

Handout 20: Imaginary Narrators Pool

Session: *Creating a Narrator Pool*

Because the events of the Lebanese Civil War are so contested, they provide the opportunity for researchers to work together in a group on an Oral History project that can represent the multiple perspectives of the war for a more representative, popular, bottom-up historical understanding of it. How can we create a narrator pool that reflects the multi-perspectivity of the war's contested history? How do we ensure that we are interviewing narrators that reflect a wide range of views and experiences associated with that contested history? If we want a diversity of perspectives, who are the narrators that we need to include in our pool? You have brainstormed classifications to ensure a representative sample of narrators and a range of voices, perspectives, and experience during the warm-up session, these may include:

- Gender
- Age-group (generation)
- Socio-cultural background (social class, religion, ethnicity)
- Ideological background
- Geographic background
- Rural/Urban context
- Others from the warm-up?

Let's say your subject is the Lebanese War, your topic is the 1983 Mountain War, and your research question is: How did the Mountain War (MW) impact the social fabric (family and community connections) of the communities of XX village/s?

To collect a sample of different voices and experiences, you and your group partners have come up with a list of people to interview, your narrators. In the imaginary list below, five narrators represent different genders, age groups, geographic backgrounds, and ideological backgrounds.

Narrator A:

is an 85-year-old man whose son was killed in the MW and who is one of the only people who still lives in his home in the village.

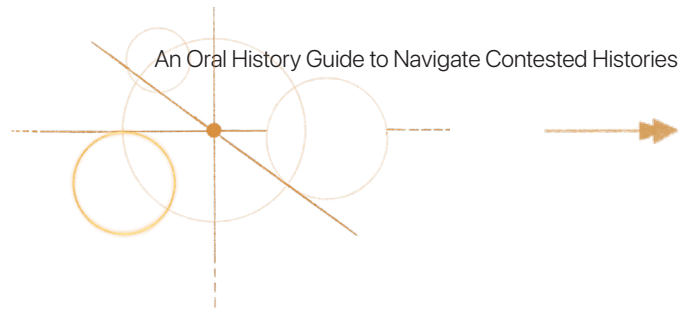
Narrator B:

is a 55-year-old woman who lives in Beirut, but she grew up in the XX village and went to school there. She has not returned to the area since the war ended, and doesn't plan on returning.

Narrator C:

is a 50-year-old man whose family was dispersed as a result of the MW, but who has moved back to the XX village to rebuild his family home and turn it into a bed and breakfast.





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Narrator D:

is a 78-year-old woman related to one of the political leaders of the region. She didn't live in the XX village but in the region.

Narrator E:

is a foreign journalist who covered the war in the 1980s, and still refers to it in his present writing.

YOUR TURN:

If your group has not already set a topic and research question in earlier sessions, decide on one together before thinking of the narrator pool. Describe five imaginary narrators that represent different voices and experiences to create a multi-perspective representation of a contested history. Following the example above, describe each narrator (maybe imaginary, but also maybe based people you know) and prepare to share the diverse range of narrators in your pool with the rest of the group:

Topic:

Research Question:

Narrator A:

Narrator B:

Narrator C:

Narrator D:

Narrator E:

