To develop a detailed representation of the repertoires of violence that shaped Palestinian militant organizations and communities in the 1980s, the organizational context, and the broader environment, I gathered archival materials such as primary source documents (published by militant organizations, the PLO, aid organizations, and the United Nations, among others); Arabic, English, and French newspaper reports; and surveys (published by political organizations, aid organizations, and the United Nations as well as by researchers). Aware of the fact that different sources often focus upon distinct aspects of violence and repression (Davenport and Ball 2002), I deliberately sought out materials that varied as broadly as possible in their authorship, political orientation, and institutional origins (e.g., militant faction, newspaper, civil society organization, think tank). I used these archival materials to build an understanding of localized repertoires of violence during the 1975–1990 Lebanese Civil War, the 1982–2000 Israeli occupation, and the 1976–2005 Syrian occupation. Archival materials deeply inform the historical narrative in chapter 2 and provide evidence of Palestinian interpretations of and reactions to the conflict throughout the book. Intensive archival work also provided key historical background that helped me to develop more meaningful interview questions and to competently participate in conversations about the past with both current and former members of Palestinian militant groups.
Publicly Accessible Archives

I consulted materials from and benefited from the research staff at five archival institutions over the years. In Beirut, I visited the American University of Beirut’s (AUB) Jafet Library; the Institute for Palestine Studies; the al-Safir newspaper archives; and the Institut français du Proche Orient (IFPO). In the United States, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) archival collections in Philadelphia also provided invaluable documentation.

The contents of AUB’s and al-Safir’s collections, combined later with material from al-Nahar available on microfiche in the US, allowed me to construct a collection of newspaper articles and other media reports on each of the camps and their broader environments from 1975 to 1990; in some cases, I extended my searches up to 2008. I relied heavily on AUB’s digitized editions of al-Safir, a daily, left-leaning Arabic-language paper that is generally understood in Lebanon as trending toward the “pro-Syrian” side of contemporary Lebanese politics. I also consulted microfiche copies of al-Nahar, the other primary Arabic daily in Lebanon (which, in turn, has been described as trending toward the “pro-European and American” side of Lebanese politics). However, former journalists who had worked at al-Nahar informed me that the paper did not have reporters who covered the Palestinian refugee camps consistently during the 1980s, whereas al-Safir did. Since I use the articles in order to help establish differences in localized repertoires of violence, I determined that al-Safir was more likely to cover the events of concern, so I focused my time in Lebanon on gathering those data. Al-Safir itself holds a topically and chronologically organized clippings archive that includes articles from major Arabic, English, and French publications in Lebanon dating back decades. I examined their extensive dossiers on the 1982 invasion, the Sabra-Shatila massacre, the War of the Camps, the Battle of Magdousheh, and postwar violence in the camps. After locating and skimming these articles, I organized these articles by year and by camp and had research assistants briefly annotate them. I then triangulated among interviews, memoirs, and secondary sources in order to present the most detailed version of events possible (particularly during the War of the Camps, when al-Safir’s coverage became noticeably more limited).

Though I do not consider these articles to represent the full scope of historical events, this technique allowed me to broadly understand distinctions in regionalized repertoires of violence and how they changed over time. Local newspapers told very different stories about each of the camps; initially planning to construct an events dataset, I spent months reading every digitized issue of al-Safir, starting in 1974, especially looking for news about the camps and local branches of the Palestinian factions. Accessing thousands of individually scanned page images
representing thirty years of journalistic coverage gave me a feel for what types of incidents affected each camp over time; I came to identify local repertoires of violence (and also to recognize which types of events weren’t commonly reported), to distinguish camp-specific organizations, and to identify recurring local characters. Yet these reports could not be treated as indisputable reflections of reality. Speaking to former journalists from *al-Safir* and *al-Nahar* clarified what might be expected: that media access issues, particularly in South Lebanon under the Israeli occupation, Syrian censorship, and the papers’ own political leanings profoundly shaped what had been reported. For example, in 2014, one former journalist told me exactly where I could find a box of censored, never-published photographs he had taken during the 1985–1988 War of the Camps. When I contacted the newspaper, an employee confirmed that a storage room was full of such boxes related to a multitude of sensitive topics.

At AUB’s Jafet Library, I also made use of materials held by the Archives and Special Collections department. These include the Political Poster Archive, which comprises materials from the factions as well as UNRWA. The Palestinian Oral History Archive (POHA), now an open-access, annotated, online repository of video interviews related to Palestinian history and culture, was not yet public when I conducted the bulk of my research. In 2018, with the aid of AUB’s Archives and Special Collections staff, I was able to access four interviews that are part of the archive’s Ein al-Hilwet (Ain al-Hilweh) collection before they were publicly posted. I quote from them with permission from POHA and the copyright holders.

The library staff at IPS helped me to locate materials such as PLO camp studies (which described conditions in each refugee camp before the 1982 invasion), consultant reports on the PLO’s and guerrilla factions’ social institutions, and the nine copies of *Sawt al-Mukhayyam* that the book references extensively. In addition to the materials quoted in the book, I also read and took notes on other materials available at IPS—collections of local media reports, research institutions’ and local scholars’ studies of the camps, and hard-to-find almanacs, as well as back issues of the factions’ and PLO’s various journals (e.g., *al-Buraq*, *al-Hurriya*, *al-Quds*, and *Shu’un Falastiniyya*). These all provided crucial background, helped me to narrow my research questions and scope, aided my ability to contextualize other materials, and supported my general understanding of the political and social environment, both historically and in the context of my own research efforts.

The AFSC archives, which hold materials created and collected by the organization’s humanitarian staff in Lebanon during the 1970s and 1980s, include public and internal reports, private letters, field notes, interviews, records of conversations, and related materials. After consulting with the archivist in charge to determine whether the collection held relevant items, I sent a graduate
research assistant to Philadelphia to photograph the Lebanon materials, which included hundreds of pages in total. These materials, some containing minute details of how collaborator organizations operated, dynamics in Ansar prison camp, and human rights conditions, became of particular importance for my chapters on South Lebanon. They often detailed less-visible modes of violence and repression from the perspective of foreign humanitarian workers who were embedded in the context. Because these individuals were frequently more mobile than many of the Palestinians and Lebanese who lived in the region, and also because they were in direct contact with a diverse array of actors, these materials present a uniquely comparative view of dynamics in Saida versus Sur, as well as within both cities. I quote from these materials with the permission of the AFSC.

**Private Archives**

Several people also granted me temporary access to smaller, private archives in Mar Elias, Shatila, Burj al-Barajneh, Burj al-Shamali, and al-Buss camps. Some of these materials had been relocated from other camps during the war; the joint PLO-LNM media archive that a Fatah officer gave to me (see Appendix A) had originally been housed in Rashidiyeh camp in South Lebanon. Officers in the PLO’s Lebanon office provided me with materials from their internal archives, including digitized versions of the PLO’s original film and video footage of the 1976 siege of Tel al-Za‘tar, the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre, and the War of the Camps in Beirut. This film archive enabled me to view, literally through the lens of the PLO, what wartime violence in the 1970s and 1980s looked like to cadres on the ground. Two individuals who had lived in Tel al-Za‘tar also provided me with copies of foreign documentaries that had been made on the 1976 siege and massacre; others from the community gave me books that locals had written about the events, while others permitted me to view their personal photo archives of the camp. Other archives represented personal collections of materials tied to a relative, a camp, or a village community. Many contained copies of personal documents and correspondence related to people who disappeared or died during the civil war or occupation (e.g., during the Sabra and Shatila massacre). I used these materials to reconstruct and better understand the narratives and symbolic production that surrounded different, regionalized environments of violence during the 1980s as well as aspects of organizational decision-making and community mobilization.
An Archival Archipelago

Several limits to existing archival collections should be addressed. Much of the PLO’s and the guerrilla organizations’ archives have been destroyed or lost. Some materials never left Lebanon; Rashid Khalidi, for example, notes that officers did not have time to microfiche documents before they departed Beirut in 1982 (Khalidi 1985). Much of the material that did remain vanished when the PLO’s Fakhani offices were raided and when the IDF destroyed the Institute for Palestine Studies as well as Palestinian and Lebanese intellectuals’ private collections (Said 1983). Israeli forces took massive amounts of Palestinian documentation back to Israel, where much of it, to the best of my knowledge, remains in government archives that are largely inaccessible to researchers.

Even the documentation that made it out of Lebanon during the evacuation is not necessarily available today. Some of the materials that were salvaged by departing PLO personnel, such as the Chairman’s Archive (later used extensively by Yezid Sayigh in his 1997 book), were taken to Tunis in 1982 and then to Gaza and Jericho following the Oslo Accords in 1993. I was told that the archives that the PLO deposited in Gaza upon its return were, for the most part, destroyed by Hamas in 2006. People informed me that many of the Syrian-allied factions’ archives were stored in facilities around Damascus; they were inaccessible to me for the duration of my research. Extant materials must therefore be treated as both informative windows onto the PLO’s and guerrilla organizations’ structures and behaviors in the early 1980s and the product of preservation efforts by archivists and private individuals in the face of the broader destruction, inaccessibility, denial of access to, or disappearance of historical documentation.

Research Assistants’ Contributions

A series of superb research assistants supported much of this archival work. In Lebanon, Salah Hamzeh helped me to gather and photograph archival materials at IPS; he and a second research assistant, Rima, aided in the annotation of the media reports gathered at AUB, al-Safir, and IPS for later reference. While I was at the University of Minnesota, Thomas Vargas traveled to Philadelphia to photograph the 1970s and 1980s Lebanon files from the AFSC holdings, which he then catalogued and annotated for easy consultation. At the University of Minnesota, Sean Williams, Eslam Bedawy, and Kelsey Fogt collected and organized thousands of English-language news wire reports and al-Nahar articles into searchable datasets. Bedawy also helped to located and translate relevant