (Nazi Germany); Azicri, Max (1988): 'Women's Development through Revolutionary Mobilization.' In: Horowitz, Irving L. (ed.): *Cuban Communism.* 6th ed. New Jersey: Transaction Books, pp. 360–85, p. 362 and p. 365 n. 16 (Cuba, 1978).
89. As for membership in other mass organisations, in Italy for example, a total of a quarter of women eligible had signed up with state-run mass organisations. de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, p. 265.

Chapter 4   Reaching out to Every Woman

1. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]): *Taqrir al-nashatat li'l-dawra al-intikhabiyya (80–83) al-muqaddam li'l-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-rabiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq 8 adhar 1984.* [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 1, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]): *Taqrir al-nashatat: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 8 adhar 1994 – 'Inna dawr fi l-bilad yaʿni al-ʿafiyya al-wataniyya. Wa yushakkil tasaʿud dawr al-marʾa dalilan ʿala itrad taqaddum al-fikr wa-irtiqaʾ al-wujudan wa'l-hiss al-watani wa'l-qawmi wa'l-insani' – min aqwal al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 4.
2. EM: *Interview with Amina*. April 2010, Aleppo.
3. EM: *Interview with Amina*. April 2010, Aleppo. House visits and parents' days remained crucial points of contact. See also al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 7f. lit; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 6; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi

(al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]): *Taqrir al-nashatat: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – 'al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʿid Hafiz al-Asad.* [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 5.

4. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a): *al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi: Taqrir al-nashatat.* [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 10ff. lit; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 7ff., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi.* [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 8.

5. EM: *Interview Zaynab*. May 2010, Aleppo. The Union first targeted nine to 12-year-old children only, expanding this policy to include six to nine-year-olds in the 1980s. See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 6 lit.

6. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-munʿaqad fi Dimashq bayna 10–14/12/1973*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. pp. [20–4], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 64ff., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 4f., p. 7ff. and p. 13f. lit, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1989a), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 10ff. lit, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 10ff., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 16 lit.

7. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 64ff.

8. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, pp. [20–4].

9. Ibid., EM: *Interview with Hanna*. August 2009, Aleppo.

10. EM: *Interview with Amina*. April 2010, Aleppo, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [23]. Only ten years later, the head of the literacy section coordinating these activities became employed in some administrative offices. See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 14 lit.

11. Ibid., p. 11 and p. 16 lit.

12. This is the earliest and most recent data available per governorate. The 2008 statistics state total numbers only.

13. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 4 and Table 15.

14. UNESCO (2004): 'EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005: Education for All: The Quality Imperative'. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001373/137333e.pdf, p. 262 and p. 129.

15. The 1970, 1994 and 2004 censuses did publish data on education by governorate and sex. However, the number of women recorded as having attended Union literacy classes in 1969 is too low to be statistically

significant, and no attendance figures are available for the periods from 1970–3 and 2004–8. The figures available for 1989–93 list participants of both beginner and advanced level courses together, which is not useful here as many women will have been counted twice if they moved on to the higher level within the same term.

16. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 4 vt, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 119, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [29].

17. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 6 vt, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 4 vt.

18. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 4 vt.

19. EM: *Interview with Amina*. April 2010, Aleppo.

20. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [32ff.], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 78f., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 119, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 2 and p. 7 vt, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 5f. vt. For the salons, see al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 129f., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 13. However, often this entailed an office room to which the Union hairdresser would bring her own equipment outside of office hours rather than a fully fitted salon.

21. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [30], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 75ff., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 6 vt, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 127, ibid., p. 129f., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 8ff. vt, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 15 vt. Photographs above taken by the author. The picture on the left shows needlework typical of Idlib, whilst the decoration on the right was crafted in Aleppo. The picture in the middle shows a stitched certificate for a driving class.

22. As for difficulties, see al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 81, no activity report for 1976–80, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 12 vt, no vocational training report for 1984–8, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 120f., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 7 vt, no mention in 2004, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]): *Taqrir al-nashatat:*

al-muʾtamar al-tasiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – 'al-Marʾa hiya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya wa'l-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad. [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 259. With respect to income, see al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 7ff. vt, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 118, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 2 vt, no figures for 2004 and 2009. For example, between 1994 and 1998, 115,778,903 Syrian pounds of income stood against 93,247,636 Syrian pounds of expenses.

23. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [31], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 253ff.

24. Hardy, Mohammed K. (UNESCO) (1965): 'Technical Education in the Arab States'. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0000/000013/001328eo.pdf, p. 30; Matthews, Roderic D. and Matta Akrawi (1949): *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East.* Washington D.C.: American Council on Education, p. 375ff.

25. European Training Foundation (2003): 'Vocational Education and Training in Syria and its Relevance to the Labour Market'. http://www.pedz.uni-mannheim.de/daten/edz-tr2/esb/03/VET_Syria.pdf, p. 8 and p. 20.

26. Ibid., p. 24.

27. Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (1970): *Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. Damascus: Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ, p. 18ff. Table 7, and Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (2004): *Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya.* Also available at www.cbssyr.org and http://www.cbssyr.org/General%20census/census%202004/pop-str.pdf (no page), Table 6.

28. Benavot, Aaron (1983): 'The Rise and Decline of Vocational Education.' *Sociology of Education,* vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 63–76, p. 68f. Figures for 2004 could not be established.

29. European Training Foundation, *Vocational Education and Training in Syria*, p. 27.

30. EM: *Interview with Tariq*. April 2010, Aleppo. In 2010, the official average income was around 11,000 Syrian pounds per month. See al-Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (2010): 'Average monthly Salary of main Work for paid Workers (15 years and over) by economic Activity and Gender in 2010'. http://www.cbssyr.sy/work/2010/ALL-2010/TAB46.htm.

31. EM: *Interview with Hanna*. August 2009, Aleppo.

32. The earliest figure dates back to the term ending in 1976, and no figures are available for 1984–8. Most of the underlying statistics count participants, while some only consider those who successfully completed the class. Thus the total figure of those having entered vocational training classes can be estimated as higher, but the number of girls and women who completed them as lower, than the figure above.

33. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 2 vt.

34. Appendix B Table 20. These figures reflect formal employment. In addition, an unknown but probably significant number of women found work in the informal sector, which was estimated to make up 42 per cent of Syria's GDP by 2004. The informal sector is an important site of women's work. It includes unpaid workers and labourers in family-owned businesses and in the fields, those who are self-employed, domestic workers, or part-time workers. Work in the informal sector as well as informal work in the formal sector excludes workers from social protection, and is usually not documented. See ESCWA (2004): Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region 2003–4. Beirut: ESCWA, p. 51 and ILO (2010): 'Policy Brief 8: Gender, Employment and the Informal Economy in Syria'. http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/arpro/beirut/downloads/info/fact/genderbriefs/policybrief_8_syria.pdf.

35. UNDP (no year): 'Human Development Data for the Arab States: Labor Participation Rate, Female (% of Female Population ages 15+)'. http://www.arab-hdr.org/data/indicators/2012-35.aspx. Problematically, this source quotes the female employment rate for Syria at around 20 per cent.

36. The necessity for statistics and planning was stressed before 1980, but as a separate section statistics and planning only emerge in the reports from that year onwards.

37. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a), *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, introduction to the chapter on Statistics and Planning.

38. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 2ff. sp, also al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1989a), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 8 sp.

39. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 15 sp.

40. For investment projects, see ibid., Table 3, p. 11ff., p. 16 sp, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1989a), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, pp. 10–20 sp, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 314, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 15f. sp, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 10, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 161.

41. See for example al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1989a), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, pp. 10–20 sp or al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 314.

42. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thalith*, p. 17 sp, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, Table 3 sp.

43. al-Razzaz, Nabila (1975): *Musharakat al-marʾa fiʾl-hayat al-ʿamma fi Suriya: Mundhu ʾl-istiqlal 1945 wa-hatta 1975*. Damascus: Manshurat wizarat al-thaqafa waʾl-irshad al-qawmi, p. 91.

44. Ibid.

45. This was made explicit. See ibid., p. 93.

46. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [20].

47. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 1 nk.

48. Ibid., p. 5 nk and Table 11 nk.

49. The number of nurseries fell from 299 in 1964 to 259 in 1969, but increased thereafter to 215 by 1974. It is unclear whether the increase entailed re-opening some of the nurseries that had been closed down earlier.

50. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [25], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 67, no information for 1976–80, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 6 and p. 13 nk, only statistics for 1984–8.

51. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 258ff.

52. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 20 nk, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 131. By that time, the sections had been renamed into the section for child protection.

53. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 4 nk, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 8 nk.

54. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [20], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 67, no report 1976–1980 for nurseries and kindergartens, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 17 and Table 11 nk, no report 1984–8 for nurseries and kindergartens, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 291 Table 8, no information on summer camps 1994–8, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 24 nk, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 128f.

55. See appendix B Table 20.

56. UNESCO Arab Resource Collective (2006): 'Background Paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007: Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education. Comparative Regional Analysis of ECCE in four Arab Countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Sudan)'. http://unesdoc. unesco.org/images/0014/001474/147440e.pdf p. 15.

57. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2005): 'Global Education Digest 2005: Comparing Education Statistics around the World'. http://unesdoc.unesco. org/images/0014/001403/140350e.pdf, p. 40.

58. UNESCO (2008): 'Regional Overview: Arab States. EFA Progress and Challenges'. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001572/157267e.pdf, p. 12.

59. Kattaa, Maha and Shattouf al-Shaykh Hussein (2010): 'Women's Access to Social Protection in Syria.' *European Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 591–604, p. 594. Not all Union facilities charged the same prices; it

appears that a scheme for reduced fees was introduced in the early 1980s. See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 11 nk. By 2009, almost half of all Union nurseries and kindergartens offered especially low fees, cf. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 128f. In Syria, only 16 per cent of personnel had received appropriate training by 2004. See UNESCO, *Regional Overview*, p. 2.

60. In 2005, 50 per cent of Syrians compared to 88 per cent of Lebanese living in urban areas. See UNESCO Arab Resource Collective, *Background Paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007*, p. 12, p. 15 and p. 36 table A5.

61. The armed forces were opened to women in the 1970s. See Galdo, Anna (no year): 'Welfare in the Mediterranean Countries: The Syrian Arab Republic'. http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/caimed/unpan018931.pdf, p. 12; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1985): *al-Taqaddum alladhi ahruzat al-marʾa bayna 1976–1985: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi l-qatr al-ʿarabi al-suri. al-Muʾtamar al-ʿalami liʾl-ʿaqd al-umam al-muttahida liʾl-marʾa, Nairobi, 15 tamuz 1985 al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 26f.; al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi l-qatr al-ʿarabi al-suri (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi, maktab al-iʿlam al-markazi) (1979): *al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi arbaʿa sanawat, 1976–1979*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 20f. From 1994 onwards, the section was renamed into the section of Health, although civil defence still continued to play a role. For parachuting, see al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 3 cdh.

62. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [35f.], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 85 and p. 87, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1989a), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, no page, Table 4 hcd, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 168ff., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 29 h Table 2, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 5ff. and Tables 3 and 4 h.

63. Military training was even compulsory in secondary schools and at university. See Perthes, Volker (1995): *The Political Economy of Syria under Asad.* London: I.B.Tauris, p. 148 n. 42f. and p. 172 n.107f.

64. Hoffmann, Erik P. and Robbin F. Liard (1984): *The Soviet Polity in the Modern Era.* New York: de Gruyter, p. 377ff.

65. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [36], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 85 and p. 87, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 7ff. cdh, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1989a), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 5ff. hcd, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 166f. and 173ff., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*,

p. 6ff. h, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 5ff. h.

66. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 11 cdh, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 166.

67. Courbage, Youssef (1994): 'Fertility Transition in Syria: From Implicit Population Policy to Explicit Economic Crisis.' *International Family Planning Perspectives,* vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 142–6, p. 142f.

68. EM: *Interview with Amina*. April 2010, Aleppo.

69. EM: *Interview with Amina*. April 2010, Aleppo.

70. Ibid.

71. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 87, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 4ff. cdh, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1989a), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 12 hcd, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 166, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 16f. h, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 3f. h and Table 1.

72. Commins, David Dean (2004): *Historical Dictionary of Syria.* 2nd ed. Oxford: Scarecrow Press, p. 126; International Organization for Migration (2011): 'Country Fact Sheet: Syria'. http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/MILo-DB/DE/Rueckkehrfoerderung/Laenderinformationen/Informationsblaetter/cfs-syrien-download-englisch.pdf?__blob=publicationFile, p. 9. This compares to 21 beds per 10,000 in Egypt and 31 in the United Kingdom in 2007, or 80 in Germany in 2008. See World Bank (no year [b]): 'Hospital Beds per 1,000 People'. http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MED.BEDS.ZS.

73. Galdo, *Welfare in the Mediterranean Countries*, p. 5f.

74. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 174ff., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 10ff. h, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 5ff. h.

75. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989a), section on World Food Programme [no page numbers], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 214ff., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 1ff., section on the World Food Programme, ibid., p. 1 wfp, and FAO (1999): 'Special Report: FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to the Syrian Arab Republic, 23rd August 1999'. http://www.fao.org/docrep/004/x2839e/x2839e00.htm.

76. Numbers rose from 8,700 women trained in first aid and 1,500 in civil defence between 1967 and 1973 to 28,700 and 5,600 between 1980 and 1983. Since membership continued to increase, the estimate is certainly a rough indicator only. See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [35], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 16 cdh.

77. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [43ff.], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 71–3, no report in 1980, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 12f. fr, no report in 1989. Western exceptions were Great Britain and Belgium. See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 70 and p. 74, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 1ff., 12ff., 48ff. fr.

78. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 5ff. fr, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 200ff.

79. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 16 l, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 6f. l, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 10f. l.

80. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 19ff. l, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 4ff. l, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 18ff. and p. 29 l.

81. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 7 l, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 30 l.

82. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 3 l.

83. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [37f.].

84. UN (CEDAW) (2005): 'Consideration of Reports submitted by States Parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women: Initial Report of States Parties: Syria'. http://www.arabhumanrights.org/publications/countries/syria/cedaw/cedaw-c-syr1-05e.pdf, p. 12.

85. Ibid., p. 51f.

86. For details, see ibid., p. 54; Kattaa and al-Shaykh Hussein, 'Women's Access to Social Protection in Syria,' p. 592ff.

87. UN (CEDAW), 'Consideration of Reports', p. 34 and p. 97, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 4l.

88. UN (CEDAW), 'Consideration of Reports', p. 46.

89. EM: *Interview with Amina*. April 2010, Aleppo. However, there is no official requirement for women to be Union members in order to be eligible for parliamentary elections.

90. Perthes, *Political Economy*, p. 222f.

91. UN (CEDAW), 'Consideration of Reports', p. 24.

92. For excerpts, see Appendix C. For the complete document, see United Nations (1990): 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

against Women. Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 18 December 1979.' In: United Nations (ed.): *Treaties and International Agreements registered or filed and recorded with the Secretariat of the United Nations* (Treaty Series, 1249). New York: [no publisher]. No 20378, pp. 13–23 (English), p. 16 and p. 17.

93. UN (CEDAW), 'Consideration of Reports', p. 30f. In addition, personal status rights depend on a person's religious affiliation. For example, unlike Muslim women, Catholic women were granted equal rights of inheritance in 2006. Cf. Maktabi, Rania (2009): *Family Law and Gendered Citizenship in the Middle East: Paths of Reform and Resilience in Egypt, Morocco, Syria and Lebanon.* Yale University Department of Political Science 31 January – 1 February 2009. Draft paper presented at the World Bank / Yale workshop 'Societal Transformation and the Challenges of Governance in Africa and the Middle East'. http://www.yale.edu/m acmillan/cmes/rethinking/RMaktabi.pdf p. 17. Syrian personal status law is grounded in the Ottoman Law of Family Rights (1917) and Islamic law (as is also the case in Lebanon and Jordan). Influenced by the Egyptian legal reforms of 1920s and 1940s, it was amended twice, first by Legislative Decree No. 59 (1953), and again under the Baʿth by Legislative Decree No. 34 (1975). See Anderson, Norman J. D. (1955): 'The Syrian Law of Personal Status.' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 17, no. 9, pp. 34–49, p. 34; Euromed Gender Equality Programme (no year): 'National Situation Analysis Report: Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality (Syria)'. http://www.enpi-info.eu/ files/publications/Situation%20Analysis_Report_Syria.pdf, p. 14; UN (CEDAW), *Consideration of Reports*, p. 15 and p. 106f.

94. Ibid., p. 44.

95. United Nations, 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,' p. 20. See Appendix C.

96. UN (CEDAW), 'Consideration of Reports', p. 104f. These age limits date back to the 1953 Legislative Decree, see Anderson, 'The Syrian Law of Personal Status,' p. 37.

97. United Nations, 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,' p. 20. See Appendix C.

98. UN (CEDAW), 'Consideration of Reports', p. 46 and p. 30f.

99. Ibid., p. 47 and p. 105f.

100. Ibid., p. 47, p. 79f., p. 105f. With respect to travel, it was argued that in the Hanafi, Maliki and Shafiʿi schools of law, women can request the right to travel without their husbands' agreement in their marriage contracts.

101. United Nations (2007): 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Concluding Comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women – Syrian Arab Republic'. http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/375/96/PDF/N0737596. pdf?OpenElement, p. 2. Also: United Nations (2014): 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: List of Issues and Questions in Relation to the Second Periodic Report of the Syrian Arab

Republic'. http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download. aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FSYR%2FQ%2F2&Lang=en, p. 1.

102. UN (CEDAW), 'Consideration of Reports', p. 47.

103. EM: *Interview 8. Interview with Anonymous*. March 2010, Aleppo.

104. al-Maktab al-markazi li'l-ihsaʾ (2004): 'Nataʾij al-taʿdad al-ʿamm li'l-sukkan fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya'. Also available at www.cbssyr.org and http://www.cbssyr.org/General%20census/census%202004/pop-str.pdf (no page), Table 3. Accounts on the number of Palestinians in Syria differ significantly. However, even with Di Bartolomeo et al., who estimate about half a million Palestinians to have lived in Syria by 2009, the share of men would still remain below 2 per cent. See Di Bartolomeo, Anna, Thibaut Jaulin et al. (2012): 'CARIM – Migration Profile. Syria.' http://www.carim.org/public/ migrationprofiles/MP_Syria_EN.pdf, p. 2f.

105. Euromed Gender Equality Programme, *National Situation Analysis Report*, p. 17f.

106. Ibid., p. 18.

107. EM: *Interview 8. Interview with Anonymous*. March 2010, Aleppo.

108. Euromed Gender Equality Programme, *National Situation Analysis Report*, p. 27.

109. Ibid., p. 16. However, CEDAW did inspire increasing gender awareness, for example leading to changes in school curricula to reduce stereotyped gender representation. See ibid., p. 25.

110. The frequent changes in name can be summarized as follows: 1967–73, section for research and media; 1973–6, section for research and culture and section for media; 1976–80, no report; 1980–3, section for research and section for culture and media; 1984–8 section for studies and section for media and publication; 1989–98, section for research, section for media and publication and section for political culture and propaganda; 1999–2003, section for media and publication and section for political culture and propaganda (research became integrated into the section for planning); 2004–8 section for political culture and research and section for media and publication.

111. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. [37ff.].

112. Ibid., p. [41f.].

113. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 91ff., no report for 1976–80, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi ([1984]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 1, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1989a), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 1ff. ms, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 83ff., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ*, p. 5ff. mp, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 2ff. mp, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 115ff.

114. Although the section is named 'maktab al-thaqafa wa'l-i'dad', the context of the term 'thaqafa' as used throughout the reports makes it clear that it does not refer to culture in the sense of the arts, but is tied to Ba'thist politics.

115. al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 17.

116. Ibid., p. 17 and Table 12, al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 16 and Table 13, al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 28 and p. 56 Table 17, al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 12f., al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 21f.

117. al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([1994]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 400ff., al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999b), *Taqrir al-mu'tamar al-'amm al-sabi'*, p. 1ff. pc, al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2004]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. [121ff.], al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]), *Taqrir al-nashatat*, p. 264ff.

118. The section for nurseries and kindergartens became the section for the protection of children (ibid., p. 123ff.), whilst literacy was renamed to become the section for population growth and adult education. See ibid., p. 123ff. and p. 39ff. Newly added were administrative affairs and information technology. See ibid., p. 35f. and p. 53ff.

119. See Roggenthin, Heike (2002): *'Frauenwelt' in Damaskus: Institutionalisierte Frauenräume in der geschlechtergetrennten Gesellschaft.* Münster: LIT, p. 220ff. Pierret, Thomas and Kjetil Selvik (2009): 'Limits of "Authoritarian Upgrading" in Syria: Private Welfare, Islamic Charities, and the Rise of the Zayd Movement.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 41, pp. 595–614, p. 596.

120. Ibid.

Chapter 5   Administration of Union Membership and Activities

1. Kasza, Gregory J. (1995): *The Conscription Society: Administered Mass Organizations*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, p. 29.

2. Ibid., p. 31.

3. Conditions for membership: First law: Anon. (1967): *al-Marsum al-tashri'i li'l-ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i fi l-jumhuriyya al-'arabiyya al-suriyya*. [no place]: [publisher unknown], §10, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i*, §12, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (1976): *Taqrir al-mu'tamar al-'amm al-thani li'l-ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i al-mun'aqad bi-ta'rikh 03/01/1976*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. pp. 19–33: §6, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-'amm al-nisa'i wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §13/6.

4. Application/appeal: First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §7/8, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §13f/14f., internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §8/8, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili.*, §10/11//9/9.

5. Rights: First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §11, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §16, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §9, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §14/10.

6. Obligations/expulsion: First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §12/13, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §17/20, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §10/-, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §15/14//17/27.

7. Conditions/rights/obligations participating members: First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §14/15/15, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §12/18/18, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §7/11/12, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §18/19/-//7/11/14.

8. First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §15, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §19, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §11, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §19/-.

9. The only exception to this rule are the units, the work of which is planned by the unit's conference. For the units' tasks, see: first law: not specified, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §24, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §22, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, - /§31. Associations' tasks: first law: not specified, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §40, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §37 and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun*

li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili, §23/38. Administrative offices' tasks: first law: not specified, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §52, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §47 and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §26/45. Executive office's tasks: first law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §44, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §71, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §67, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, - /§52.

10. Cf. units' tasks. There is a detailed procedure in place for appeals in case of an application being rejected.

11. Cf. paragraphs quoted for the executive office's tasks.

12. Unit minimum number/no of leading members: First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §6/16, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §7/22, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §14/20 and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §20/9//28/-. In 1986, decision-making on the establishment of units was transferred to the executive office. See below.

13. Number of leading members: associations: first law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §20, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §38, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §35 and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §22/35.; administrative offices: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §25, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §50, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §46 and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §56/42; executive office: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §39, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §69, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33 65 and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §34/49.

14. Kasza, *Conscription Society*, p. 44.

15. Ibid., p. 40ff.

16. Ibid., p. 41.

17. Composition of unit's conference/election to office: First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §16/16, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §31/22, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §16/20 and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §20/20//28/28.

18. Composition association's conference/election to office: First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §21/20, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §40/38, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §31/35. The procedure changed from 1986 onwards, see below.

19. Composition branches' conference/election to office: First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §27/25, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §55/50, and internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §41/46. Again, new procedures were introduced in 1986; see below.

20. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-munʿaqad fi Dimashq bayna 10-14/12/1973*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. [13].

21. Internal elections units/associations/administrative offices: First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §-/-/-, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §23/36/51, and internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §21/36/47, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §20/23/26//29/36/43.

22. The author consciously decided against a literal translation to avoid confusion. 'Administrative council' would have seemed to indicate the council belongs to the level of administrative offices, which is not the case.

23. Composition general conference: First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §32, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §80, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §53, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §29/70.

24. Election to and composition of general council/election to executive office: First law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §38/39, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili*

li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, p. 60/69, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §58/65, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §33/34//57/49.

25. Internal elections executive office: First law: not specified, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, p. 70, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §66, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §35/50.

26. Composition associations' councils/elections to office: law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §-/-//62/61; composition administrative councils/election to office: law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §-/-//60/59.

27. Hence an association's conference was composed of the association's council, the leading members of all units bound to the association, and additional unit delegates; law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §24/76. Accordingly, the branches' conference included all members of the branches' council, the leading members of all associations in the governorate, and additional administrative offices delegates; law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §27/73.

28. EM: *Interview with Wafaʾ.* May 2010, Damascus.

29. Kasza, *Conscription Society*, p. 43.

30. Units'/associations'/branches'/general conferences' tasks: first law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §17/22/-/35, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §32/44/56/84, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §17/32/43/55, and law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §-/-/-30//79/77/74/72.

31. Associations'/administrative councils tasks: ibid., §-/-//62/60.

32. Although mentioned here, the Union reports make no mention of sub-organisations.

33. General council tasks: first law: Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §44, original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §62, internal regulations 1975: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, pp. 19–33: §58, and law/internal regulations 1986:

al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §33/58.

34. See also Chapter 3.

35. Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*.

36. Trentin, Massimiliano (2009): 'Modernization as State Building: The Two Germanies in Syria, 1963–1972.' *Diplomatic History*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 487–505, p. 503.

37. Yaziji, 'Najah Saʿati,' p. 138.

38. Ibid.

39. *Letter to the Democratic Federation of Women, 9 March 1971*. SAPMO BArchiv, DY31/1408. Original text in French.

40. *Letter from the GDR Embassy to the DWF, 14 April 1971*. SAPMO BArchiv, DY31/1408.

41. *Letter {anonymised} to the Democratic Federation of Women, 29 May 1971*. SAPMO BArchiv, DY31/1408.

42. *Notice (anon.), Department for International Relations, 21 July 1971*. SAPMO BArchiv, DY31/1408. According to this source, such treaties already existed between all other GDR and Syrian mass organisations at the time.

43. Freedom House (no year): 'Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa - Syria'. http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/47387b70c.html.

44. EM: *Interview with Badriyya*. May 2010, Damascus.

45. In Syria, the GUPW was established in the same year as the Syrian Union (1967). Brand, Laurie (1988): 'Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration.' *Middle East Journal*, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 621–37, p. 632ff. The question to what extent it was a mass organisation in the institutional sense, what links it maintained with the Syrian Union, and how the GUPW developed in Syria after 1988 require further research.

46. Kasza, Gregory J. (1995): *The Conscription Society: Administered Mass Organizations*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, p. 55.

47. Ibid., p. 30ff.

48. Appendix B Table 9.

49. Appendix B Table 10.

50. Ibid.

51. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-munʿaqad fi Dimashq bayna 10-14/12/1973*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. [74], al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi li'l-dawra al-intikhabiyya bayna ʿam 1984–1989 al-muqaddam li'l-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-khamis li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 8.

52. Ibid., p. 9.

53. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sadis li'l-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, 08/03/1994*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 16.

54. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi li'l-dawra al-intikhabiyya bayna ʿam 1980–1983 al-Muqaddam li'l-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-rabiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 8.

55. Ibid.

56. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-tasiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – 'al-Marʾa hiya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya wa'l-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad*. [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 7. In the preceeding term, the number of units based in private homes was even higher (59 per cent). See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004): *Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thamin li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, adhar 2004 – "al-Marʾa insan shaʾnuha shaʾn al-rajul yashtarikan maʿan fi binaʾ al-watan la tamayyuz baynahuma abadan', al-qaʾid Hafiz al-Asad*. [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 7.

57. Appendix B Table 11.

58. The members per association ratio will not be considered here as members are primarily bound to their unit, not associations.

59. Appendix B Table 12.

60. Out of 114 associations, 29 offices were owned, 68 rented, and 17 shared. See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 49f., Table 11.

61. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a): *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi majal maktab al-tanzim iʿtibaran min 03/01/1976 wa-lighayat 19/01/1980*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 8.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid., p. 7f.

64. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 9.

65. See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 14, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 15.

66. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a), *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, p. 9f.

67. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) ([2009]): *Taqrir al-nashatat: al-muʾtamar al-tasiʿa li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi, Dimashq, 7 nisan 2009 – 'al-Marʾa hiya allati tashum fi mukhtallif mawaqiʿ al-ʿamal fi l-tanmiyya wa'l-taqaddum', al-sayyid al-raʾis Bashar al-Asad*. [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 164.

68. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a), *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, p. 14.

69. Ibid., p. 15, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 15f., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 27.

70. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a), *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, p. 15.

71. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 15f.

72. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 19.

73. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 17.

74. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a): *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi: al-Muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-sabiʿ liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi – ʿInna rafʿ al-hayf ʿan al-marʾa la mafarr minhu inna mumarasat al-marʾa dawraha fi hayat al-mujtamʿa darura wataniyya qawmiyya insaniyyaʾ, al-rafiq al-munadil Hafiz al-Asad, 16 adhar 1999*. [no place]: [publisher unknown], p. 12f., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 13, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 15.

75. Unfortunately, information on meetings is sometimes lacking. The paragraphs quoted in the following confirm the above statements unless indicated otherwise. Legal decree 1967: Anon. (1967): *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi fi l-jumhuriyya al-ʿarabiyya al-suriyya*. [no place]: [publisher unknown]; units, associations, administrative offices: -, executive office: -; general committee §17, associationʾs conference §22, branchesʾ conference: -, general conference §31; general council §41. Original internal regulations: Anon. (no year [a]), *al-Nizam al-dakhili liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, units §25, associations: -, administrative offices §53, executive office: §72; general committee §63, associationʾs conference §43, branchesʾ conference §56, general conference §82; general council §63. Internal regulations 1975: ibid., pp. 19–33, units, associations: §39, administrative offices §51, executive office: §68; general committee §17alif, associationʾs conference §32alif, branchesʾ conference §43 alif, general conference §54; general council §60. Law/internal regulations 1986: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987): *Qanun liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*. Damascus: Matabiʿ dar al-baʿth; units: -/fortnightly §30, associations -/§37, administrative offices -/§44, executive office §40/50; general committee §21alif/§80.4, associationʾs conference §24dal/80.3, branchesʾ conference: every two years §27dal/80.2, general conference §35/71/ conflicting: every five years §80.1; general council: §36/93; administrative council (new): -/three times a year §95, associationʾs council (new): -/twice a year §98.

76. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a), *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, p. 9f., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 9, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 16, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 52 Table 14. No information available on the remaining terms.

77. Strikingly, the number of association meetings held varies from 100 to more than 250 per term and governorate between 1984 and 1998, with 30 to 50 meetings for each administrative office. In the period 1999–2009 though, administrative offices are listed as having held between 170 and more than 250 meetings, while no information is available on the number of meetings held by associations. It could not be established whether this is a mistake in the tables or whether the procedure had indeed been amended. For associations/ administrative office meetings see al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a), *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, p. 10/p. 10, no information on 1980–3, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 9/p. 11, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 10 Table 11/p.10 Table 12, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 51 Table 12/p. 53 Table 14, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, no page, Table 20/p. 7, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 14/p. 57 Table 16 and al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 15/p. 52 Table 13.

78. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 11, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 20, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 6, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 15, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 16.

79. Associations' councils/administrative councils: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 13/12, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 22/22, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 7/7, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 18/18, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 18/18.

80. For the general council: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 12, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 12, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 20f., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 7, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 17, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 16.

81. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 12f., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 13, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 23, no information for 1999–2009.

82. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 13, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi)

(1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 13, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 23, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 18.

83. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 13, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 13, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 23, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 8, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2004), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 18; no information on 2004–8.

84. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a), *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, p. 9f., al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 7.

85. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 15.

86. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1989b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 6, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 11.

87. EM: *Interview with Hanna*. August 2009, Aleppo; EM: *Interviews with Amina, Farah, Khulud and Maryam* (separately) April 2010, Aleppo; EM: *Interviews with Yasmin, Zaynab and Sara* (separately). March 2010, Aleppo.

88. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 19.

89. Kasza, *Concription Society*, p. 43.

90. For the last term discussed here, it stood at 12 per cent. 27 of these were Baʿthist, one was independent, and two belonged to the National Progress Front (Socialist Union/Syrian National Social Party). See also Ghanem, Muna, Samuel Abboud et al. (no year): 'Women and the People's Assembly in the Syrian Arab Republic: A Research conducted in Cooperation with UNIFEM & SCFA'. http://www.unifem.org.jo/pages/articledetails.aspx?pid=666&aid=743, p. 26 and p. 35.

91. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal*, p. {74}.

92. The only governorate to run its own course was Aleppo. Cf. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-munʿaqad bi-taʾrikh 03/01/1976*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. 11.

93. Ibid., p. 12.

94. Ibid.

95. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a), *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, p. 16.

96. Ibid., p. 15.

97. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 18.

98. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 56 Table 17, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi)

(2004), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 21 and p. 70 Table 21, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (2009), *Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 11f.

99. EM: *Interview with Tariq and Layla*. April 2010, Aleppo, EM: *Interviews with Nur and Wafaʾ* (separately). May 2010, Damascus.

100. EM: *Interviews with Interview with Amina, Khulud and Maryam* (separately). April 2010, Aleppo.

101. EM: *Interview with Hanna*. August 2009, Aleppo, EM: *Interview with Yasmin*. March 2010, Aleppo EM: *Interview with Farah*. April 2010, Aleppo, EM: *Interviews with Zaynab and Sara* (separately). May 2010, Aleppo.

102. See al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, financial section.

103. Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §62, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, §84, 1987 law: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §25, 1987 internal regulations: ibid., §127.

104. Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §51, 1987 law: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §48.

105. Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §53, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), §88, 1987 law: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §49.

106. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 51fs, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984a): *al-Taqrir al-mali li'l-dawra al-intikhabiyya min 1980–1983 al-muqaddam li'l-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-rabiʿ li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*. Damascus: [publisher unknown]. [no page] appendix B table income.

107. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1976), *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-thani*, p. 41fs.

108. Anon. (1967), *al-Marsum al-tashriʿi li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, §73.

109. Ibid., law 1987: al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1987), *Qanun li'l-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi wa-nizamuhu al-dakhili*, §64, internal regulations 1987: ibid., §146.

110. Law 1987: ibid., p. 64, internal regulations 1987: ibid., p. 144. These amendments do not show in the 1975 text, but complaints dating from the early 1980s clearly illustrate that these new provisions had been introduced before the 1987 new law and regulations.

111. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 26.

112. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (1980a), *Ma tamma tanfidhuhu min khittat al-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi*, p. 10, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1984b), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 26, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1994), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 17, al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1999a), *al-Taqrir al-tanzimi*, p. 12f.

113. Ibid.

114. al-Ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi (al-Maktab al-tanfidhi) (1973): *Taqrir al-muʾtamar al-ʿamm al-awwal liʾl-ittihad al-ʿamm al-nisaʾi al-munʿaqad fi Dimashq bayna 10-14/12/1973*. Damascus: [publisher unknown], p. [18].

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16. As a result, humanitarian aid has become a hotly contested good in local governance processes. The government in particular has sought to enforce a system of 'humanitarian control'. See Meininghaus, Esther (2016): 'Humanitarianism in Intrastate-Conflict: Aid Inequality and Local Governance in Government- and Opposition-controlled Areas in the Syrian War.' Third World Quarterly, forthcoming.

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Appendix D   List of Women's Societies in Syria before 1967

1. This table lists all initiatives mentioned in the sources. Only those for which more substantial information was available have been included in my analysis.

2. Cf. al-Bayni, 'Thurayya al-Hafiz,' p. 77 vs al-Razzaz, *Musharakat al-mar'a*, p. 142.

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