Money Talks: Discourse, Networks, and Structure in Militant Organizations

Sarah E. Parkinson

Scholarship on militant organizations and rebel movements emphasizes the effects of fragmentation and disunity on military and political outcomes. Yet this scholarship's focus on formal, durable, and externally observable aspects of organizational structure omits the social practices that constitute, reinforce, and reproduce intra-group schisms. How do intra-organizational divisions calcify into permanent cleavages? What processes reproduce factions over time? Using the case of Fatah in Lebanon, I argue that informal discursive practices—e.g., gossip, jokes, complaints, storytelling—contribute to the maintenance and reproduction of intra-organizational factions. Specifically, I focus on how networks of meaning-laden, money-centric discourse structure relations among militants who identify as being "Old Fatah." I demonstrate that while these practices frequently originate in the organizational realm, cadres subsequently reproduce them within kinship, marriage, and friendship networks. This "money talk" between age cohorts within the quotidian realm connects younger members of Fatah to older cadres through collective practices and conceptions of organizational membership. These practices both exemplify an intra-organizational schism and constitute, in part, the faction called Old Fatah. Examining how symbolic practice comprises social structure thus provides important insight into the politics of organizations such as militant groups, social movements, and political parties.

> I went [overseas] on a scholarship but had to do a one-month training with Fatah first . . . I stayed for four months [overseas] and then decided to come back. I immediately joined the Beirut Arab University. I lived in [a refugee camp] in one room in a very run-down house . . . I was at the top of my class of [hundreds of] students in spite of my poor situation. When I went to switch my focus, the head of the faculty offered me three years of tuition [to stay]. I never went to school in civilian clothes. People thought I was stupid, that I was a follower, that I was a bad guy. I used my uniform to cover my poverty.
>
> —Mahmud, Summer 2011

> Money killed the revolution.
>
> —Mahmud, Summer 2011[1]

Mahmud's statements express an ostensibly irreconcilable paradox. The former militant initially presents his late-1970s affiliation with Fatah[2]—a Palestinian militant group and leading party in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—as a source of socioeconomic mobility and camouflage. Specifically, he associates dignity, educational access, and upward mobility with the receipt of material support from Fatah in the form of an academic scholarship and a uniform. The scholarship, taken at a foreign Arab university and provided in exchange for military service, represented a clear monetary exchange. Yet it also served as a stepping stone towards later enrollment in a prestigious Beirut university, academic recognition, and receipt of full tuition support: difficult achievements for a Palestinian man raised in a refugee camp in the 1960s–1970s. Mahmud also notes that his military uniform enabled him to conceal his low economic status; he was willing to shoulder other criticisms—e.g., being called "a follower" or "stupid"—if

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doi:10.1017/S1537592716002875

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002875 Published online by Cambridge University Press

he could sartorially perform economic equality with his middle-class and wealthy Lebanese classmates. Just a few minutes further into our conversation, however, Mahmud abruptly used a nostalgic discussion of the dirty jokes cadres told in training to springboard into several anecdotes of immoral leaders "playing games," "cutting deals," and cavorting with "French dancers"[3] at enemy militia leaders' houses during the Lebanese Civil War. This apparent tangent culminated in Mahmud's puzzling disavowal of the same material prosperity that he had just described as having altered his own life for the better: "money killed the revolution."

Many Fatah members in Lebanon regularly reference versions of the same seemingly irreconcilable contradiction; though they accept monetary benefits themselves, they also commonly label others "immoral" for receiving a salary or material assistance from the organization. A cadre engaged in community work recruits employees with promises of steady salaries,[4] but later complains that other members who hold similar jobs are "only there for the money."[5] A secretary receives small loans and extra phone cards from a friendly superior officer but justifies shunning a more recent hire by arguing that the woman is probably trading sex with her supervisor for a spot on the PLO's payroll.[6] Given members' apparently similar access to monetary resources, the moral claims embedded in these statements imply a deeper, counterintuitive schism rather than a simple rivalry between financial "haves" and "have nots." Extended observation indicates, moreover, that this type of language is deployed only within a specific sub-network of Fatah members and affiliates in Lebanon who identify as "Old Fatah": on the surface, a cohort of cadres who joined between 1969 and the mid-1980s and thus participated during periods of armed struggle.[7] The continued existence of this informal faction within the larger, ostensibly unified organizational hierarchy of Fatah presents scholars with two puzzles: How do intra-organizational divisions calcify into permanent cleavages? What processes reproduce factions over time?

Leveraging evidence gathered during nearly two years of ethnographic and archival fieldwork in Lebanon, I make two central arguments. First, I contend that informal discursive practices—e.g., gossip, jokes, complaints, storytelling—maintain and reproduce intra-organizational factions if they reflect routine behavior among a sub-network of members. Second, I argue that the content of these exchanges matters. I maintain, in other words, that given a multitude of options, people reference money due to its broader symbolic resonance. To do so, I examine what I term "money talk": "everyday" discourse that uses the social meaning of money to express deeper moral critiques and judgments. This approach draws on one of the core tenets of economic sociology: that the concept of money inevitably points to existential and frequently moral distinctions between things that can be monetized and things that cannot.[8]

I demonstrate that money talk provides an avenue for Fatah members to collectively debate the ways that others deploy monetary assets and derive advantage from access to financial flows. On a deeper level, money talk allows them to veil conversations about power and to nuance questions about others' claims to authenticity, right to lead, and political effectiveness.[9] Money talk is thus a way to share collective understandings of values, priorities, accountability, and deservingness.[10] I outline three thematic registers members use to express these sentiments: 1) treating money as a distributive good; 2) considering money as a means versus an end in of itself; and 3) presenting money as "power over" versus "power to."[11] In general, money talk emerges from and reinforces a shared understanding that Fatah members have monetized the organization and themselves in unacceptable ways.

I also demonstrate how money talk works as a network flow[12] to constitute the faction known as Old Fatah. Long-term and retired members engage in money talk as a way of preserving their relationships with each other and reasserting shared conceptions of membership. Younger cadres adopt the discourse from elders via their everyday relationships—e.g., a teenager repeats his uncle's gossip about a leader embezzling salaries—rather than through processes of formal organizational socialization—e.g., if officers were to teach a teenage member of the Fatah scouts that a leader had embezzled. Due to its symbolic resonance, money talk works to reinforce a set of ideals that maintain and reaffirm Old Fatah as a distinct intra-organizational network of co-members. In sum, money talk represents a discursive practice, the content of social networks, a constitutive element of Old Fatah, and evidence of a deeper structural rupture within the larger organization.[13]

By examining the intersection of money talk and cleavages within Fatah, I engage with recent debates that suggest important relationships between military organizations' structures and key political outcomes.[14] Much of this scholarship suggests that structural factors such as multiple competing organizations, institutionalization, and decentralization[15] affect outcomes such as the deployment of violent tactics, choice of diplomatic strategy, resilience, and likelihood of military victory.[16] Yet these approaches often overlook the processes through which cleavages emerge, ossify, and reproduce. Other research examines the way economic incentives or resources influence militants' behavior.[17] However, even when these studies incorporate organizational structure, they focus on the material role that money plays rather than its meaning-based resonance in militants' social relations.[18] I aim to introduce a new, complementary dimension to scholars' conceptualizations of both organizational structure and economic resources: symbolic and specifically discursive interaction.

I expand these arguments in six sections. First, I outline why Fatah in Lebanon provides a compelling

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002875 Published online by Cambridge University Press

organizational site to study discursive structure. Second, I address the theoretical foundations of my arguments, which are founded in social network theory. Third, I detail the ethnographic approach that grounded my fieldwork and analysis. Fourth, I empirically explore the three registers through which money talk operates and show how members' practices work to constitute a faction known as Old Fatah. Fifth, I use material from participant observation among youth cadres to show how money talk reproduces Old Fatah across generations. Finally, I conclude by exploring my arguments' implications for research on militant groups, Palestinian politics, and organizational behavior in general.

Fatah in Lebanon

Fatah's Lebanon branch offers a unique site to study the relationship between resources, discourse, and organizational structure.[19] Fatah is one of the oldest militant organizations in the world; founded by Palestinians during the 1950s, the group launched its first military attack against Israel on January 1, 1965. Since then, Fatah has been a leading guerrilla party in the PLO, a central actor in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and, via the PLO, one of the most prominent non-state players in regional politics.

The political relationship between Fatah's Lebanon branch and the larger, transnational organization has undergone multiple transformations since the late 1960s. It has manifested as a loose constellation of underground cells (pre-1969); the primary location of the transnational party's political, social, and guerrilla mobilization (late 1970–August 1982); an embattled but still-crucial national subdivision (1982–1990); a geographically partitioned, semi-licit organization dominated by local patronage relationships (1990–2005);[20] and a predominantly advocacy- and welfare-based bureaucracy (2005–present). Furthermore, in 1983, the northern Lebanese city of Trablus and the eastern Biqa' Valley were also the sites of a Syrian-backed revolt led by Colonel Sa'id al-Muragha against Fatah's leadership. While this uprising ultimately failed to topple Fatah's elite, the offshoot organization that emerged—Fatah al-Intifada—went on to join the Syrian-allied Rejectionist Front and fight against Fatah's mainstream units in the refugee camps between 1985 and 1988. Lebanon was thus a central stage in leader Yasir Arafat's struggle to maintain dominance over the party and the PLO in the face of Syrian attempts at usurpation.

Fluctuations in monetary fortune accompanied these political changes. Palestinians born in Lebanon's refugee camps before 1969 grew up under intense surveillance by the Lebanese *Deuxième Bureau* (military intelligence). Systematically discriminated against in employment and education, they often assumed high risks as teenagers to clandestinely participate in Fatah and other political groups. The 1969 Cairo Agreement shifted authority over the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon to the PLO; the PLO and the guerrilla organizations' relocation from Jordan in the wake of Black September followed in 1970–1971. Arab states, the Soviet Union, and a five percent income tax on Palestinians working in Gulf countries subsequently funded massive political and social projects in Lebanon. These two events thus opened seemingly limitless opportunities for overt, armed, and paid political and social roles as part of a Palestinian national project.[21] The PLO became Lebanon's largest employer, running industrial operations through organizations such as Samed and popular organizations such as the General Union of Palestinian Women.[22] The geographic and financial accessibility of its facilities made the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) one of the top healthcare providers in Lebanon.[23] Scholars have estimated that the PLO employed up to 65 percent of the Palestinian workforce in Lebanon during this time.[24] Areas of West Beirut and South Lebanon became near-autonomous regions.[25] Perhaps unsurprisingly, many Palestinians who joined Fatah during this period—that is, many members of Old Fatah—remember it nostalgically as a time of immense personal hope, social opportunity, relative prosperity, and political ascendancy. This era thus serves as a key point of reference when members of Old Fatah deploy money talk.

By contrast, many long-term members saw the PLO and Fatah's subsequent involvement in the 1975–1990 Lebanese Civil War as unavoidable but regrettable. In the eyes of many long-term activists, Palestinian organizations allowed themselves and their political projects to be sullied by involvement in Lebanese politics. Specifically, cadres often used the language of "illness" and "infection" to reference the idea that involvement in Lebanese politics invited a type of moral necrosis, specifically due to its perceived sectarian nature. Certain moments during the civil war served as focal points in these conversations, such as Arafat's purported prolonging of the 1976 siege of Tel al-Za'tar camp in East Beirut to generate international sympathy (at the cost of hundreds of Palestinian lives). Old Fatah activists also associated this time period with rising corruption in Fatah, sharing stories of the "deals cut" or "games played" in Arafat's dealings with Lebanese militias—particularly those that were actively targeting Palestinian communities.[26]

The guerrilla organizations and the PLO suffered a decisive military defeat during the June 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The subsequent two-month Siege of Beirut, when the Israeli Defense Forces besieged and bombarded the city, produced thousands of casualties, substantially damaged infrastructure, and elicited intense pressure from the Lebanese and other governments to reach a negotiated withdrawal. The PLO and guerrilla organizations' subsequent departure from Beirut in 1982 largely crippled Fatah in Lebanon and produced questions regarding the leadership's decisionmaking.[27] Many Old

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Fatah members linked the party's consequent reorientation towards financial dependence on the Gulf States and Iraq, along with deepening poverty among Palestinians in Lebanon, to corruption, poor recruitment, and factional disputes in the 1980s and 1990s. The First Intifada, the end of the Cold War, the first Gulf War, and the Oslo Accords also accompanied massive shifts in Fatah and the PLO's finances.[28] These events fundamentally altered the way that long-term members of Fatah view its history and form narratives about it.

This historical arc is salient to this paper for two main reasons. First, perceived differences between recruitment cohorts associated with these time periods undergird the categories of Old and New Fatah. Specifically, Old Fatah members generally identify themselves as having joined between the 1960s and the 1980s, in other words, during the height of the party's involvement in social action and armed struggle. Situating money talk within this historical arc thus allows scholars to understand its relationship to broader political processes and to internal organizational debates regarding leadership, decisionmaking, motivations, and accountability. Second, these political shifts speak to the relevance of studying a Fatah country office rather than the central organization (now headquartered in Ramallah). Despite Lebanon's now peripheral position, ground-level dynamics there have profoundly influenced broader Fatah (and PLO) politics, whether by providing the primary space for political and military expansion in the 1970s,[29] by affecting international diplomatic decision-making and leadership rivalries in the 1980s,[30] or by serving as a key locus of memory politics in the 1990s and 2000s.[31] Studying intra-Fatah dynamics from the standpoint of the Lebanon branch consequently helps scholars to recover historical perspective on contemporary Palestinian politics and highlights under-recognized aspects of a critical and oft-deployed case in studies of rebellion and insurgency.[32]

Militant Organizations, Structure, and Discourse

A wealth of research explores the sources and consequences of disunity, fragmentation, and factionalism in rebel organizations and movements. Scholarship in this realm has found that organizational and movement structural factors influence outcomes such as the timing and location of violence,[33] rebel resilience, and the ability to coordinate nonviolent protest.[34] Yet this research often overlooks the processes through which cleavages within groups harden and intra-organizational factions consolidate. Moreover, it provides limited insight into means through which these structural schisms reproduce.

These omissions stem in part from conceptualizations of structure that emphasize formal, static, material, or externally observable factors. That is, they address structure by examining variables such as the configuration of human or sub-unit roles (e.g., as evinced through organizational/movement diagrams or number of active organizations in a movement),[35] institutionalization (e.g., set "rules of the game"),[36] and internal power distribution.[37] Abdulkader Sinno's view of organizational structure, for instance, draws on six factors: the number of independent organizations; the superorganizational institutions that link groups (e.g., the PLO links guerrilla organizations such as Fatah and the DFLP); sub-unit overlap (e.g., the existence of multiple internal security agencies); centralization of decision-making in top-tier leadership; patronage ties; and task specialization between subunits.[38] Similarly, Kristin Bakke et al.'s conceptualization of movement structure centers on the number of organizations and institutionalization while also incorporating power distribution.[39] The result is a conceptual emphasis on durable hierarchies and institutions as well as a tendency to privilege material measures of power (e.g., troop strength).[40] These approaches thus eclipse the influence of human agency and elide how emergent modes of interaction shape and reinforce intra-organizational relationships and behaviors.[41]

Relational conceptualizations of structure capable of incorporating dynamic interaction, practice, and meaning offer a compelling complement to existing research.[42] Among them, social network theory "emphasizes how material and social relationships create structures among actors through dynamic processes."[43] Much network-oriented research on militant organizations relies on three core concepts: actors' positionality (e.g., as hubs, brokers, or peripheral figures);[44] the density of ties between actors;[45] and the strength or weakness of key ties.[46] For example, Arie Perliger and Ami Pedahzur rely on three categories of tie strength in their analysis of suicide bombers' social networks: "family ties, long-term friendships and earlier acquaintance."[47] Yet because scholars often focus on particular types of relations—e.g., friendship—they often take the content of ties for granted—e.g., expecting friends to consistently trust each other.[48] The constitutive importance of both practice and meaning in these networks is consequently underexplored.

Dualist network models proposed by scholars of organizational and market emergence hold promise due to their emphasis on interactions between multiple, overlapping social networks, the content of relational ties, and the "rules and skills" that constitute network membership in distinct network "domains" based on the type of nodes present and the ties that connect them.[49] For example, the economic domain contains firms (the nodes) linked by contracts (the ties). Scholars have noted that embedded actors may transpose ties across network domains, producing new logics of interaction and, potentially, feedback into the original domain. For example, militant parties' relocation of marriage contracts from the kinship domain into the political domain may shift future logics of recruitment.[50] Adopting this perspective provides scholars with a framework to further

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002875 Published online by Cambridge University Press

explore the relationships between network content, evolving social practice, and emergent structure.[51]

I draw on this theoretical foundation to show how discursive practices centered on money maintain and reproduce Old Fatah in the political, kinship, and social domains.[52] Focusing on informal discursive devices—e.g., gossip, jokes, storytelling—provides an especially useful window into processes through which people maintain and reproduce everyday notions of groupness. Victoria Bernal, for example, has examined how humor can lead to the development of new subjectivities in conditions of dictatorship. "Humor," she argues, "expands the range of what can be publicly expressed."[53] Her focus on public expression is noteworthy when considered in contrast to James Scott's division between the "public transcripts" and "hidden transcripts" that mark relationships between politically dominant and subordinate groups or Chalmers Johnson's analysis of language deployment in "explicit" and "implicit" politics in Japan.[54] Bernal's argument implies that specific discursive strategies—such as the deployment of humor—have the potential to transport the critiques associated with hidden transcripts into more public social spaces. In varied organizational contexts, humor, gossip, and complaint are important ways to express shared understandings and critiques of membership and authority.[55] The extensive scholarship on the political power of these discursive devices has yet to be applied in the context of militant organizations.[56]

Money serves as a productive thematic focus for two reasons. First, recent research demonstrates that the meanings associated with material resources play an important role in activists' ability to develop and express shared conceptions of grievance.[57] For example, by focusing on the meanings associated with subsistence resources such as water, Erica Simmons notes how material grievances work to index particular types of collective claims and frame activist mobilization.[58] Work in this vein suggests that a meaning-based approach to material resources can generate fruitful insight into the processes that bring collective identities into being and the mechanisms that drive contentious politics.[59]

Second, the ways that ideas about money resonate and diffuse distinguish it from other thematic touchstones. Extensive work in economic sociology emphasizes that money almost universally carries non-material and frequently *moral* significance.[60] For instance, Viviana Zelizer argues that in the early days of the life insurance business,

> putting death on the market offended a system of values that upheld the sanctity of human life and its incommensurability. It defied a powerful normative pattern: the division between the marketable and the nonmarketable, or the sacred and the profane … [s]acred things are distinguished by the fact that men will not treat them in a calculating, utilitarian manner.[61]

Scholars in this realm also underscore that money is *intimate*, that is, embedded in kinship and community relations.[62] In the context of this article, a salary or benefit flow provided by a militant organization also travels through kinship, marriage, and friendship ties, for example to buy food, pay college tuition, or offer loans for a funeral.[63] As a result, due to the exchangeable qualities of money, organizational finance is automatically rendered a *personal* matter. These two traits mean that the concept of money provides a near-universally accessible discursive vehicle to link everyday conversations to deeper, collective ideas about shared values and norms.[64]

Money Talk as Discourse, Network, and Structure

Collective, informal narratives regarding money can thus be used to construct symbolically resonant systems of belonging and represent claims regarding groups' relative moral superiority—e.g., a statement such as "they sold us out" indexing the feeling that "you cannot put a price on the revolution." I term the practice of invoking these morally infused meanings of money in everyday conversation "money talk." We can understand these exchanges of money talk as social network ties: when person A shares money talk with person B, we can illustrate the exchange as A→B with the arrow indicating a tie whose content is money talk. If A shares money talk with B and B responds with affirmation or money talk, then we can consider the relation reciprocal (A←→B). Yet analyzing money talk by noting the presence or absence of ties between individual members during a discrete moment is only a preliminary step towards understanding how collective actors such as factions consolidate and reproduce.

Such an approach must also note that that discursive devices such as money talk are only rendered salient by the relational and historical contexts in which they are embedded. For instance, as Roger Gould notes in his study of urban insurgency in Paris,

> the collective identity of workers *as* workers only emerges if the social networks in which they are embedded are patterned in such a way that the people in them can plausibly be partitioned into 'workers' and 'nonworkers;' but once this is possible, social conflict between collective actors who are defined in terms of this partition will heighten the salience and plausibility of the partition itself.[65]

Money talk relies on the perceived relevance of a partition within the political domain between recruitment cohorts in Fatah: those who joined during "revolutionary" periods of high-risk, armed activism and those who joined in eras characterized more by party patronage and political advocacy. So, any individual in Fatah who makes a joke about money is not necessarily Old Fatah. Rather, for money talk to serve as a constitutive element of the faction, it must be deployed 1) in a routinized, regular, commonplace fashion, 2) among a sub-set of Fatah members and affiliates associated with specific recruitment cohorts, and 3) so that it carries collectively understood references and social meaning.

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Adding Value through Money Talk

My point is not that formal hierarchies and aggregate structural attributes do not influence outcomes; existing scholarship indicates that they do. Rather, I show that incorporating interaction-, practice-, and meaning-based approaches captures aspects of organizational structure unrecognized by extant perspectives. As Rogers Smith argues, "stories affirming the normative worth of political memberships . . . can be seen to serve political functions that no other accounts can really provide."[66]

Within Fatah, disputes centered on money are certainly not the only salient cleavages. Opinions on core Palestinian political issues, personal patronage systems, and competition between formal organizational subdivisions are only some of the issues that create friction. Nor is money talk the sole mode of maintaining and reproducing the cleavage between Old and New Fatah. The distinction between Old and New Fatah often manifests publicly; for instance, during a group interview in 2008, soccer fans affiliated with Fatah explained that Old and New Fatah affiliates play for separate soccer teams in some camps whereas other organizations (e.g., the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) only field one. Members of Old Fatah also do favors for each other, share information, and help each other get jobs. One cadre explained that she was able to invoke her Old Fatah status in order to shift out of one job and immediately into a second when her male supervisor harassed her. Many women in her position would not have been taken seriously, let alone granted instantaneous reassignment in a more desirable office.[67] Her supervisors, however, felt that they "owed" her family.

Money talk interacts with symbolic and material elements of organizational structure that overlap and co-evolve with it. It is unique in that it provides the collective narrative that links those who identify as Old Fatah across sub-divisions, ranks, geography, gender, and age via everyday, informal exchanges. While Old Fatah is poorly represented in Fatah in Lebanon's male-dominated leadership bodies (e.g., the elected *aqlīm* committees), several of my Old Fatah interlocutors told me that they resigned from high-ranking positions—including in the PLO's main office in Beirut and in regional offices of the General Unions—*after* they attained them. Meanwhile, people associated with Old Fatah are prominent in Fatah's Women's Office and the General Union of Palestinian Women in Lebanon. Interacting with cadres and affiliates from across functional and regional subdivisions, histories of exile or imprisonment, and camp and non-camp communities, I found that money talk cut across these potential cleavages and across other ostensible "identity" categories—e.g., socioeconomic status, home village in Palestine, religious affiliation—rather than layering onto them. Money talk thus provides cadres with a unique means to situate their diverse experiences within a broader, collective narrative by, for example, allowing individuals to link discrete sources of frustration (e.g., the refusal of a promotion) to stories about macro-level problems (e.g., the organization's "moral decay").

The following sections show that money talk does political work both because it structures relations *and* because it renders cleavages between Old and New Fatah "cognitively significant"[68] by embodying morally-laden collective understandings of Old Fatah. As a routinized, socially legible, and historically resonant practice within a discrete sub-network of Fatah members, money talk has thus come to represent an emergent aspect of the "rules and skills" that constitute membership in Old Fatah. Money talk thus produces Old Fatah by undergirding a social network, transforms it by providing "new ways of doing things" (e.g., socializing young members, interacting as members, understanding collective identity), and reproduces it via positive feedback.[69]

Taking Everyday Talk Seriously: An Ethnographic Approach

Employing an ethnographic approach informed by social network theory allows scholars to examine the relationship between structure, practice, and meaning. I draw upon nearly two years of ethnographic, interview-based, and archival fieldwork carried out between 2007 and 2014 in seven Palestinian refugee camps and several non-camp Palestinian communities in Lebanon.[70] As part of a larger project on organizational adaptation, I conducted research with members of multiple Palestinian factions, including completing ten months of organizational ethnography with Fatah members.[71] I interacted with male and female members of varying ages who identified with both Old and New Fatah. However, due to my specific interest in the 1980s, I spent the bulk of my time with people who had been active members during that time period and frequently identified as Old Fatah. Additionally, I conducted in-depth interviews with 114 current and former members of Palestinian militant organizations, social and humanitarian aid workers, and long-time United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) employees.[72] Within Fatah, I observed meetings (at the camp, regional, and national level, open-invite and invite-only), visited party offices, collected and studied the party's publications, watched its television channels, visited members' and affiliates' homes, attended events such as poetry readings and demonstrations, and gathered materials such as party-produced yearly planners. I also studied sites of political discourse such as an e-mail listserv for publicizing party events and public Facebook pages.

Pursuing long-term research with Fatah members afforded me an opportunity to study the interface between members' formal organizational networks and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002875 Published online by Cambridge University Press

their quotidian ties, which include kinship, marriage, and friendship. Research with "public" organizations led to sustained participant observation in more "private" spaces (e.g., living with a Palestinian friend in the heavily Palestinian neighborhood of Tariq al-Jadida in South Beirut). At least partially due to my status as a young, unmarried, female researcher, I was increasingly invited into family homes and to social gatherings.[73] Developing deep ties within the party afforded me the opportunity to observe contemporary organizational practices and hierarchies, but also to introduce comparative questions about the past to my interlocutors. Conversations and complaints about veterans' healthcare, for example, presented the opportunity to ask about party funding and how it had operated in the 1980s.

The section on cross-generational adoption of money talk builds on this broader research and on my interactions with seven families linked to Fatah with whom I had close relationships. By "close" I mean that I communicated regularly with more than one family member (e.g., via text or WhatsApp), visited family members frequently at home or work, regularly ate meals at and slept over in family homes, helped with household chores, and attended party events with family members.[74] I came to know members of multiple generations. For example, in one family, I repeatedly interacted with 29 different members whose birth dates fell between the late 1940s and the present—a widow born in the late 1940s, her children born between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, her children's spouses and their mothers, and her grandchildren (born between the 1980s and the present).[75] Half of the children born between the 1960s and 1980s currently serve or have served in a formal office in Fatah; several others would identify as being "with" Fatah. Another family with whom I was similarly close invited me to stay with them in their house in one of the camps; treated largely like a visiting cousin, I held myself to many of the same standards as other young women in the same family (e.g., observing a curfew when staying in the camp, contributing to housework). This approach allowed me to follow and participate in discursive networks that spanned multiple organizational and quotidian domains, operated across genders, and bridged generations.

During my fieldwork, I began to observe that while Fatah members and affiliates frequently looked forward to events such as festivals and rallies, many simultaneously joked that the party's rhetoric was excessively staid and sterile. For instance, an elderly woman who sat next to me at a commemoration of Yasir Arafat's death turned to me in the midst of a solemn speech, made a "blah blah blah" hand signal by pressing her thumb and fingers together quickly like a talking mouth, rolled her eyes at the speaker, and grinned at me. Regarding a different commemorative service in 2012, Abu Wissam, a forty-year member of various Palestinian parties including Fatah, told me that memorials were "very boring, the same thing every time, every year." Interviews revealed similar themes. Over coffee in his family's living room, one officer noted that excluding the self-criticism (*naqd thāti*) portion of formal meetings had become increasingly common. He associated this oversight with lack of proper training among the leadership and a refusal among some cadres to allow critiques of the faction.

As with more general party narratives, later coding and analyses of my interviews and field notes revealed that, when it came to money, activists frequently vacillated between toeing the party line and mocking it. For instance, during my second formal interview with Hanan, one of the most loyal party members I knew, she adopted the upright stance and stilted tone of a high-ranking Palestinian politician giving a formal speech. Addressing me in the presence of a youth cadre in the spring of 2010, Hanan explained that corruption is an inevitable consequence of politics: "like any people, like any revolution, we have corruption . . . the money went on a path that was not right." She then laughed ruefully and noted in a joking, off-the-cuff fashion: "corruption, reform, corruption, reform, we're such a stereotype!" After identifying and interpreting similar patterns of discursive practice in my transcripts and notes, I then initiated several in person, Skype-based, and instant-message conversations with key interlocutors regarding my arguments. These discussions allowed me to evaluate the resonance, robustness, and validity of my findings and to further deepen my theory as a result.

Immersion in these social networks is a crucial means of assessing how organizational hierarchies, institutions, and roles operate in "real life."[76] This approach provides incomparable insight into the meanings that people associate with their affiliations and the ways that social practices structure intra-organizational relations. By highlighting insider views, performances, and understandings of membership, it also privileges interlocutors' experiences of the organizational worlds that they inhabit rather than relying on external categorizations.[77]

Delineating a Schism: Registering Morality through Money Talk

Money talk's core dichotomies rest on themes such as authenticity versus insincerity, self-sacrifice versus greed, pricelessness versus baseness, even sacred versus profane. Using vehicles such as complaints and jokes allows members of Old Fatah to access these deeper dichotomies in everyday conversation. Specifically, cadres mobilize the themes of money via three registers: money as a distributed good; money as a means versus an end in itself; and money as a form of power. Rooted in historical ruptures such as the 1982 Palestinian defeat in Lebanon, the leadership's exile in Tunis, and the subsequent political pivot from Lebanon to the West Bank and Gaza, money talk is used to

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002875 Published online by Cambridge University Press

achieve a particular type of memory work. Invoking money talk allows members of Old Fatah to link notions of a more "authentic" and "moral" past to logics of contemporary factional membership and participation.[78] Because money talk operates through a discursive network, the act of sharing money talk works to constitute and reproduce a social cleavage between Old Fatah and New Fatah.

Money as a Distributed Good

Difficult socioeconomic conditions for Palestinians in Lebanon—such as employment discrimination[79]—and Fatah leaders' own actions—such as paying some salaries months late[80]—mean that discussions surrounding cheapness, budgets, and lack of funds constantly punctuate daily life. Yet referencing money as a distributed good is not just a way for cadres to complain about mismanagement or to measure leaders' favoritism. It is also a means of invoking shared values via an implied present-day contrast to a historical image of the organization in its well-funded heyday.

For example, in the spring of 2010, I was getting a ride in a car belonging to Abu Afif, a senior officer and a thirty-year veteran of Fatah. Opening the door to the back seat, I unsuspectingly tore the internally corroded handle off his old Mercedes. When I shakily told Abu Afif that I had "broken" his car, he grinned broadly at my guilty face and told me: "You have to go in through the other side, *this is Fatah*." Pondering his jovial invocation of "this is Fatah," in response to me savaging his car, I noticed that a new, metal M3 logo had been jammed onto the car's trunk[81] (where the Mercedes symbol belonged) and jokingly asked him if he had stolen the car, ending with: "Is that what makes it a Fatah Mercedes?!"[82] Already in the front seat, Abu Afif and Sabah, a youth cadre who had invited me along, burst out laughing. "It's Fatah work [*shighil Fatah*]!" Abu Afif yelled out the window as I approached the driver's side. When I climbed into the car, Abu Afif declared loudly in English: "Fuck Fatah!" Sabah seemed inspired by her supervisor's candor: "Yeah, fuck Fatah!" She flung her middle finger towards the roof of the car as Abu Afif gunned the motor and flew into the street.

At its core, Abu Afif's statement "this is Fatah" implies "of course it's broken, of course it's flimsy, of course there's something wrong with it." His use of "Fatah work" to describe the car with the M3 symbol is also instructive; Fatah work, to Abu Afif, was jury-rigged or imitation due to lack of funds. Fatah work is what you get when money is not properly distributed. This interlude is particularly striking because Abu Afif was Sabah's superior in Fatah; he was part of the regional leadership. He certainly didn't use the terminology "Fatah work" in front of every party member; two years later, when I reminded him of the incident in a party office, he giggled but shushed me, indicating colleagues in the adjoining room with a slight nod of his head and a meaningful look.

Jokes such as "Fatah work" are a particularly important form of money talk; they resemble Scott's "hidden transcripts" in that they are shared only among members of Old Fatah and constitute a form of behind-the-scenes pushback against the dominant, official party rhetoric.[83] Yet not all money talk in this vein is darkly humorous in the way that "Fatah work" is. For example, the subject of health is particularly sensitive given Fatah and the PLO's past history of health service provision and the perception of a growing health crisis among Palestinians in Lebanon today. For many cadres, the history of relatively equal access to comprehensive, low-cost medical services through the PRCS starkly contrasts the current situation where people are often forced to put a price on life.[84] In almost every party office I visited, the topic of soaring healthcare costs surfaced, with officers offering examples of members who, due to the gap between UNRWA services and Fatah's capacities, could not pay for diabetes test strips, chemotherapy, heart medications, or surgery. According to Mukhtar, a Fatah representative on one camp's Popular Committee, the PLO[85] in 2010 paid 30 percent of a "regular person's" medical bills, 50 percent for members' spouses and immediate kin, and 80 percent of a cadre's unpaid bills; Abu Hamad, an accountant, told me in 2012 that Fatah members with colonel rank or higher got 90–100 percent of their bills paid, but that lower ranks received less support. Abu Umar, a high ranking Fatah official at the PLO's headquarters in Beirut, informed me that the PLO also spends US$3 million on medications for Palestinians in Lebanon each year. Yet over the years, cadres consistently apprised me that Fatah's payments to martyrs' families, the families of those who are imprisoned, and the families of those who are injured are insufficient and have dropped over time.

Old Fatah cadres use money talk to underscore the collective sentiment that these payments occur on a subjective, case-by-case basis and favor the "wrong" people. Specifically, they are seen as heavily favoring New Fatah: those who joined during or following the mid-1980s and had benefitted from rising regional leaders' patronage.[86] Abu Hamad, the accountant, shared this opinion as members of Fatah stopped by an office in order to get their pictures taken for their military ID cards. As elderly men filed up to his colleague's desk, Abu Hamad explained in a distressed tone that the leadership told him that there is no money to reimburse those same veterans (from the 1970s and 1980s) for medical expenses or to pay their pensions. Instead, in his words, the "PLO is paying people who did nothing. No one pays the revolutionaries." Abu Hamad's statement is about more than simple budget shortfalls. The ludicrousness of paying someone who "did nothing" is amplified by the contrast of not paying the "revolutionaries" who (in his view) did significant political and military work.[87] In the midst of the formalities associated with paperwork submission and portrait taking,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002875 Published online by Cambridge University Press

several long-term cadres mentioned that they felt as though the party was more interested in providing the glossy trappings of membership—which were identical to those used in Ramallah and mandated by the central bureaucracy—rather than providing the benefits that they felt had been promised decades ago. In short, the IDs were Fatah work; cadres understood them as a cheap sheen—like the M3 symbol—on a decaying organization.

These themes should be understood not only in the current economic and social context (which has worsened since the civil war in Syria began),[88] but also in light of Fatah and the PLO's past focus on social support in Lebanon (e.g., stipends for martyrs' families). Joking about a decaying car and complaining about unreimbursed healthcare costs may seem to be unrelated topics. Yet Abu Hamad's and the veterans' feelings about healthcare payments unexpectedly layer onto Abu Afif's still-fond assessment of his formerly luxurious car. They evoke themes of unreliability, abandonment, and deception. Sabah, the young cadre who rode in the Mercedes with me, later summed up her feelings of neglect: "the factions and the associations don't help anyone. Most of the time, if someone needs something, the community will take care of it." Comments such as hers both maintain an intra-organizational fracture and reveal the everyday processes that have reproduced it across temporal generations.

Money as a Means versus Money as an End

Despite complaints that centered on a contemporary lack of material benefits, people who identified as Old Fatah almost always underscored how cadres in the 1970s and early 1980s—when Fatah was relatively flush—did not join solely for financial gain. Nor, some emphasized, did they associate staying with a monetary payoff. Rather, they distinguished between using money as a means to achieve revolutionary goals and money as an end in of itself. This register thus operated to index questions of authenticity, motivation, and sincerity. References to salaries and social support are often qualified with the emphasis that money is not the goal of an individual's activism. For example, Yunis, now a former member of Fatah, explained that while his salary in early 1982 was approximately equivalent to US$1000 a month, he stayed despite the fact that by 1988 it was only worth about US$80 a month due to the Lebanese Pound's wartime crash. Mukhtar, the Popular Committee member, told me in fall of 2010 that he opened a small business with his sons because "$500 [his combined PLO and Fatah salaries] can't pay for everything" each month in his six-person household. His point was that, even as an officer, he still could not support an average family on his Fatah salary. Playing on such distinctions, members of Old Fatah frequently described New Fatah cadres as being in it "for the paycheck;" that is, opportunists only superficially committed to the "real" party. However, comments such as Mukhtar's introduce an additional subtext that members of the Lebanon branch feel progressively undervalued and deserted by their leadership.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given Old Fatah cadres' strong normative commitments to a specific historical ideal of Fatah, they also called on pop culture portrayals of gangs and mafias to contrast their own modes of participation. This form of money talk relied on a implied motivational and ethical contrast between "mafia"—an organization where the members are criminals and the ends are unabashedly economic—and a resistance movement—where the members are revolutionaries and the end is political and social transformation. Several times, people referred to specific officers who rose to power in the 1990s as being "like the Godfather" and their supporters as being "mafiosos" due to their alleged engagement in skimming from salaries, creating institutional fronts for patronage, and intimidating economic competition.[89] Yunis relayed that during the mid-1980s, he "felt like they [the leaders] were stuck in a Lebanese war, that Palestine was very far away [*pause*] I saw corruption, clashes between Palestinian groups, plots against people [*pause*] it's just a mafia." He then added: "many people just stayed in the groups for economic reasons, to get their salaries."[90] His implication, in part, was that people's loyalty and participation had been "bought" by officers with access to financial resources—rather than political legitimacy—and that the entire organization was tainted by the consequences. Like many others, Abu Umar, the national-level officer mentioned earlier, argued that these officers abuse their political positions for personal financial ends via kickback schemes: "If I have power, I will not let the infrastructure project happen unless they build a villa for me."

Underscoring the implied moral distinction between the two groups, several Old Fatah cadres also registered this theme via explicitly religious money talk. Using this tactic interrogates a member's motivation, commitment, and authenticity; to build on Zelizer's juxtaposition of the sacred and profane, it questions the individual's political "piety" by probing their relationship to the "sacred" Palestinian resistance. Abu Hamad, for instance, argued that notwithstanding Fatah's wealth before the 1982 evacuation of Beirut, the money that came afterwards "destroyed the revolution." Specifically, he cited a Qur'anic verse "where Allah says that people will begin worshipping a golden god."[91] Mahmud also used an explicitly religious story to argue that members' superficial material motivations destroyed the resistance: "In the days before Muhammad, during the *jāhiliyya,*"[92] he told me, "there were gods made out of dates [i.e., idols]. People would eat the dates when they were hungry. The revolution was the gods, and we ate the gods." To Mahmud, Palestinians blasphemed by using their idol (the revolution) for temporary and shortsighted material gain; it was an end in itself rather than a means of enlightenment. Yet his

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002875 Published online by Cambridge University Press

statement regards the revolutionary idol as pre-historic and the product of an ignorant time. For Mahmud, the revolution was a false god; like the golden calf, it could not respond to people's prayers.

These statements evoke a tension within the contemporary Fatah organization. On one hand, Fatah is a day-to-day job; steady office jobs in the organization play an important economic role in a community that faces broad, long-term employment discrimination and, more recently, labor competition from Syrian refugees flooding Lebanon. In one sense, financial benefits are worthwhile ends in themselves; officers in Fatah might receive a monthly salary, an additional commuting allowance, and a pre-paid card to recharge their mobile phones. In 2007, male youth cadres pocketed approximately US$200 a month to act as on-call militia members.[93] In 2008, a good soccer player on a Fatah-affiliated team might have earned a monthly stipend of US$40–50.[94] Students who are "with" Fatah earn scholarships to universities in Lebanon and abroad. The PLO General Union of Palestinian Artists contributes to dance troupes' coffers; both the local branches and the national party court popular musicians with monthly stipends. Militant parties fund and protect local hospitals, clinics, and social associations. Party money thus flows through formal, institutionalized channels as well as filtering into the network of everyday relationships that constitute families, voluntary associations, and religious congregations.

Yet members of Old Fatah also associate specific meanings, memories, and values with these disbursements; in their eyes, Fatah is not a "regular" job that one works "for the paycheck." For cadres who participated in military operations, were imprisoned for their political affiliation, or went underground during the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, accepting party funding or welfare is an inherently political act that can constitute a demonstration of loyalty, political agency, tradition, or defiance.[95] Several noted that receiving a stipend was a way to memorialize people who died working for Fatah. For instance, Miriam, an official in Fatah's Women's Office, nuanced her peers' usage of money talk when showing me the yellow card that entitled her mother to a US$200 monthly stipend in recognition of her father's death in combat. Several people had previously argued that these payments were not enough to support a family that had lost a male breadwinner. Miriam explained that she saw the stipend as a courtesy payment solely to her widowed mother "for [papa]." Miriam did not understand the money as a source of revenue and an end in itself; instead she regarded it as Fatah's ongoing tribute to her father's memory and her mother's sacrifice. Members of Old Fatah, in other words, saw monetary disbursements as being earned through participatory avenues attached to political goals; people working office jobs "for the paycheck" collectively devalued these acts.

Money as a Form of Power

Finally, Old Fatah cadres used money talk as a register of power. Specifically, they mobilized a dichotomy similar to Hannah Pitkin's distinction between "power to" and "power over."[96] This form of money talk opens space for members to pursue nuanced conversations about ineffectiveness, co-optation, and accountability. Interviewees and texts date a shift from Fatah having "power to" accomplish things to another entity having "power over" Fatah to the mid-1980s.[97] This division is associated with an influx of Saudi Arabian money that gave the Saudis "power over" Palestinians. For instance, Abu Hamad linked Fatah's and the PLO's dependence on Saudi money during the 1980s with the loss of organizational direction and the concurrent rise of a new generation of Fatah cadres beholden to the Saudis: "King Fahd ordered Arafat to return to Beirut. Why? To keep the Shi'a from taking Lebanon. [Nabih] Berri[98] was going to overthrow [Amin] Gemayel[99] and become president." Abu Hamad added: "He [Arafat] spent so much money, Saudi money for Saudi purpose, but Arafat wanted anything to reach Beirut."

Old Fatah cadres also employed the idea of money as granting "power over" at a more micro level. For instance, discussing the state of soccer pitches in different camps (e.g., whether a camp had one, whether it was dirt or astroturf, whether teams had clubhouses) proved to be a frequent, cross-regional technique used to register the idea of "buying power over." Mentioning one camp's astroturf pitch was a form of money talk because it implied that the Fatah commander responsible for the pitch both had the money to spend (implying that he was corrupt) and that he was expending money to bulk up his personal following—to gain and maintain power "over." In 2007, cadres in a different camp made a point of showing off a plush new sports center funded by a regional commander while expounding on the man's generosity and widespread local following. The commander told me that his job was to "handle new social associations, raise up Fatah, target the new generation" but informed me that (what later emerged as) his personal foundation funded most of the work. These types of comments evoked a tension between a real lack of community resources on one hand and clearly personalistic trends on the other. For instance, a young Women's Office representative with three small children matter-of-factly pointed out that the astroturf field was a wonderful resource for boys who didn't have anywhere else to play. Yet because accessing these resources ostensibly came with political strings attached—e.g., that those same boys would later lend political support to their benefactor—individual leaders' monetized competition for "power over" Fatah members brought activists' contemporary powerlessness into stark relief.

To many Old Fatah militants, the idea that leaders and new recruits appeared willing to monetize Fatah's worth

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002875 Published online by Cambridge University Press

was abhorrent. Yet it is also important to note that the quantity of money was not what mattered. Massive amounts of foreign money bolstered Fatah and the PLO in the 1970s and the early days of the 1980s when many of these members joined. The distinction is that members of Old Fatah felt that money in that period gave them "power" to: fund scholarships overseas, staff a massive social service apparatus, buy weaponry and train soldiers. "Saudi" money, in contrast, put a price tag on what long-term militants saw as a sacrosanct national project. In their eyes, Saudi money did not simply turn them into mercenaries; the very act of putting a monetary value on the resistance profaned it.

Constituting a Faction: Reproducing Old Fatah across Generations

Fatah does not exist in a social or political bubble; the organization and others like it are deeply embedded within the Palestinian community in Lebanon.[100] That is, cadres simultaneously and naturally inhabit roles in multiple network domains; a party member is also potentially a spouse, parent, neighbor, co-congregationist, or former high-school classmate. Thus, a salary or welfare payment does not simply concern an individual; the fact that money is exchangeable, loanable, and transferable means that it flows through multiple network domains and types of social relations.[101] The inherently intimate nature of financial matters consequently opens space for money talk to flow through kinship, friendship, and community relations as well as co-membership ties. For example, during Ramadan of 2010, a politically inactive member of an Old Fatah family explained to me that they could not serve meat at their family's celebration of 'Id al-Fitr because Fatah salaries had not been paid; she felt deserted and humiliated by the organization. While she was not on the payroll, she was still embedded within the networks that delayed salaries affected. In this light, money talk is particularly potent because it is easy to deploy outside of the political domain. This trait also makes it incredibly difficult to counter. Even if officers try to punish cadres who employ money talk too publicly or broadly—e.g., by posting jokes or criticisms on their personal Facebook pages—those cadres' kin, neighbors, and friends still engage in money talk during everyday interactions. This process further reinforces divisions within Fatah.

In this section, I underscore the organizational consequences of money talk's social reach and discursive flexibility. Specifically, by demonstrating how younger members and affiliates learn and mobilize money talk, I show that it has become a constitutive element of membership in Old Fatah. I thus reveal how money talk helps to create distinct categories of members based not on age or time of recruitment, but rather on their location within discursive networks.

Children both "inherit" their parents' status as Old Fatah and mark themselves as members through practice—including money talk—and social interactions.[102] For instance, Huda, the 18-year-old daughter of two Fatah officers, once engaged me while her mother, a high-ranking regional officer, gossiped with Nisrin, a regular at the Woman's Office. Nisrin was upset that a visiting Woman's Office official from Ramallah—who she identified as New Fatah—did not know who she or her family were.[103] Huda's subsequent explanation for Nisrin's anger revealed both her personal upbringing and informal socialization as a younger Fatah affiliate: "There's a big difference between the party . . . how the party used to be and how it is now. My mom always complains about it, that there are bad people in the party who only want things for themselves. There is Old Fatah, they love the PLO and Fatah. But now people don't know the ideology, the history." Even as a young student who isn't particularly interested in politics, Huda reveals her understanding that members of New Fatah are in it for the money and material benefits: "They only want things for themselves." Huda uses the theme of money as an end to register its meaning. Yet, she also situates her own knowledge of the Old Fatah within her familial relations by nothing that her mother "always complains about it." Here, money talk layers onto pre-existing kinship ties, rather than co-membership.

Like long-term cadres, younger members also used money talk to register deeper commentaries on Fatah. Many emphasized that it was not the presence of money that was problematic, providing examples of what they saw as positive, beneficial, appropriately "revolutionary" uses of party funding. For example, when pressed on the issue of Old Fatah's access to state sponsors and taxes, Khalil, a male cadre in his mid-20s, underscored that "Old Fatah also benefitted from money . . . Old Fatah was efficient, they used money to recruit people, to train fighters, and the most important thing is that they spent a lot of money on education and for services, for medicine." Here, Khalil treats money as a means to achieve military goals and social protection. When I pushed back, noting that Fatah currently spends money on education, health, and recruiting, Khalil's immediate response was to cite what he understood as a clear image of financial waste, corruption, and insensitivity, arguing: "but today, [Mahmud] Abbas bought shoes for 20,000 euros!"[104]

Ironically, as Daud, a young cadre, pointed out, the term "Fatah pays" (*Fatah tidf'a*) now signifies New Fatah's allegedly widespread use of payoffs to protect its members. Daud alleged that Fatah members had killed several people in his camp in 2012 and that the faction had subsequently bribed their families so that they would not go to the courts —a clear example of using money as a form of "power over." Hinting at the mafia and gang thematic deployed by others in Old Fatah, Daud called it "protecting criminals from the law." Whether or not his anecdote is factual, it adds

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002875 Published online by Cambridge University Press

dimension to the money-as-power register; the implication is that money isn't just used to buy cadres' loyalty, it's also used to subvert justice on behalf of the organization. Terms such as "Fatah pays" imply that money talk is used to express more than simple material grievances. Instead, these discursive devices are used to delineate intra-organizational cliques defined by their moral quality.

Associating oneself with Old Fatah as a young member is not only a means of communicating political authenticity; it also is a way for youth cadres to associate themselves with what they perceive as the successful, moral, revolutionary organization of the 1970s. In other words, there is an explicitly non-material status implied in affiliation with Old Fatah. When asked to explain what Old Fatah means to him, Khalil, explains that "simply put, Old Fatah was resistance, existence" but that today Fatah is "money, negotiations, and failure." When asked immediately afterwards how he learned the difference between Old and New Fatah, Khalil told me: "Living in a refugee camp in Lebanon and being a Fatah young member under a leader who fought in 1982 and got injured, Fatah for me was resistance, liberation, existence, fighting until the last moment of your life . . . those leaders still talk about their experience and how they fought and they were ready to die . . . my mom is one of those old leaders." Khalil's mention of growing up in a refugee camp is a reference to his family's relative poverty; his description of Fatah is one associated with self-sacrifice and agency. Like many of his elders, Khalil emphasized his view that the party had deteriorated morally by juxtaposing what he saw as its contrasting political and criminal (economically-driven) organizational forms: "After it was a revolutionary movement, Fatah became a gang." Though he was born in the mid-1980s, Khalil strove to situate himself and his political efforts in a different temporal and organizational frame, one he understood as being in stark contrast to contemporary political, economic, and social frustrations.

For younger members and affiliates such as Huda, Daud, and Khalil, money talk is not simply a way to let off steam; it is a component of everyday organizational practice that they have been socialized to understand as essential to being in the organization. They consciously associate this language with their position in multiple overlapping social networks, primarily their location in family relations and their associated access to Old Fatah networks. In our conversations, each linked their social network position to their political education; this socialization process, for the second generation of Old Fatah, clearly accompanies the discourse of Old Fatah that is shared through family and factional networks.

Discourse and Social Structure: Implications for Future Inquiry

My approach informs dominant theories of militant groups and political organizations more generally in two ways. First, by employing an ethnographic methodology informed by social network theory, it provides a situated view of how social practices such as money talk structure intra-organizational relations. This vantage point complements more top-down or static treatments of rebel group structures and underscores the potential of approaches to studying organizations that incorporate meaning, interaction, and ontological relationalism. By highlighting how the social meaning of money shapes activists' experiences of membership and allows cadres to articulate collective critiques of Fatah's leadership, this argument also implies that accounts of organizational structure should consider resources from meaning-based as well as materialist perspectives.

I challenge the assumption that increases in resource endowments are symbolically neutral events that expand organizational capacity and buy soldiers' loyalty. My findings strongly suggest that scholars and policymakers rethink their expectations regarding rebel finance, state sponsorship of militant groups, and the effects of "non-lethal" aid. For example, recent policy discussions—especially those linked to material support of "moderate" Syrian rebel groups—have focused on the risk of aid falling into the "wrong" hands, the likelihood of spurring competition between rebel organizations, and the potential to encourage mercenary behaviors. My evidence indicates that the logic undergirding these concerns—that if material support reaches the "right" people, the "right" people will build capacity—is limited and potentially misleading. Instead, it suggests that even if material aid is "appropriately" disbursed to the "right" groups, scholars must still attend to the social and political meanings cadres in those organizations associate with it. Money meant to strengthen an organization may buy requisite supplies, attract recruits, and pay salaries, but it can also be perceived as a moral affront to early joiners' political ideals, an attempt to co-opt an organization's trajectory, or a bid to buy leaders' future loyalty. The effect is to introduce a potential source of organizational schism and a powerful language for reproducing it over time.

The case of Fatah in Lebanon suggests that the types of interactions that constitute and reinforce Old Fatah may be more likely to emerge in groups that manage multiple country branches and dependent populations; that have exiled or geographically distant leaderships; or who experience variations in the timing, amount, or sources of external funding over time. Potential examples include the African National Congress between the 1960s and 1980s;[105] Afghan groups in the 1980s and 1990s; or the contemporary Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Rebels-turned-government in Mozambique, for example, experienced schisms based in part on debates over external support and authority.[106] Evidence from journalistic sources suggests that similar dynamics to the ones explored earlier here emerged early within the Syrian opposition.[107]

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002875 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Rania Abouzeid notes that many Syrian fighters explain their relationship to the exiled leadership with statements such as: "'We are in the *khanadik*'—trenches—'and they are in the *fanadik*'—hotels."[108] This quote implies that Syrian leaders are living a life of luxury while others fight their war; it directly calls their authenticity, motivations, and right to lead into question. Wendy Pearlman has likewise noted that "if you ask any of these people [Syrians who have participated in the uprising] what seems to be the worst problem of the opposition . . . or the worst problem of the rebellion: *al-māl al-siyāsī* which in Arabic is 'political money,' without a doubt" adding that this is "money that filters in with the agendas of whoever their patrons are."[109] The implication is that Syrians believe the opposition has been co-opted by external funders and their priorities.

My approach may also inform analyses of broader Palestinian politics. In Palestine, disputes surrounding Fatah elites' leadership and distribution of resources (e.g., salaried positions in the Palestinian Authority) following the 1993 Oslo accords produced an "Old Guard" and a "New Guard;" the elite officers such as Arafat and Abbas who returned from Tunis comprised the "Old Guard" whereas the "New Guard" encompassed West Bank- and Gaza-born cadres who had been ground-level activists during the First Intifada.[110] Pearlman notes that the network of New Guard cadres subsequently embodied in *Tanzim* (the Organization), led by West Bank General Secretary Marwan Barghouti, "criticized the corruption of Fatah 'fat cats'"; in other words, Tanzim's characterization of Old Guard Fatah centered on an archetypal image of a selfish businessman or politician who uses his influence to accumulate wealth at the public's expense.[111] Khalil Shikaki notably attributes the eruption of the Second Intifada in part to the crystallization of this Old Guard-New Guard rivalry;[112] it is worth asking, as a result, whether and how symbolic interactions such as money talk operated to perpetuate the Old-New cleavage and influenced the New Guard's evolution from marginalized network to powerful internal faction. More recently, there are strong indications that discourses akin to money talk were deployed during a series of autumn 2012 protests in the West Bank that centered on skyrocketing housing, healthcare, and gasoline costs.[113] In this setting, tracing how local, embedded Palestinian discourses surrounding money interacted and co-evolved with narratives associated with the concurrent Arab Uprisings may lend important insights into processes of protest diffusion and transnational identity formation.

For scholars studying militant organizations, the relationship between discourse, factional maintenance, and boundary reproduction demonstrates the necessity of a conceptual broadening of the term "organizational structure." My goal has been to explore a dimension of organizational structure that is difficult to observe through non-immersive means. Conceptualizing money talk and other symbolic practices as network flows allows scholars to usefully incorporate them into extant models. For example, researchers engaging network theory may map discursive exchanges onto other ties in order to identify new forms of brokerage and centrality; those interested in power distribution may study practices such as money talk as evidence of ideational influence. In line with Simmons's or Edward Aspinall's work, scholars might examine how discursive networks grounded in other themes constitute intra-movement factions and frame activists' participation, tactical decisions, and internal rivalries.[114]

A multiple-network approach grounded in immersive research methods also provides opportunities for scholars to explore the ways that networks of practice, language, and meaning structure social relations beyond these realms. Incorporating social network concepts into research agendas that examine the role of language in national security policy or peacekeeping, for example, might shed light on how similar discourses of threat or violence emerge from temporally persistent sets of cross-domain relations (e.g., prior co-deployment or employment in specific international nongovernmental organizations).[115] In other studies, discursive phenomena such as money talk may be usefully leveraged as evidence of informal institutions and intra-group cliques. This study thus complements, rather than rejects, extant conceptualizations of militant groups' structures while providing compelling new arenas of inquiry for scholars of political organizations, as well as those interested in ethnographic methods and political networks.

Notes

1 Oral history conducted with Mahmud, summer 2011.
2 A Palestinian guerrilla organization and political movement founded in the 1950s, Fatah is now a leading party in the Palestinian National Authority (PA). For the sake of clarity, I use the terms "militant organization(s)/parties/groups" with the understanding that a militant organization is a collective, institutionalized, non-state armed entity that uses violence alongside other tactics such as social service provision or electoral participation to compete for political power.
3 In this case, a euphemism for sex workers.
4 Author's field notes, May 2012.
5 Author's field notes, June 2012.
6 Author's field notes, summer 2010.
7 "Old Fatah" and "New Fatah" in Lebanon are distinct in origin from the "Old Guard" and the "New Guard" in the West Bank. Please refer to the concluding section "Discourse and Social Structure: Implications for Future Inquiry" for further discussion.

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8 See, for example, discussions of the invention of life insurance in Zelizer 1983, 43–44, or contract murder in Hart 2005. See also Hann and Hart 2010, 94; Zelizer 1983, ch. 4; Zelizer 1989; Hart 2005; Meagher 2010; Roitman 2005; Gudeman 2001; Parry and Bloch 1989; Bähre 2007.
9 In this light, money talk has much in common with what Scott 1990 terms "hidden transcripts."
10 I thank Jeffrey Isaac for helping me to clarify this point.
11 Pitkin 1972, 276–279.
12 In keeping with social network theory, I define a "network" as a system of relations consisting of nodes (agents/actors/roles) linked by ties (flows/associations/relationships). Wasserman and Faust 1994, ch. 1.
13 On language networks, see McLean 2007, 1998. On structure and depth see Sewell 1992, 22–26. On networks of murder and their structuring effects on gang relations, see Papachristos 2009.
14 Much of this work draws directly or indirectly on resource mobilization approaches to social movements, e.g., McCarthy and Zald 1977.
15 Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour 2012; Pearlman 2011; Sinno 2010.
16 Pearlman 2011; Staniland 2014, 2012; Lawrence 2010; Sinno 2010; Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour 2012; Pearlman and Cunningham 2012; Krause 2014; Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour 2012; Driscoll 2012; McLauchlin and Pearlman 2012.
17 Christia 2008; Weinstein 2007; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Byman 2007; Azam and Hoeffler 2002; Azam 2006.
18 Weinstein 2007; Christia 2008.
19 On the history of Palestinian politics in Lebanon, see Sayigh 1997; Brynen 1990; Sayigh 1979, 1994; Peteet 1991, 2005; Allan 2013; Khalidi 1985.
20 Following the Lebanese Civil War and during the Syrian occupation of Lebanon (1990–2005), Fatah was considered an illicit organization in Syrian-controlled territory (North Lebanon, the Biqa' Valley, and the greater Beirut region). Many Fatah members from Lebanon were incarcerated in Syrian prisons during this time. The party was openly active in South Lebanon. Starting in 1998, Fatah members were able to organize somewhat more freely than before in occupied regions; members sometimes described returning to politics in a "quiet" or "careful" manner. However, they were still watched closely by Lebanese and Syrian authorities.
21 Suleiman 1997, 400.
22 Suleiman 1997; Rubenberg 1983a, 1983b.
23 Employees of the PLO and their families received free medical care. See Rubenberg 1983a, 21.
24 Suleiman 1997, 399; Sayigh 1994, 17.
25 Khalidi 1985, 52; Khalili 2007, 48.
26 See, for example, the case described in Hundman and Parkinson 2015.
27 Khalidi 1985; Sayigh 1983.
28 Sayigh 1997, 58; Khalili 2007, 38–40.
29 Suleiman 1997; Sayigh 1979; Peteet 1991.
30 Kaplan 2015.
31 Khalili 2007; Allan 2013; Peteet 2005.
32 See for example Pearlman 2011; Pearlman and Cunningham 2012; Krause 2014; Kydd and Walter 2002; Pedahzur and Perliger 2006; Mylonas and Shelef 2014; Pearlman 2009.
33 Lawrence 2010.
34 Pearlman 2011.
35 Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour 2012; Krause 2014; Sinno 2010; Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour 2012; Johnston 2008; Shapiro 2013.
36 Pearlman 2011, 10; McLauchlin and Pearlman 2012, 44; Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour 2012, 269.
37 Krause 2014; Lake forthcoming 2017.
38 Sinno 2010, 34–40.
39 Bakke, Cunningham, and Seymour 2012, 266–272.
40 Ibid., 271.
41 Hadden 2015, ch. 2; Sewell 1992, 2.
42 Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; McLean 1998; Emirbayer 1997.
43 Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009, 560.
44 Pedahzur and Perliger 2006, 2011; Parkinson 2013.
45 Pedahzur and Perliger 2011.
46 Staniland 2014, 20–23; Perliger and Pedahzur 2011, 47; Pedahzur and Perliger 2006.
47 Pedahzur and Perliger 2006, 1990.
48 Small 2010, ch. 1.
49 Padgett and Powell 2012; Padgett and McLean 2006. By contrast, most network scholarship in political science aggregates different types of ties into a single-domain "flat" network.
50 Fatah, along with many other militant groups, has long encouraged endogamy in its ranks. See for example Peteet 1991; Parkinson 2013.
51 Padgett and Powell 2012, ch. 4; McLean 1998, 2007; Gould 1993, 1995.
52 This approach is influenced by seminal scholarship in the sociology and philosophy of language, e.g., Bourdieu 1999, Wittgenstein 1973.
53 Bernal 2013, 304
54 Scott 1990; Johnson 1995, ch. 8.
55 Weeks 2003; Scott 1987, 1990; Obadare 2009
56 For example, see Johnson 1995, ch. 8; Bernal 2013; Scott 1990, 1987; Wedeen 1999, ch. 4; Mbembe 1992; Besnier 2009; Obadare 2009.
57 Simmons 2014; Aspinall 2007.
58 Simmons 2014, 515 and 2016.
59 See Gould 1995.
60 Hann and Hart 2010, 94; Zelizer 1983, ch. 4 and 1989; Hart 2005; Meagher 2010; Roitman 2005;

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Gudeman 2001; Parry and Bloch 1989; Bähre 2007. Recent studies in American politics have begun to explore this relationship as well. See, e.g., Grimmer, Messing, and Westwood 2012.

61 Zelizer 1983, 43–44.

62 Hann and Hart 2010, 94; Zelizer 1983, ch. 4; Gudeman 2001.

63 See Allan 2013, ch. 2, on financial support and personal loans in Shatila camp.

64 Research on participation and identity construction in rebellion strongly emphasizes the importance of collective moral commitments and narratives in mobilization. See Wood 2003; Viterna 2013, 75–77.

65 Gould 1995, 15.

66 Smith 2003, 59. See also Wedeen 2008, 69, on the role of shared moral panic in generating national belonging.

67 It is possible that those responsible wanted to avoid a potential public confrontation. However, I was inclined to believe given my conversations with her, them, and other officials, that her supervisors actually feared the reputational costs of wronging a member of a prominent Old Fatah family much more. I knew of other "favors" that the family received and all signs indicated that members of Old Fatah felt the family was owed a debt for their history of service.

68 Gould 1995, 15.

69 A process referred to as "linguistic autocatalysis" by Padgett and McLean 2006, 1468–1469, and Padgett and Powell 2012, 5, 8.

70 I conducted fieldwork in August 2007, June–September 2008, October 2009–October 2010, April–May 2011, May–June 2012, January 2014, and May–June 2014. I also visited Ramallah in June 2012. Research was conducted under IRB protocols H07177 and H10075 at the University of Chicago and protocol 1312S46161 at the University of Minnesota. Interviews took place predominantly in Levantine Arabic without a translator present. For security and methodological reasons, interviews were never recorded. Interviewees have been given pseudonyms and their identifying details have been concealed. Quotations are taken from the author's interview transcripts and field notes; for ease of readership, I usually note an interlocutor's name and a date when the interaction occurred in the text rather than footnoting each excerpt. Some dates have been omitted to protect my interlocutors' confidentiality.

71 For an overview of organizational ethnography, see Yanow 2012.

72 Operational since 1950, UNRWA provides schooling, healthcare, and maintains some infrastructure in the camps.

73 For a discussion of the advantages and challenges of conducting research in the Middle East as a Western woman, see Schwedler 2006.

74 Not wanting to be disrespectful or exploitative, I tried very hard to reciprocate their immense generosity. For example, I would bring dessert or extra dishes to a meal, help with housework, tutor children, and edit resumes and visa applications.

75 I did not interview anyone under the age of 18, though I did volunteer at several children's centers and observe youth events such as scout meetings and field trips.

76 See, e.g., Blau 1955, Yanow 1997, 2012.

77 Bayard de Volo and Schatz 2004; Pachirat 2009; Wedeen 2009, 2010; Schatz 2009.

78 On memory, see Khalili 2007.

79 Suleiman 1999; Sayigh 1994.

80 My fieldwork coincided on several occasions with these delays, which I recorded in both my field notes and interview transcripts.

81 An M3 is best described to the layperson as a "souped-up" BMW. Young men in Lebanon buy or steal M3 symbols and add them to less desirable or older cars to make them look cooler and more expensive.

82 In effect, I was jokingly accusing Abu Afif of trying to make his classic, reliable Mercedes look cooler by copying a tactic associated with groups of young men who spend their free time drag racing through Beirut's streets. I was guessing that a son or nephew had attached the symbol.

83 Scott 1990.

84 UNRWA now finances the bulk of primary-healthcare clinic visits and part of secondary-level services via a partnership with the remaining five PRCS hospitals.

85 In contemporary Lebanon, the PLO is understood to be Fatah dominated.

86 Andoni 1988.

87 See Khalili 2007 on Palestinian communities and the politics of commemoration.

88 See, e.g., UNHCR 2013; Parkinson 2014.

89 Though many people in my field sites were previously familiar with the films, a Lebanese TV channel screened "The Godfather," (translated into Levantine colloquial) in fall 2009. The translated showing may have increased the concept's accessibility to a broader audience and thus the frequency of this specific reference during my fieldwork.

90 On intra-Fatah clashes during this era, see e.g., *as-Safir,* September 19 and September 21 1986.

91 Both Sura 7: 150–153 and Sura 20: 77–98 of the Qur'an reference the Israelites' betrayal of Allah by worshipping a golden calf during Musa's (Moses's) time on Mount Sinai.

92 The term "*jāhiliyya*" indicates "the time of ignorance" before Allah revealed the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad.

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93 Figures are for 'Ayn al-Hilwa, a camp in southern Lebanon.
94 Figures are for Nahda in 'Ayn al-Hilwa. A member of the Ansar team's management told me in 2008 that their players made about US$20–30 monthly.
95 Giannou 1990, 41.
96 Pitkin 1972, 276–279.
97 Andoni 1988; Nawfal 2006.
98 The leader of the predominantly Shi'a Amal Movement.
99 The Maronite leader of the Kita'ib Party and President of Lebanon from 1982–1988.
100 Granovetter 1985. On Palestinian guerrilla organizations' and the PLOs' social embeddedness see Peteet 1991 and Sayigh 1979.
101 For a description of borrowing, lending, and community investment practices in the camps, see Allan 2013, ch. 2.
102 On multi-generational and family participation in high-risk activism and militant organizations see Peteet 1991, Sayigh 1979, Lawrence 2016, Wickham 2013.
103 Nisrin's father died decades ago, but is commonly known to have been a high-ranking member of Fatah's central bureaucracy.
104 The story of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's purchase of €20,000 designer Italian shoes has been covered on multiple occasions. See, e.g., Asharq al-Awsat 2008.
105 Ellis 2013, 151–204. I thank Nicholas Rush Smith for sharing his knowledge in this realm.
106 Manning 1998, 2007.
107 Khalaf and Fielding-Smith 2013; Abouzeid 2013.
108 Abouzeid 2013.
109 Pearlman 2013, m. 7. Pearlman also notes the importance of the monetary theme in her own studies of Palestinian movements. See Pearlman 2011.
110 Pearlman 2011, 132–133; Harb 2009.
111 Pearlman 2011, 133. See also Usher 2000, Abrash 2007, Harb 2009.
112 Shikaki 2002, 89–90.
113 Ma'an News Agency 2012a–b.
114 Simmons 2014; Aspinall 2007. For an example of prior work on the organizational effects of discursive frames see Autesserre 2009, 2010 on peacekeeping.
115 Krebs 2015a, 2015b; Autesserre 2009, 2010.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716002875 Published online by Cambridge University Press