Transforming Conflict Within Lebanon Through Efforts of Justpeace: Reinterpreting History to Support a Hermeneutics of Citizenship

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Transforming Conflict within Lebanon through Efforts of Justpeace:

Reinterpreting History to Support a Hermeneutics of Citizenship

Fred Aziz Ata

A Thesis in the Field of Middle Eastern Studies
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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Abstract

This thesis explores the following question: can conflict transformation in Lebanon occur through a process of identifying, locating, and transforming multiple forms of violence, where the use of isolationist narratives that represent cultural violence has supported conflict, political hegemony, religious oppression, and disunity in nationalism?

Lebanon’s history of colonialism, border formation, external and internal influences has resulted in sectarianism and the use of isolationist narratives that represent cultural violence. Sectarianism is further driven by the country’s confessional political system, which allots political positions based on religious affiliation. This has resulted in a religious/secular binary, defined by Omer and Springs, that causes non-sectarian fractures. This binary can wrongfully support religion as the source factor for conflict rather than identify other factors from various dimensions.

Galtung’s typologies of violence are utilized to locate all violence, beyond direct forms, and to work toward efforts of justpeace. Moore’s understanding of religion is used to help identify more factors contributing to violence, which also aids in locating reformation within religious language and helping deconstruct the religious/secular binary. These methods will lead to Omer’s hermeneutics of citizenship, whereby Lebanese nationalism can be reimagined to be more inclusive.

The results and conclusions show that justpeace efforts exist in the Lebanese landscape regardless of religious affiliation. They also show that narratives have and can
be used to support pluralism and unity (cultural peace), and that Lebanese citizens support these efforts as long as their well-being needs are being met.
Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to those oppressed and to those finding themselves surrounded by conflict outside of their control. I also want to dedicate this to the Lebanese people—that one day they can live united amongst each other in a conflict free region under a judicious and transparent government, one that has their best interests in mind.
Acknowledgements

I want to thank my parents, Mary and Aziz Ata, and my brother Oliver, for without them I would not be situated in my beliefs, even if mine are sometimes in opposition of their own.

I give special thanks to those who have supported me throughout this endeavor, who have experienced and endured my stress and lack of time, and have cheered for me along the way, as happy for me to have met my goal as I am: Rheanna Ata, Rola Ata, Ani Avanian, Anthony Buscemi, Mel Boyajian, Eunice Choi, Amanda Ingram, Jesse Jagtiani, Meghan McCormack, Erin Roth, Ana Trandafir, Cindy Tsai, and countless others. Thank you.

I would also like to thank Stephanie Bukema, who has helped me through my anxieties, fears, and self-doubt. She helped make the process more manageable.

Lastly, I would like to thank my academic support: Stephen Shoemaker, my research advisor, for being available and prompt, continually guiding me through the process, and ensuring I had all the needed elements to move forward. To Diane Moore, my thesis director, for giving me the language and foundation to articulate my thoughts and argument. It is a priceless gift. And to Cherie Potts, my editor, who did an amazing job of cleaning up and formatting my writing so it would flow well while helping me to better articulate my thoughts.
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Chapter I

Introduction

As a Lebanese Maronite who emigrated during a time of civil war in the 1980s, I encountered firsthand narratives that tell stories of threats and persecution—reasons why we fled our homes. These narratives depict people from specific religious communities as one of the causes of threats and, in the process, pit one community against another. These narratives portray us as victims—and who would challenge that notion when a family of refugees is fleeing their country with two young children? I was almost six years old and my brother was three, so I remember this event. Although I do not remember any such narratives at the time of our initial departure, they became a stronger part of our story once we began living in the United States. This leads me to believe that, at the very least, the Diaspora maintains these narratives.

My question is: do these narratives still exist in the Lebanese state nearly three decades later? My desire for answers to this question fuels this research. I hope to address and deconstruct isolationist narratives and contribute to greater unity among all Lebanese citizens, external and internal, while hopefully playing some role in transforming conflict and maintaining a sense of home.

I believe there are many narratives among the many citizens of Lebanon, but how do we find them? Every global community maintains historical narratives, within both its home country and outside of it among those who have emigrated. The many communities
of Lebanon (17 religious communities officially acknowledged by the government)\(^1\) are prime sources for multiple narratives. The everyday lives of a population of 6.3 million (July 2017 est.) living in approximately 10,400 square kilometers,\(^2\) coupled with varying narratives from external Diaspora communities, offer the potential for many kinds of narratives. Each community, just like my own, has its own distinct perspectives on narratives of oppression, conflicts, civil wars, and political and economic despair. These narratives inflame religious factions that exist in such a tunnel vision that the possibility of alternative narratives is considerably diminished out of fear that voicing such alternatives may cause communities to be perceived as weak and vulnerable to threats. Soon enough, it becomes lost that most Lebanese are victims of conflict, civil wars, oppression, and socio-economic despair—regardless of religion—with a dysfunctional political system that leads to sectarianism and corruption among its leaders.

Over the centuries, Lebanon has been inhabited by many diverse peoples and influenced by many events. This has made the region itself, and the formation of the Lebanese state in particular, susceptible to ongoing civil wars and violence. Although the country currently is at peace, in fact it is affected by a history of colonialism and sectarianism fueled by myriad internal and external players. The result is a perceived sense of peace resting on tensions that can explode into conflict at any point. These tensions are affected by many factors: shifting political parties and personalities, historical narratives that players rely on and engage with regardless of the effects on


specific communities, and the confessional political system which combines religious affiliation with political position. In turn, these factors give rise to narratives that are espoused by anyone belonging to a religious community—politicians, the oppressed, people in power, and people who fear the loss of power—with each faction using the narratives to achieve its own goals. These factors need to be identified and addressed, otherwise the sectarian landscape and its accompanying false sense of peace will continue, which leads to a heightened risk of civil war in the future.

Political leaders, educators, students, civilians, activists, theorists, and religious figures are all part of a landscape that has fostered sectarianism, violence, and a failure to establish a unified identity. Although many factors could be cited, I believe religious illiteracy is a key factor upholding assumptions and misunderstandings. Religious illiteracy is a term I use in this thesis to depict the deficient understandings of religion that exist, which include classifying religion as a discrete factor without connecting religious text and its interpretation within social, historical, and cultural contexts. Alternatively, being religiously literate means being able to show how religion has influenced socio-political and cultural factors in a specific context. According to Diane Moore:

Religious literacy entails the ability to discern and analyze the fundamental intersections of religion and social/political/cultural life through multiple lenses. Specifically, a religiously literate person will possess 1) a basic understanding of the history, central texts (where applicable), beliefs, practices and contemporary manifestations of several

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3 The Lebanese confessional system (also know as confessionalism), which will further be discussed in Chapter 3, was modeled after the consociational model developed by Arendt Lijphart (Democracy in Plural Societies, 1973). “The main elements were: government by ‘grand coalition’; the mutual veto or ‘concurrent majority’ rule; proportionality as the principle of representation; and a high degree of autonomy for each community to run its own internal affairs” (Rigby, 2000, 171-172). In the research literature, Lebanese communities are sometimes referred to as confessions, which will also be used in this thesis.
of the world’s religious traditions as they arose out of and continue to be shaped by particular social, historical and cultural contexts; and 2) the ability to discern and explore the religious dimensions of political, social and cultural expressions across time and place.⁴

Therefore, religious illiteracy assumes that religion is a universal and discrete notion not influenced by specific surrounding factors. Religious illiteracy allows assumptions and misunderstandings to develop and thrive, which risks rationalizing violence as inevitable due to imbedded ideologies or traditions in each religious community.

Since various traditions of religion are embedded in the entire structure of Lebanon—politically and within private and public spheres—it is crucial to understand religion from what Moore calls a cultural studies approach. This process helps identify religious narratives that maintain sectarianism, marginalize specific communities, encourage support for political hegemony among affiliated religious communities, maintain a perceived communal threat, and reinforce negative stereotypes among citizens of communities. It is important for all participants to understand the meaning of peace as it relates to conflict, and then question why the outward appearance of peace (which may be a façade that covers multiple forms of violence) may lead to civil war.

Multiple forms of violence, as identified and discussed by Johan Galtung in his article on “Cultural Violence,”⁵ provide a framework within which Lebanese players can hold each other accountable for inflicting diverse forms of violence. This accountability allows players to formulate higher expectations when vying for peace rather than aiming

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to abolish direct forms of violence while maintaining other less-direct forms that continue sectarianism along religious lines.

Although I do not consider myself a particularly religious person, or even knowledgeable of the Bible, I still feel strong ties to my cultural upbringing, which includes religious traditions. Religious practices are embedded in my family’s daily life, from the food we eat, the rituals we partake in, the analogies and parables we speak, and the figures to which we sometimes find ourselves praying. I am aware that my rituals as a Maronite Christian are sometimes similar to those of other religious groups in Lebanon, that is, we have cultural similarities regardless of our specific religious upbringings. I respect the figures in my own religious narratives, but because I have encountered isolationist narratives, I also consciously try to respect other people’s narratives—not only within my own community of people who may have opposing viewpoints, but other communities around me, especially those that derive from a Lebanese foundation.

To date, political and identity-formation solutions to conflict have been successful in some respects and unsuccessful in others. Resolutions have fallen back on common threads of identity, multiple iterations of the same political system, and confessional narratives that maintain the same perceived threats. Moore’s cultural studies approach to understanding religion provides a theoretical framework for resisting these “go to” resolutions that, in the past, have tended to rely on religious illiteracy. Utilizing her theoretical frameworks may help transform the discussion of conflict within the historical and cultural contexts of Lebanon because the frameworks provide tools for analyzing religion as it is entwined with socio-economic and geopolitical factors.
This theoretical foundation will then be supported by two concepts: (1) the hermeneutics of citizenship, and (2) justpeace, which envisions a different future for Lebanon by stepping away from older tactics. These concepts redefine a more inclusive identity supported by multiple lenses and peace initiatives that entail more than the reduction of direct forms of violence and treat religion as modern and essential to the discussion.

In the following chapters, I develop the frameworks utilized in this thesis to create a process for locating historical narratives that are detrimental to conflict transformation. In turn, this will help re-image identity through hermeneutics of citizenship while working within peace initiatives such as justpeace. This process will step away from old approaches to conflict, religion, politics, economics, and nationalism in order to present a new approach.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the two theoretical frameworks that are utilized in this thesis: (1) Johan Galtung’s three typologies of violence, and (2) Diane Moore’s cultural studies approach to understanding religion. I begin with Galtung’s typologies to help locate structural and cultural forms of violence, i.e., the Lebanese political system that attempts to maintain a community’s hegemony or withholds basic needs from some communities— which are less apparent than direct forms of violence. This is pertinent

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7 After discussing Galtung’s typologies of violence, it will be clearer how these narratives have come to exist as forms of cultural violence.

8 Galtung, “Cultural Violence.”

9 Moore, “Our Method.”
because past peace initiatives have dealt with direct forms of violence. But we need a more finely tuned framework in order to locate the less-direct forms of violence, which may be just as damaging. In the Lebanese context, these typologies show how religion has been used to excuse violent acts—from political dominance to civil war.

Second, in conjunction with Galtung’s three typologies, Moore’s cultural studies approach will form the framework within which to understand the role of religion in Lebanon. This will help identify how religious narratives are used to either promote power or marginalize via multiple methods of indirect violence. Moore’s approach will be used to argue against the wrong and limiting idea that religion is a discrete factor that leads to violence, which challenges the notion that violence is inevitable due to innate theoretical, foundational, and historical differences. Thus religion, one of many factors that lead to conflict, is entwined with socio-economic and geopolitical factors, is internally diverse, evolves and changes, and is embedded in cultures.

Moore’s framework identifies helpful terms for discussing religion in a specific context rather than more universal and all-encompassing religious claims. The notion of “situatedness” details how each person is a product of his or her specific cultural context and informs how both person and religion are not universally understood. This is useful in the discussion of conflict in Lebanon because it deconstructs players’ claims that lead to perceived threats and places them in the context of Lebanon. It helps explain how ideologies that incorporate religious roles and narratives may be constructions and interpretations seeking to meet specific needs rather than givens.

I follow with a discussion of Atalia Omer’s and Jason A. Springs’ propositions that challenge the religious/secular nationalism binary and relate them to Galtung’s
This is important because secular communities exist in Lebanon, and it is essential for conflict transformation to provide a platform on which all sides can meet at. In the religious/secular binary discussion, I show how religious illiteracy draws lines between political and governance factors. This binary pits the secular against the religious, marking the latter as pre-modern and detrimental to politics and governing. Not only is this a form of religious illiteracy, but it could also become a basis for structural violence that demeans the role of religion. Demeaning the role of religion suppresses a major factor that is undeniably important to the Lebanese population. However, this binary has the potential to switch the roles, pitting the religious against the secular. In this vein the secular model becomes backwards and detrimental, rather than constructing the conversation to rely on both sides being mutually influential.

The diffusion of this religious/secular binary is important in the Lebanese context for several reasons. Players have used religious narratives outside the framework of a cultural studies understanding, which has led to and maintained isolationist ideas of community as well as a non-transparent, religion-based political system that has been a source of sectarianism. This system is not transparent because it relies on the problematic construction of this binary, which has pushed secular ideologies to define the political sphere and religious ideologies to the private sphere, even as it ensures political positions to people from specific religious affiliations along demographic lines. The continued wrongful use of the religious narrative to garner political support has resulted in ongoing conflict, sectarianism, and national disunity. Furthermore, because religion has influenced identity formation and the political system while failing to foster peace, it is

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regarded as a negative factor. This has enabled this binary with secular and anti-religious ideologies to surface. This binary will continue along a similar trajectory that does not support an inclusive identity or the restructuring of a new political system. Instead, this binary has and will continue to contribute to internal fracturing of the religiously based and the secular communities.

The Lebanese people are closely connected to their religions and are a living result of the context and history of the country, which has relied on religion even if wrongfully used by some to achieve power. Therefore, religion must be viewed as a modern ideology in conjunction with the secular. When thinking of a new system, I believe it is beneficial to deconstruct the religious/secular binary in order to re-imagine a system forged by dialogue that respects and incorporates all factors that are important in the Lebanese context, giving equal consideration to religious and secular ideologies.

In Chapter 3, I address the historical Lebanese context of three prominent communities: Maronites, Sunnis, and Shi’ites. I start with the history of the region before it became what we now know as Lebanon: its border formation, colonial influences, and the writing of its constitution. This leads to a discussion of the three communities, often regarded as opposing one another within Lebanon. Such discussion is essential because it helps ground the narratives used in recent history to support identity formation, constitutional development, the political system(s), power legitimacy, and oppression—each of which have supported varying types of violence. Because some of these narratives are based on religious affiliation, utilizing the cultural studies approach to understanding religion is beneficial to the discussion by showing that these narratives are not discrete or givens. Understanding this supports the notion that these narratives are
constructed and can be redefined to promote what we want to achieve during the processes of conflict transformation, hermeneutics of citizenship, and justpeace.

Chapter 4 examines Omer’s hermeneutics of citizenship\textsuperscript{11} and John Paul Lederach’s and R. Scott Appleby’s concept of justpeace.\textsuperscript{12} The hermeneutics of citizenship provides multiple lenses for looking at citizenship, which, in conjunction with the cultural studies approach, helps identify pluralities within given communities and express identity through the use of multiple lenses. This will be helpful for deconstructing Lebanese identity, which has been formed from narrow-minded narratives that foster isolationist community understandings and sectarianism, even though identity formation efforts were intended to be more inclusive. Thus, locating these historical narratives is pertinent to exposing the faults of a well-intended process in order to be more successful when redefining this process. This concept helps form a new, more inclusive national identity by reinterpreting narrative to expose the cultural similarities of Lebanese citizens. The cultural studies approach grounds religion as entwined in multiple factors, including identity formation; hermeneutics of citizenship takes these multiple factors, including religion, and redefines an identity that may come closer to becoming all-encompassing.

Lastly, I discuss justpeace as a concept borne out of the historical context of peace initiatives in connection with Galtung’s typologies of peace. By discussing how past peace initiatives have relied on suppressing direct forms of violence in the name of peace, I intend to show why this initiative, a false sense of peace, may allow the continuation of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Lederach and Appleby, “Strategic Peacebuilding, 19-43.
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more structural forms of violence.\textsuperscript{13} Advocating for justpeace means advocating for the suppression of multiple forms of violence, which means locating the narratives (representing cultural violence) that have influenced sectarianism and conflict. Identifying players that have used religion to oppress and to inflict violence will lead to locating other players who have practiced transformative means for redefining identity and justpeace initiatives, with examples provided in this section. I will discuss these players and their efforts with the concept of justpeace, in order to advocate for such efforts from all players, including readers of this thesis, showing how the same narratives that have resulted in oppression and isolation can instead be used to promote justpeace. This broader understanding will form a foundation for more plural understandings of religions that foster inclusivity, conflict transformation, and a peace initiative that seeks to diffuse all forms of violence.

\textsuperscript{13} Springs, “Structural and Cultural Violence,” 151.
Chapter II
Frameworks

In this chapter, I outline frameworks I found pertinent to addressing the conflict taking place in Lebanon. Galtung’s\textsuperscript{14} typologies of violence (described in the next section) help the reader consider other forms of violence beyond more obvious direct forms such as physical acts. Moore\textsuperscript{15} defines a language for discussing religion without reducing it to a discrete factor that leads to violence. This allows for multiple pertinent factors to be identified and addressed as they are intertwined with religion in Lebanon. Finally, along with the Galtung and Moore frameworks, the secular/religious binary discussed by Omer and Springs\textsuperscript{16} will be addressed. I will show why placing these two ideologies as opposing and discrete rather than intertwined, has and will negatively affect Lebanese nationalism and further contribute to sectarianism.

Galtung: Three Typologies of Violence

Galtung, often referred to as the “Father of Peace Studies,” defined a three-tier typology that identifies and addresses violence in three forms: cultural, structural, and direct.\textsuperscript{17} This foundation makes us more aware of multiple forms of conflict, which in turn makes us more accountable for utilizing techniques that could diminish the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{14}] Galtung, “Cultural Violence.”
\item[\textsuperscript{15}] Moore, “Our Method.”
\item[\textsuperscript{16}] Omer and Springs, Religious Nationalism.
\item[\textsuperscript{17}] Galtung, “Cultural Violence.”
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
foundation of that conflict, not just what is seen on the surface. For example, if we identify and understand how actors use a specific narrative to excuse acts of violence, then we can challenge the use of that narrative (an example of cultural violence).

Direct forms of violence are acts that threaten life straightforwardly, thus affecting one’s capacity to achieve basic human needs. These include killing, maiming desocialization, and repression. Structural forms of violence, which can be less obvious than direct, are systematic acts of oppression, marginalization, and penetration. These acts, for example, might prevent a person from obtaining basic needs through actions such as denying citizenship and thereby goods and services such as the right to vote. Structural violence puts people at a disadvantage, leading to more severe forms of suffering such as death or starvation. Cultural violence exists in the form of a culture that embeds social norms or assumptions that make direct and structural forms of violence acceptable. Historical narratives can be used as forms of cultural violence that give legitimacy to direct or structural forms of violence from one community to another. In contrast, cultural peace represents aspects of culture that embed norms and assumptions that legitimize direct and structural peace.18

Galtung defines violence as the abuse of basic human needs, which he combines with a distinction between direct and structural. Table 1 illustrates eight types of violence with subtypes. This table depicts acts that may not be considered violent due to their lack of a direct or obvious form. However, once we identify variations of structural violence and imagine the rights that would be taken away, we may begin to imagine how detrimental such acts can be on our health and happiness. This table also helps visualize

how these typologies are intertwined between the various forms, showing how they relate to and reinforce each other. There may not be a clear distinction between acts of violence.

Table 1. Typologies of Violence

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<td>Direct Violence</td>
<td>Killing</td>
<td>Maiming, Siege, Sanctions, Misery</td>
<td>Desocialization, Resocialization, Secondary Citizen, Penetration, Segmentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structural Violence</td>
<td>Exploitation A</td>
<td>Exploitation B</td>
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Source: Galtung, 1990, pp. 291-305.

Galtung considers cultural violence to be an umbrella that encompasses the other two typologies: structural violence and direct violence. He posits that cultural violence represents embedded norms and assumptions that make structural and direct forms of violence feel “right” or “not wrong.” For instance, Community A may inflict forms of oppression on Community B because Community A has been told throughout its history that it has been a victim of Community B. This notion then supports Community A’s religious doctrines and collective memory. Applied to the Lebanese context, Palestinian refugees in southern Lebanon are typically lumped with Muslims (Sunni and/or Shi’ites). The Palestinians do not have political rights or opportunities for integration, thus paving the way for excusing structural and direct forms of violence. This fact may bear on the Lebanese army, which is predominantly Christian, enabling it to ignore the ban on entering Palestinian refugee camps and excusing the use of violence to suppress
extremists. Narratives that depict Palestinian refugees as a community that the Lebanese government must deal with, and using refugees’ extremist behavior as an excuse to enter and suppress their behavior, has allowed various forms of violence to be inflicted on Palestinians as a group. This helps explain why it is important to understand cultural violence and how it has and can be used to legitimize various forms of violence. If we understand how some narratives work to focus on certain aspects of a community, diluting what may be a larger and more diverse culture, we can begin to question the validity of any cultural violence.

Cultural factors are not all-encompassing. For instance, not all Palestinian refugees believe the extremist ideologies that can be found in refugee camps. In another example, Galtung uses an event that took place “more than one thousand years ago,” when Nordic Vikings attacked Russians. In order to excuse the attack (a direct form of violent behavior), the Vikings embedded cultural violence by promoting the idea that “Russians are dangerous, wild, primitive.” Subsequently, this form of cultural violence was used to excuse direct forms of violence in 1940 when Germany attacked Norway, and “the official conclusion became that the Russians are dangerous because they may one day do the same.”

Returning to the example of Palestinian refugees in southern Lebanon: a direct form of violence occurs when Lebanese police infiltrate refugee camps; a structural form of violence occurs when Palestinian refugees are excluded from voting or naturalization.

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These forms of violence are excused by cultural forms of violence, which exist as embedded assumptions that allow repression of Palestinians, i.e., Palestinians are perceived as a problem in Lebanon and “one of the lingering irritants.” They are also perceived as “provid[ing] personnel for the numerous Islamist groups which not only pay them money but also give them specific ideological guidance,” and they are blamed for the “destruction of Lebanon.” Because they are assumed (1) to be a problem, (2) to join Islamist groups, and (3) to be responsible for Lebanon’s destruction, it is acceptable to repress them for the sake of the Lebanese state as a whole. For example, “it is considered inappropriate to challenge the Lebanese system to allow more rights for displaced Palestinians who have been living for decades in camps in Lebanon.”

Understanding Galtung’s typologies helps us better recognize how narratives in a specific context can be used by any player as a form of embedded cultural violence to support direct and structural forms of violence against another community. By locating violence, we can identify the problematic nature of a certain narrative promoting exclusionary tactics. This is the first step to utilizing better tactics for peace which, for now, we can imagine as the opposite of the various typologies of violence.

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22 Rassadin, “Lebanon's Confessionalism,” 89.

23 Rassadin, “Lebanon's Confessionalism,” 89.


Religion is an important factor in this discussion not only because of the role it plays in the Lebanese landscape but also for its role in the larger Middle Eastern region. Three monotheistic religions are foundationally rooted in this region where each religious narrative begins. This is not to say that sectarianism and conflict are due to these original narratives; rather, that religion has a long history in this region. People have utilized these historical and embedded narratives as explanations for current affairs, or to support more modern narratives that coincide with colonialism or struggles for power.

The Religious Literacy Project at Harvard Divinity School, created by Diane Moore, believes that understanding religion is critical to understanding human interactions, so the Project “provides educational opportunities and resources for how to recognize, understand, and analyze religious influences in contemporary life through the overarching theme of conflict and peace.” Moore believes that comprehending the power of religion in human experience is key to understanding contemporary global affairs. She provides a cultural approach to understanding the multiple facets of religious influence.

Moore makes four assertions, often put forth by religious scholars, that are sometimes lost in broader public discussion:

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26 Created in 2011 by Diane Moore, the Religious Literacy Project is dedicated to enhancing and promoting the public understanding of religion. It provides resources and special training opportunities for educators, journalists, and others seeking to better understand the complex roles that religions play in contemporary global, national, and local contexts. See: https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/. Accessed 20 August 2018.


1. “Devotional expression” and “the study of religion” are different. This is important because it allows discussion of religious aspects without equating theology to some universal understanding.

2. “Religions are diverse as opposed to uniform.” This means that in addition to noticeable differences between Catholics and orthodox Christians, for example, differences reside within sects depending on regional, cultural, and political context.

3. “Religions evolve and change over time as opposed to being ahistorical and static.” Although the texts of the Bible and the Quran remain constant, the understanding and interpretations of those texts evolve.

4. “Religious influences are embedded in all dimensions of cultures as opposed to the assumption that religions function in discrete, isolated, ‘private’ contexts.”

Religion is a powerful force in human experience and it influences and is influenced by the political, cultural, historical, and economic contexts of adherents.29 Having this basis for understanding religion forms the foundation of religious literacy (a concept defined in the previous chapter), which is not relegated solely to scriptural and theological knowledge.

The cultural studies approach forms the analytical framework for religious literacy. This approach takes the above four assertions and frames them within a “post-modern worldview” with five characteristics:

First, the method is multi- and inter-disciplinary and recognizes how political, economic, and cultural lenses are fundamentally entwined rather than discrete. . . . Second, the method assumes that all knowledge claims are “situated” in that they arise out of a particular social/historical context.

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and therefore present particular rather than universally applicable claims. . . Third, this notion of situatedness applies to texts and materials being investigated, the scholarly interpreters of those materials, and all inquiries regardless of station. . . Fourth, the method calls for an analysis of power and powerlessness related to the subject at hand. . . Fifth, this approach highlights what cultural anthropologists know well: that cultural norms are fluid and socially constructed even though they are often interpreted as representing uncontested absolute truths.  

This framework works in tandem with Galtung’s typologies to help decipher the complex relationship between religion and human affairs. The framework also may help us better identify reductionist understandings of religion that have supported violence. By using this tool to facilitate our understanding of religion, we can challenge the problematic means by which actors have used religious narrative as cultural forms of violence to garner support from their communities. This understanding can be altered, instead of accepting that religion-based narratives are absolute truths that are believed by any community to justify the oppression of another.

Omer and Springs: A Challenge to the Religious/Secular Nationalism Binary

A discussion by Atalia Omer and Jason Springs challenges the religious/secular binary that assumes that religious and secular ideologies are separate and discrete. For example, secularists often perceive religion to be a pre-modern relic of the past while those representing religious perspectives perceive secularism as anti-religious. Mary Douglas discusses “trends of modernization” in which ideology and influence fall

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31 Omer and Springs, Religious Nationalism.

within the modern era and tend to favor scientific and evidence-based practices that focus on the human ability to understand the separation of religion and state. Within this binary, some secularists “view religion as not requiring empirical facts or verifiable evidence . . . outdated and irrational . . . even regard religion as the opposite of progress . . . [and] it assumes that religious nationalism will be inevitably pathological and uniquely volatile.”

This binary has the potential to create divisions between and within groups when, in reality, they exist side by side and often support the same goals: to govern and provide basic needs for the state. Rather than rely on narratives working in tandem with each other, the binary creates narratives of opposition that are not supportive of inclusive nationalism. Omer and Springs discuss this type of binary, which is constructed on the basis that religion becomes less important as modernization becomes more prevalent.

Not only does this binary define religion as a discrete, backward notion; it also portrays the secularist as the antagonist, thus creating a space of opposition in which neither side can come to an understanding because they are constructed as adversaries.

One way to view the negative impact of this binary is to look at Mark Juergensmeyer’s account of religious nationalism, in which he places religion and secular nationalism in direct opposition. He posits that a secular state believes religion should remain private because the more involved religionists become in the political and public spheres, the more opportunities there are for exclusivity and conflict. He also

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33 Omer and Springs, Religious Nationalism, 3.
34 Omer and Springs, Religious Nationalism.
believes that religious nationalism has become apparent around the globe, thereby helping to construct a nationalism that relies on religious influence. In this vein, he believes that religion can provide a foundation for unity and greater meanings of life and human values, which secular models fail to provide. Although Juergensmeyer’s discussion highlights the positive role of religion, it comes at the cost of secular ideology. Thus this binary has the potential to discredit either side. Rather than working on a type of nationalism that includes all secular and religious ideologies, the current effort continues to rely on separatist ideologies that work against building unity.

I believe religion must be addressed in the context of Lebanon’s political system because people’s narratives of oppression and threat are supported and founded by their religious beliefs. However, this needs to be done outside of the religious/secular binary. Building a national identity and minimizing people’s anxieties about a political system may best be achieved through religious and secular support, not with one or the other. Political scientist Scott Hibbard offers his outlook on why religion remains pertinent in politics today without relying on this binary. He argues that secular actors and political players are responsible for exclusivist and religiously divisive politics. Omer and Springs believe that Hibbard portrays the relationship between religious actors and the secular state as “symbiotic,” in which each benefits: “For instance, in some cases, political elites increasingly needed, and sought out support and legitimization from

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37 Omer and Springs, *Religious Nationalism*, 5
religious figures.” This statement indicates how religious narrative may have been co-opted in Lebanon, resulting in sectarianism and multiple forms of violence.

Greater transparency about the role religion plays in the confessional system would be more beneficial and help to legitimize the Lebanese government. The current system pushes the influence of religious leaders and their practices into the private sphere. However, secularist leaders, affiliated with religious systems, have relied on religious narrative to garner support. “Secular elites try to push religious voices into the private sphere and keep them contained on the margins of political society.” However, as elites continue to force this on religious people, “the more . . . people feel compelled to assert their religious beliefs in forceful and even confrontational, political ways.” Examples of religious extremism that occurred due to pushing religion into the private sphere can be observed in the Lebanese landscape, which I will discuss further in Chapter 3. Future attempts to transform conflict will require more transparency from all participants—to openly invite religious leaders to become part of the political system and to work in tandem with secular thinkers.

Galtung’s and Moore’s frameworks help move the conversation forward in the context of Lebanon’s history, enabling the identification of examples of problematic religious narratives that have resulted in sectarianism and violence. Both authors’ work shows how elites from all systems have used religious narratives that are detrimental to an inclusive nationalism while striving to achieve a political aim, oppress, or rally the oppressed.

38 Omer and Springs, *Religious Nationalism*, 4-5.


The historical Lebanese context has supported and continues to support these narratives, which in turn continue sectarianism and conflict. Furthermore, the religious/secular nationalism binary brings a vital aspect to the discussion. Political elites from any side, secular or religious, exist within the same contextual space and influence each other, even as the binary contributes to the use of narratives to further divisions. Religious literacy is one aspect that needs consideration, but the binary needs to be deconstructed as well. It contributes to religious extremism, problematic views of religious influences, and the separation of secular and religious ideologies as opposing and discrete rather than entwined. This binary separates the secular elites who may rely on the divisive use of religious narrative from religious leaders who may forcefully insist on religious ideology in the public sphere in response to secular oppression.
Chapter III

History and Narratives: Maronites, Sunnis, and Shi’ites

In this chapter, I discuss the history of Lebanon and how it came to influence the current sectarian landscape. By focusing on the formation of the state, which impacted the dynamics of confessional power, I address why this history has been a problem in the implementation of justpeace. I break down the history of the three major confessional groups—Maronites, Sunnis, and Shi’ites—that hold top positions in the Lebanese confessional system. By discussing Lebanon’s historical narratives, I will show how they came to exist as cultural violence and were used to embed problematic cultural norms that led to sectarianism. Then we will see how these narratives excused structural and direct forms of violence through a dysfunctional political system, as well as the use and understanding of religion in problematic, discrete, and exclusive ways in order to garner support for a party’s confessional affiliation. Finally, I will discuss how ignorance of various religions may have led to the secular/religious binary in the Lebanese political landscape, pushing religion into the private sphere and leading to internal factions in confessions.

It is important to mention that Lebanon, like all nations, does not have a single, linear history. Rather, it has many intersecting histories told from the perspectives of numerous intertwined communities. I selected histories that may have contributed to conflict and power inequality, while bearing in mind that this is not a comprehensive history.
My goal is not to argue the validity of these narratives. Whether they are true or not is irrelevant to conflict transformation and notions of justpeace. The point is to show how these narratives were used to support the rise to power of varying groups and to show how the narratives represented cultural forms of violence against opposing communities. This mode of thinking constructs an “us versus them” mentality.

Demographic Narrative: Maronites Come to Power in Petit Lebanon

Prior to the formation of Lebanon, there was a region that is now referred to as Petit Lebanon, which consisted mainly of the districts of Jubbat Bsharrī, Batrūn, Jubayl, Kisrawān, Matn, and Shūf.41 The way Petit Lebanon came about has been used to legitimize Maronite dominance.

The Maronites’ original homeland is said to have been in the valley of the Orontes, a region of Syria directly north of present-day Lebanon. However, the Maronites fled to Mount Lebanon during the “sporadic control” of the Byzantines.42 The Maronites moved into Mount Lebanon between 1291 and 1305 when Sunni Mamluks expelled the Shi’ites. Eventually the Maronites became the majority during the rule of Sunni Shihābī princes prior to the Ma’nis reign in 1697. In the late 1600s, the Ottomans recognized Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ma’nī, chief of the Druze Ma’n family, as ruler over some districts of

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Mount Lebanon and northern Palestine. However, Fahkr al-Dīn did not have strong relationships with his fellow Druze, so he looked to the Maronites “to boost his power.”

The Shihābīs also came to rely on the Maronite settlers to maintain their rule. Along with the economic penetration of Europe, this increased the socioeconomic standing of the Maronites, leading to the formation of new elite families. The eventual conversion of the Shihābīs to Christianity extended Shihābī rule across the region while challenging Druze leaders. By the eighteenth century, only Maronite Shihābīs were appointed as multazims (tax farmers). One of them, Emir Bashir Shihab II, successfully expanded his iltizan (tax-farming concession) to take over the majority of Mount Lebanon. This brought most of the region under Shihābī leadership, which for the first time “could be spoken of as emirs of Mount Lebanon, or of ‘The Lebanon,’ in the broader sense of the term, not only locally but also by European travelers,” as opposed to emirs of the smaller districts that comprised the region. This history begins to explain the region’s narratives of power, which were relied on throughout the formation of the nation to support and maintain Maronite hegemony.

Maronite hegemony began to manifest even more during the late nineteenth century. The powerful Ottoman Empire sought to resolve conflict between the feudal leaders of the Maronites and the Druze. A system of self-rule known as the mutasarrifiyya was allotted to the Maronites due to their increasing power and economic standing. This enabled them to develop an organizational system for creating better

43 Firro, *Inventing Lebanon*, 16.
45 Firro, *Inventing Lebanon*, 16.
relations between communities, which in turn led to political and cultural cultivations between the French colonizers and the Maronites, and laid the foundation for a “new hegemonic colonial system.” Formation of this system legitimized hegemonic power to the Maronites and led to the “realization . . . of Maronite national aspirations.”

Economic stability and power for Maronites enabled the growth of Maronite ambitions in a Greater Lebanon (also known as Grand Liban).

**Narrative of Threat and Oppression: Maronites Form Bonds with Western Powers**

Further hegemony became legitimized for the Maronite community when coupled with narratives of oppression. The intervention of the Ottomans on behalf of the Maronites resulted from a series of conflicts between the Druze and the Maronites. These conflicts are believed to have climaxed in a massacre of local Christians in 1860, “the accepted estimate being about 11,000 [which] . . . triggered a wave of persecutions in other parts of Syria, including the massacre of about 12,000 Christians.” Events like these drew the attention of European powers such as France, and the Roman Catholic Church, which considered themselves “protectors of the Maronites.” The intervention of European powers may explain the pressure felt by the Ottomans to instill the *mutasarrifiyya* system on behalf of the Maronite community.

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48 Firro, *Inventing Lebanon*, 16.

49 Salibi, *House of Many Mansions*, 16.

50 Salibi, *House of Many Mansions*, 16.
Western and Maronite affiliation formed the basis for a narrative in which the Maronites needed protection provided by Western powers rather than becoming compatriots with their Arab neighbors. This action supported the narrative that the Maronites needed a state that they self-governed in order to secure their own protection.

Western affiliation with the Maronites was further strengthened, creating a landscape for sectarianism in the Middle East after the demise of the Ottoman Empire. Before its demise, the Ottoman Empire was considered a place of diversity. Karen Barkey labels the Ottoman Empire as the “empire of difference” due to the coexistence of diverse groups of various religions, ethnicities, and spoken languages within it. For example, coexistence occurred under a Muslim sultan who committed to ensuring that all minority communities lived in harmony—Muslims, Christians, and Jews. However, that harmony ended after the millet system was established by the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century as a means to recognize different groups, including minorities, in “official arrangements and documents.” This system reinforced “the emphasis on religion in a profoundly unequal political and social order.”

Makdisi’s historical account states that Western imperialism—which led to reformation of the Ottoman Empire, changing it “from being an empire of difference . . .

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[to] an empire of citizens,”—was one of the factors leading to sectarianism.\textsuperscript{54} According to him, the nineteenth century witnessed implicit acceptance of equality between Muslims and non-Muslims with government reforms (Tanzimat)\textsuperscript{55} “to stave off European intervention and to consolidate imperial power.” This led to the massacres of Christians and intervention by Western powers, which formed the basis of the Maronite affiliation with the West,\textsuperscript{56} isolating them from their Arab neighbors, and impacting future attempts at nationalism.

The Formation of Greater Lebanon and the Demographic Shift

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire led, in 1918, to the regional dividing of nations between the French and the British. As a result, the French acquired the region of Petit Lebanon and ruled through mandate.\textsuperscript{57} The region that encompassed Syria, Mount Lebanon, Transjordan, and Palestine was part of the “Land to the North” (“Bilād al-Shām”) during the Ottoman Empire. Later, Syrian nationalists called for the creation of an independent, Arab-identifying “Greater Syria,” which would include the region of Mount Lebanon. With French support, the Maronites responded by advocating for a “Greater Lebanon.” Petit Lebanon, which encompassed Mount Lebanon, formed into Greater Lebanon by annexing the regions of Jabal ‘Amil (the South) and the Biqa’ (the

\textsuperscript{54} Makdisi, “The Problem of Sectarianism,” 27.

\textsuperscript{55} Tanzimat-i Hayriye (Auspicious Reorganization) was a series of governmental reforms between 1839 and 1876 that sought to centralize and rationalize Ottoman rule and capture more tax revenues for the military defense of the empire. http://www.wikipedia.org. Accessed 7 September 1918.

\textsuperscript{56} Makdisi, “The Problem of Sectarianism,” 27.

\textsuperscript{57} Abisaab and Abisaab, The Shi’ites of Lebanon, 12-13.
The annexed regions, where the majority of people identified as non-Maronites, did not welcome the formation of a Greater Lebanon.

The formation of Greater Lebanon was intended to form a wider geographic range between the Arab state of Syria and the Christian homeland. However, the annexation also integrated a significant number of dissatisfied Muslims into a region that was majority Maronite. Andrew Rigby states: “Whereas in 1913, out of a total population of 415,000, Mount Lebanon had a clear majority of Christians (nearly 80%). . . . The 1932 census of Greater Lebanon showed [that] . . . Maronites constituted 30% of the total, Sunnis 22%, and Shias 20%.”

The gap widened over the years due to a high birth rate among Muslims and the out-migration of Christians during civil wars. This demographic shift meant that the Maronites’ narrative, which supported political hegemony in Lebanon, could be challenged, and the threat of becoming a minority community that could be oppressed (as historical narratives support) would be emphasized.

Narrative of Oppression: Maronites and Sunnis versus Shi’ites

These historical events help explain why it was mainly Maronites who were consulted when Greater Lebanon was formed in 1920. The Druze people, a sect derived from Islam, were deemed responsible for the massacres of Maronites, the Shi’ites were not in a position to contribute, and the Sunnis opposed the new boundaries. There was

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58 Firro, Inventing Lebanon, 9.


also a Sunni-Maronite narrative that produced an amicable relationship whereby the Sunni Mamluks drove out the Shi’ites, thus making room for Maronites to settle. Further, the Sunni Shihābīs relied on the support of Maronites and eventually converted to the Maronite religion.

On the other hand, the Shi’ite history has been told through a narrative of oppression that dates back to their separation from the Sunni majority owing to questions of authority.61 This is not to say that the split regarding succession is the cause of current sectarianism but, rather, that relying on this narrative can be problematic because a cultural understanding of religion and Galtung’s forms of violence for understanding conflict get little to no attention.

The Shi’a-Sunni conflict is an age-old narrative in the Middle East that resurfaces regularly. The narrative embeds prejudices that define Shi’ites as “plebian . . . [with] their wrongheaded view of Islam . . . [which has] defined how many Sunnis have seen their kinsmen. . . . Shias face discrimination and are dismissed as provincial, uncouth, and unfit for their lofty pretension of representing Lebanon.”62 This form of cultural violence gives sanction to structural oppression and direct forms of violence. Forms of violence are excused because Shi’a are perceived as “unfit” and “uncouth” people who should not have the same rights as the more fit and Lebanon-supporting citizens.

Narratives of oppression were also embedded as a result of annexation of the southern and eastern regions, which were predominantly Shi’a. Once these regions were annexed to Petit Lebanon, and Beirut became the center of Greater Lebanon activity, a


larger economic gap developed between the French-favored Maronites and the Shi’a peasants of the Bīqa’ Valley and Jabal ‘Amil. The majority of the population in the south, who felt greater affinity with the regions of northern Palestine and Syria due to their similar experiences of finding themselves in separate nation-states, felt much more marginalized. For them, Beirut was not the center of commercial activities, and the currency they relied on was the Palestinian lira. Thus, with the formation of Greater Lebanon, the market for southern Lebanon suffered, putting many people out of jobs.63 Most of the southerners were not consulted when the state was formed, and they suffered economic setbacks, further contributing to the narratives of oppression.

These narratives and events signify just some of the stories that represent cultural violence. There are many more, and they are always present. On multiple levels, they have impacted the way the country is governed and the ways people interact with one another, aligning people not only by religious affiliation but also by secular and religious ideologies, neatly and decisively separating each factor into its own category. The result of these problematic narratives can be seen in the failures of Lebanese nationalism and the power-sharing system. In Lebanon’s case, sectarianism may have been triggered and supported by age-old religious narratives, even as divides are furthered through a process of exclusive identity formations, communal relations, and systems of power sharing, thus creating a constant shift and struggle for power.

Attempts at Nationalism

The process of forming a distinct Syrian and Lebanese nationalism is argued to have begun in 1908 when the Turks seized power from territories previously belonging to the Ottoman Empire. With this seizure, the so-called Young Turks, also known as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), convened the Ottoman parliament so the new government could implement “Turkification policies” beginning in 1908 to the end of World War I (1918). During this period, the “gradual ascendance of Turkish nationalism” took place along with “re-interpretation of the principle of Ottomanism in line with the motto that Turkish nationality is the dominant nationality of the empire.” Minority communities that did not agree with the centralizing policies of the CUP expressed their grievances about the pressures of Turkification.

One important historical account of the formation of Lebanese nationalism details that two communities in the region came to oppose the Turkification process: the Maronite Church and Muslims in Greater Syria. The Maronite Church and the mutasarrifiyya (the system of self-rule allotted by the Ottoman Empire to the Maronite community in Petit Lebanon) refused “to send representatives to the parliament.” The Church viewed this parliament convened by the Young Turks as “an infringement of Mount Lebanon’s autonomy . . . [The] Muslims in Greater Syria also increasingly felt


65 Firro, Inventing Lebanon, 16-17.


68 Firro, Inventing Lebanon, 17.

69 Firro, Inventing Lebanon, 17.
alienated . . . [and] took up the nationalist ideas their Christian counterparts had been espousing.”

Regardless of which happened first, and which series of events caused the eventual separation of national-building trajectories, several camps for building nationalism were formed. These camps took precedence in the minds of community members and were supported by regional actors from all perspectives. Three dominant camps of nationalism formed in the Lebanese region: Lebanism [also known as Libanism], Syrianism and Arabism. Lebanese and Arabism are the two trajectories I will focus on in this section.

Between 1912 and 1920, four authors brought about the birth of Lebanist discourse: Khairallah Khairallah, Nadra Moutran, George Samné and Jacques Tabet. Each put forth similar messages, that “the ‘new Syria’ they envisaged was to secure under . . . French protection, the freedom of the Christian population.” The start of Arabism in the Mandatory period is said to have formed in response to Lebanism to, “appeal to the ‘Arab people’ . . . to unite without distinction between Christian and Muslim.” However, it would be associated politically with Islam. These two narratives have persisted into present-day Lebanon and contribute to disunity in nationalism, embedded variances of cultural violence, and the sectarian landscape.

Maronites came to be associated with Lebanist discourse and Sunnis with Arabist discourse, each influenced by and contributing to forms of cultural violence and causing

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70 Firro, *Inventing Lebanon*, 17.


divisions between communities regarding discourse and religious affiliation. Here are two examples. In the first, the predominately Sunni, urban, lower class of Lebanon is said to have embraced Arabism with a “sentiment of Islamic solidarity” because they felt “threatened by Christian imperial powers.” Salibi argues that one factor contributing to this occurred when Lebanon became a non-Islamic state.\(^{74}\) In the second example, the non-Sunni communities of Lebanon opposed Sunni-supported nationalism in the context of forming a Lebanese identity, although they may have considered themselves Arab otherwise: Christians opposed Arab nationalism due to its association with Islam, which they perceived as a threat. Shi’ites opposed Arab nationalism because they had existed and were repressed under Sunni dominance throughout history.\(^{75}\) Both of these examples exemplify the problematic role of historical narratives as forms of cultural violence and speak to the importance of understanding religion in a cultural-studies context in order to dispute and question these embedded thoughts.

Such narratives persist, representing cultural violence that contributes to fractures in identity formations, Arabism, and Lebanism. Each discourse has come to problematically categorize all Muslims into Arab camps and all Christians into Lebanist ones because of embedded cultural violence, although arguments can be made that each sought to unite all of Lebanese citizenry regardless of religious affiliation. This impact of narrative, which has the capacity to emphasize divisions, is summed up in Salibi’s writings:

> From the very beginning, a force called Arabism, acting from outside and inside the country, stood face to face with another exclusively parochial social force called Lebanism; and the two forces collided on every

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\(^{74}\) Salibi, *House of Many Mansions*, 49-50.

fundamental issue, impeding the normal development of the state and keeping its political legitimacy...continuously in question. Each force, at the internal level, claimed to represent a principle and ideal involving a special concept of nationality... But it was certainly no accident that the original proponents of Lebanism in the country were almost exclusively Christians, and for the most part Maronites, while the most unbending proponents of Arabism, as a community, were the Muslims.\(^6\)

Not only did Salibi’s writing speak of the detriment of isolationist narratives, but it also highlighted the result of these acts of cultural violence. Even he was affected. Referring to the alienation felt by Maronites vis-à-vis Turkification policies, Salibi said: “Arabs, in the name of Arab secularism, would impose their own Moslem dominance in Lebanon far more completely than the Turks”\(^7\)—a statement that emphasizes the embedded threat that Maronites collectively felt. Although Salibi exposes the detrimental downfall of the forces of Arabism and Lebanism, his statement reinforces division and conflict rather than just peace.

In Salibi’s statement, the construction of nationalism was also affected by the religious/secular binary. I can speak to why defining a secular nationalism was a problematic effort by exposing how clearly connected it was to religion. Salibi’s statement voices a more general fear that Arab secularism would impose Muslim dominance in Lebanon. Therefore, Maronite Lebanist intellectuals rallied for Lebanism as secular nationalism, not satisfied “that most Muslims [in Lebanon] called for some form of secular nationalism.”\(^8\) The idea that Arab nationalism was Islamicized (which would be pushed by Muslims in order to support a Lebanese Islamic state) elevated Maronite fears. However, not acknowledging other religious communities while creating


\(^8\) Firro, *Inventing Lebanon*, 17.
a “secular” nationalism, combined with the separation of political roles according to religious affiliation (with Maronites holding top positions), meant not openly acknowledging the role of religion as it is intertwined with secular ideology. Thus, the discourse of Lebanism can be viewed as pushing a secular nationalism that favors the Maronite, while embedding the threat of Arabism as a secular nationalism that must be detained, signifying a form of cultural violence.

The history of the formation of Lebanese nationalism relies on problematic assumptions, i.e., that each region consisted of one identity that defined a people who held the same beliefs and religious practices. But thinking about the cultural studies approach to understanding religion, the tendency to isolate communities into all-encompassing religious identities is not acceptable if one considers all the various communities that exist in the Middle Eastern region.

The Lebanese flag is another example of the impact that these isolationist narratives have had on the construction of nationalism. It also illustrates a form of cultural violence, where one community’s experience is upheld over another. The cedars of Lebanon, which only grow in the high mountains of Mount Lebanon in Petit Lebanon, became the new state’s national symbol. The original flag of the region, prior to independence, was designed with “a large green cedar superimposed upon the French tricolor.” When Lebanon gained its independence, the cedar remained but the tricolors were dropped, replaced by horizontal top and bottom red bands and a white band in the middle—a good representation of the disunity that occurred in the formation of Lebanese

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79 Firro, Inventing Lebanon, 9.
nationalism. The flag was designed without regard to the annexed regions since the people around Petit Lebanon may never have encountered cedars.

The Lebanese Political System: Contributing to Sectarianism

With independence came the need for systems of governance, laws, and power sharing. Nationalism necessitated cultural symbols like a state flag, as well as support from the people of the newly formed state, especially since that state was attempting to house people who had separate religious histories and differing regional alliances. Narratives of power and oppression infiltrated every aspect of Lebanese life, and any attempts to form a Lebanese identity resulted in disunity, opposing viewpoints, and a failed power-sharing system, each impacting all the others and emphasizing difference rather than transforming conflict by implementing justpeace.

Industries such as the silk trade heightened the status of Maronites due to their links to Europe, while simultaneously lowering the status of the Shi’ite community. Oppression of Shi’ites had existed historically throughout the peasant farming system with its feudal bosses and landlords having a major impact on the peasants’ political standing. This narrative of oppression, which coincided with the Maronites’ narrative of hegemony, continued to exist within the Lebanese landscape. Different confessions along religious lines, all affiliated with isolationist narratives, just brought about a shift of power among the confessions, all relying on narratives of oppression.

The confessional system was ratified in the National Pact, in conjunction with Lebanese independence, in 1943 by Bshara al-Khoury, the state’s first Maronite

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president, and Riyad al-Solh, the state’s first Sunni prime minister. This event included an agreement that Maronites would stop relying on France for protection, and Muslims of annexed regions would no longer argue for integration into Greater Syria. The Pact was intended to promote and maintain Maronite hegemony, even with the loss of French support, by securing key political, security, and military positions, such as the presidency. This occurred while considering the power-sharing efforts and rights of other communities based on the proportional population of each sect according to the 1932 census, which had the Christians at 52% . . . and the Muslims at 48% . . . . The agreement stipulated that the Christians should have six representatives at any given level of government to every five Muslims. These same proportions were to be observed throughout all levels of the country’s administration. In addition, the Prime Minister was to be a Sunni Muslim; the Speaker of the Chamber, a Shia Muslim; the Minister of Defense, an Orthodox Christian; the Minister of the Interior, a Druze; the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, a Maronite Christian.

The priority given to Maronites and Sunnis is evident in who was present at the signing of the National Pact and who was installed in top political positions.

Civil war broke out in 1958 when Camille Chamoun invited American support to “suppress what he perceived as the Arab nationalist threat to the Lebanese state,” which was a breach of an agreement within the National Pact: “Lebanon would pursue an essentially neutral and non-aligned course in relation to foreign affairs . . . although each had external allies and co-religionists, no community should seek external assistance in


pursuance of their domestic interests.”\textsuperscript{83} However, civil unrest, economic oppression, and non-transparency contributed to continued conflict, war, and sectarian lines of demarcation. Furthermore, demographics were shifting due to higher population growth among the Shi’a, as well as Maronite emigration, Palestinian immigration, and confessional relocation.\textsuperscript{84}

In the mid-to-late 1900s, the Shi’a poor began moving away from the south into the slums of Beirut in search of better living conditions and economic opportunities, escaping surroundings that were made “more difficult by the Palestinian presence in the south and Israeli bombardments and incursions across the border.”\textsuperscript{85} This move revealed social and economic injustices and their impoverished conditions. It also showed the need to reform the political system. The Shi’ites encountered structural forms of violence that impacted their livelihood. However, because reformation would mean challenging “the confessional foundation” on which the country was founded, it would be resisted by the Maronites who held political power.\textsuperscript{86} The Maronites relied on demographic myth to maintain the legitimacy of their power, as the confessional system on which it was based was changing away from their favor. Therefore, conflict did not abate because forms of violence persisted, and reliance on cultural violence to support the status quo of power continued to impact political decisions, adding to the disunity caused by nationalism.

Reformations of the political system have occurred throughout Lebanese history. Maronites sought to maintain hegemony from the 1940s to the 1970s through the

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\textsuperscript{83} Rigby, “Lebanon: Patterns,” 171.
\textsuperscript{84} Rigby, “Lebanon: Patterns,” 172-174.
\textsuperscript{86} Rigby, “Lebanon: Patterns,” 173.
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National Pact of 1943. The National Pact recognized the rights of various Lebanese communities. “Seats in the Chamber of Deputies were distributed in proportion to the numerical strength of the communities. . . . [It] consecrated . . . the confessional distribution of public offices, while enabling the Maronites to retain control over key . . . positions.”

That hegemony shifted in 1989 with the signing of the Ta’if Accord, which was not a major change from the National pact. It maintained the power-sharing system “based on the established consociative principle of the need to share power in order to regulate the conflict of interest between the various sects,” which left in place those who held top positions based on their religious affiliation. In terms of foreign policy, the Ta’if Accord affirmed Lebanon’s Arab identity and association, and recognized special relations with Syria. It has been argued that the Accord was created with a tilt toward Syria’s interests, which only served to strengthen Maronite fears that Lebanon was becoming a mere province of Syria’s authoritarian and repressive regime. This was a familiar embedded fear, often seen when the population of Petit Lebanon rallied for a separate Greater Lebanon rather than for becoming part of a Greater Syria.

Further change occurred in 2008 with the Doha agreement. That agreement resulted from a series of protests and conflicts between the Lebanese factions known as

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the 14th March coalition and the 8th March coalition. M. G. Rowayheb describes these coalitions:

The 14th of March movement was a coalition of the Christian, the Muslim, and the Druze parties, factions, and individuals, that was formed in 2005 as a direct reaction to the assassination of Rafik Hariri. It [the Movement] was composed of the following political parties: The Future movement (Sunni), the Progressive Socialist Party (Druze), the Lebanese forces (Christian) and the Kataib Party (Christian). The 8th of March movement was a coalition of mainly Shi’a and Christian factions like Hezbollah (Shi’a), the Amal movement (Shi’a) and the Free Patriotic movement (Christian).91

All factions “seemed committed” to the agreement, and a new government was formed that brought representation to all groups.92 However, “there would be new parliamentary elections in 2009 on the basis of a 1960 electoral law which emphasized voting primarily through smaller districts. The election had the effect of reinforcing local and confessional loyalties.”93

Each attempt at conflict transformation only maintained the confessional nature of the political system and failed to offer a successful system of power sharing. The point is not to determine who is in power but to show how these isolationist narratives resulted in driving sectarianism and conflict between potentially cohesive groups. A divided political system, built on fractured frameworks of identity, caused even greater divisions in both the private and public spheres. Created to preserve some semblance of national unity, particularly among the Maronites, the system encroached on political, personal, and

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social life: “Personal status laws and the institutions through which they were applied remained exclusively under the control of the religious leaders of the country’s seventeen officially recognised sects.” Therefore, the confessional system resulted in unwillingness among the communities to depend on the state. Rigby said, “The different confessions developed their own welfare and education services . . . to cater for their co-religionists, the central state, adopting a minimalist role, . . . estimated that up to 70% of school children . . . passed through schools of their own confession.”

Narratives that caused shifting power dynamics and excused varying acts of violence also led to a dysfunctional political system that separated religious and secular ideologies, to the point that the state had no political legitimacy. This system kept separatist, religious narratives alive while contributing to the religious/secular binary.

Religious/Secular Binary:
Compromise and Internal Conflict in the Maronite Community

Narratives that supported various power dynamics and excused multiple forms of violence also posed challenges when seeking compromise. The narratives often created fractures within confessions: some were willing to compromise while some wanted to maintain the status quo out of fear of losing political hegemony. Therefore, few changes were made with each revamping of the political system: one confessional group might achieve more power to balance out the roles, but the three top political roles with respect to religious affiliation and the confessional characteristic for power sharing would

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remain. Note that in this section I provide only examples from the Maronite context, although the religious/secular binary affected all Lebanese communities regardless of religious affiliation. It is impractical and detrimental to group entire communities as having a single, all-encompassing belief.

The pressure to revamp the political system was prompted by various factors: the Shi’a poor (described earlier in this chapter), and the need to achieve some semblance of peace during civil conflict (as exemplified by the Ta’if Accord and the Doha Agreement). All of this led to the mobilization of Lebanese society to support various ideas and politics not based on sect. This generated higher tensions at the elite level within as well as between confessional communities.96 Between 1975 and 1976, the Phalange party and its militia, which “sought to reimpose Maronite Christian hegemony over Lebanon,”97 moved to quiet competing Maronite militias. In June 1978, the Phalangist party attacked former Maronite President Sulayman Franjiyya’s militia base and killed several people, including Franjiyya’s son. The reason given for the attack was that Franjiyya was closely associated with the Syrians and was known for critiquing Phalangist connections with Israel.98

This speaks to the effectiveness of relying on cultural violence to excuse acts of violence such as this direct form of attack, resulting in loss of life. The historical and


tense relationship Lebanon has had with Syria and Israel has supported reasons for conflict between parties. That history has influenced various modes of thought, i.e., Lebanon’s split from Syria in order to become a Maronite homeland, and the view of Syria as a repressive regime that tries to control Lebanon. Israel also has had a complicated past vis-à-vis Lebanon’s various communities.

The following are a few of many events that speak to the complicated Lebanese-Israeli relationship. Although not all-encompassing, each has contributed to the landscape of embedded cultural violence.

- In 1982, Israel attacked Lebanon in response to Palestinian terrorists. Hezbollah, a Lebanese-Shi’a resistance movement, is believed to have formed in response to this attack in order to push Israeli troops out. Many thought that the Israelis supported the Christian community and marginalized the Shi’ites.\(^99\)

- The Phalangists have had contacts and close relations with Zionists,\(^100\) thus supporting the notions that Israel is the national homeland for Jews, Lebanon is the national homeland for Maronites, and both must work together against the Muslim-Arab world.\(^101\)

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\(^100\) Hagopian speaks about the Phalangist/Zionist relationship this way: “They [the Phalangist] saw the Zionist desire for exclusive control of the instrumentalities of State to maintain their separateness from other Middle East populations as similar to their case. The Zionists saw the Maronites and their desire to reassert their hegemony in Lebanon as the best basis for initiating the Zionist plan to break up the Arab world through minority nationalism and population transfers.” Hagopian, “Redrawing the Map in the Middle East,” 323.

• The Second Lebanon War occurred between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006.\textsuperscript{102}

Internal Maronite conflict was a result of embedded fears fostered by narratives of cultural violence which created a wedge between two Maronite coalitions and their followers: the Phalangists feared a relationship between Lebanon and Syria, while Franjiyya feared fostering relationships with Israel. This example shows how an embedded culture of violence relating to ties with Syrians and Israelis can act to support other forms of violence.

Political division continued among Maronite parties, resulting in “intra-Maronite civil war (January-May 1990) between Lebanese forces under the leadership of Samir Ja’ja’ and the Christian segment of the Lebanese army under the command of General Michel Aoun.”\textsuperscript{103} Two Maronite political coalitions formed: the Lebanese Front, which was interested in preserving the status quo (confessionalism with enthusiasm towards Syria), and the Lebanese National Movement, which was interested in reform\textsuperscript{104} through a “trans-sectarian proponent of Lebanese nationalism.”\textsuperscript{105} Add the detriment of the religious/secular binary to this internal fracture, which resulted from narratives representing cultural violence, and the fractures were likely to deepen even further. I can provide an example. At times Aoun’s party is neatly labeled as secular, although his actions might argue otherwise. He advocates for Maronite inclusion in the Arabic

\textsuperscript{102} Azani, \textit{Hezbollah}, 223.

\textsuperscript{103} Sirriyeh, “Triumph or Compromise,” 62.

\textsuperscript{104} Rigby, “Lebanon: Patterns,” 170.

\textsuperscript{105} Sirriyeh, “Triumph or Compromise,” 62.
landscape. Due to years of cultural violence that have maintained the status quo, it is apparent how an opponent could rely on cultural violence and successfully rally support for his cause. If Aoun supports reform outside of confessionalism and a non-sectarian Lebanese nationalism, the opponent may rely on the religious/secular binary to support the argument that Aoun must then be anti-religious and against the welfare of the Maronites. Alternatively, Samir Ja’ Ja’ and his party can be viewed as pro-religion but backwards in their implementation. This example illustrates the negative impact that the religious/secular binary could have and exemplifies why the Lebanese conflict is based on far more than religious affiliation.

The notion that, among Maronite leaders, the religious opted for the status quo while the secular were willing to compromise, is problematic in several ways. Not only does the binary support internal conflict and excuse multiple forms of violence, it lumps each side to a specific ideology (e.g., the religious are backward and unwilling to compromise), and leaves no room for deviations from the narrative, meaning such a narrative does not provide a basis for structuring unified nationalism. It was understood and accepted that religious leaders would rely on the status quo, and secular leaders would compromise. Question: why could not one be both or neither?

The problem with assumptions and stereotyping is that each group is accused of holding a specific and all-encompassing belief. Then the narrative gets told and retold without the effective use of tools, like the ones provided by Galtung and Moore, to help understand the diversity of communities and religious influence. In this vein, the narrative that takes precedence is that the Maronites were Lebanist and anti-Syrian while

the Muslims were Arabist and anti-Lebanon, thus becoming a mode of cultural violence. Forgotten in this mix is the idea that there were many intellectuals, of varying religions, who shifted their loyalties from Greater Syria to Greater Lebanon and vice versa.¹⁰⁷ Varying viewpoints changed based on differing factors at the time, such as relations with neighboring countries, the popularity of spokespeople and their beliefs, the ways in which intellects relied on historical narrative to garner support, and current events.

The narratives I have mentioned thus far, which represent cultural forms of violence, have provided support for multiple forms of violence, including oppression of rights and the economic welfare of certain religiously affiliated communities, while promoting the rights and economic welfare of others. However, there also exist narratives of inclusion representing cultural peace that could garner justpeace and a hermeneutics of citizenship through conflict transformation. I will discuss these in the following chapter.

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Chapter IV

Justpeace and the Hermeneutics of Citizenship

In the previous chapters, I set the groundwork for understanding religion and identifying multiple forms of violence. I discussed how narratives representing cultural violence were often used to support violence, a problematic understanding of religion, and the religious/secular binary. In this chapter, I discuss the concept of justpeace as a method to locate and transform conflict, and the hermeneutics of citizenship as a method to help imagine and create a more inclusive and plural Lebanese identity. These practices could build a different future for Lebanon rather than relying on former methods that merely maintain the status quo.

To advocate for these methods, I finish this chapter by presenting multiple cases in which actors in the Lebanese landscape have incorporated concepts of justpeace that set the stage for a hermeneutics of citizenship. Actors who incorporate justpeace have a higher likelihood of holding themselves and others accountable for transforming violence. Those who have used narrative as cultural peace to promote forms of peace that foster inclusivity and commonalities to support identity formation provide the basis for a hermeneutics of citizenship.
Bridging the Fields of Religion, Peace and Justice: Achieving Justpeace Through Conflict Transformation

As discussed earlier, illiterate understandings of religion have allowed politicians to use narratives as a means of garnering religious support from some communities while isolating and oppressing other communities. Past attempts at peacebuilding also incorporated illiterate means, focusing on religion as the cause of conflict. These methods did not incorporate a cultural understanding of religion, which reminds us of the internal diversity of religious communities and the continual evolution and interpretation of religious scripture. For these reasons, peacebuilding efforts have moved toward defining “religious peacebuilding” to include religion as an important factor in conflict transformation rather than to continue the separation between “religion and peace.”108

In a similar vein, the academic world has approached religious peacebuilding through separate discussions, achieving peace by achieving justice, which may deter reformation within religious tradition.109 Making bridges between the three pursuits of religion, peace, and justice will help form the multidimensional foundation for conflict transformation, religious reformation, and secular engagement, thus changing the way we approach these intertwined topics. Omer advocates for bridging these disciplines: “peace research, religious studies, and political theory . . . [through] a multidisciplinary approach . . . [to] enrich the theory and practice of conflict transformation as a process that

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involves reimagining the boundaries of ‘who we are.’”

Because of the importance of religion in Lebanon and in defining nationalism, it is pertinent to incorporate methods that utilize religion on par with other surrounding factors.

I have frequently referred to “conflict transformation” or “transforming conflict,” but what does this mean exactly? Before getting into justpeace, I will situate conflict transformation within peacebuilding attempts. Conflict transformation is a more recent attempt in peace studies to engage the dynamics of peace and conflict. The attempt to transform conflict was derived from inadequate attempts of “conflict resolution,” which failed to engage “the deeper structural, cultural, and long-term relational aspects of conflict.” Conflict resolution focuses on “immediate solutions to immediate problems,” while conflict transformation incorporates the contributions of resolution but “goes beyond a focus on the resolution of a particular problem or episode of conflict to seek the epicenter of conflict.” As I pointed out previously, conflict resolution in the Lebanese context may lessen direct forms of violence, but tensions are likely to manifest and continue since structural forms of violence require more commitment to locate and abate.

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111 Omer, When Peace, 66-67.

112 John Paul Lederach, Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 201.

113 Omer, When Peace is Not Enough, 67.

Justpeace is a further attempt to bridge and achieve justice and peace. Derived from the concepts of “negative peace” and “positive peace,” it redefines peacebuilding to embrace more than the reductionist view of achieving “just peace.” In the 1960s, Galtung defined two dimensions of peace: negative and positive. He defined negative peace as “the absence of organized violence between such major human groups as nations, but also between racial and ethnic groups because of the magnitude that can be reached by internal wars.” He defined positive peace as “a pattern of cooperation and integration between major human groups.” Essentially, negative peace is the absence of direct forms of violence, which cannot be the answer for conflict transformation since there may be other structural forms of violence at play. Although negative peace is important, it cannot be the end goal. Abating direct forms of violence must be combined with social justice efforts, which lead to the conception of justpeace.

In attempts to combine peacebuilding efforts—for example, justice, negative peace, and positive peace—Lederach and Appleby coined the term justpeace “as a dynamic state of affairs in which the reduction and management of violence and the achievement of social and economic justice are undertaken as mutual, reinforcing dimensions of constructive change.” It is achieved through “the redress of legitimate grievances and the establishment of new relations characterized by equality and fairness.

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116 Omer, *When Peace is Not Enough*, 69.

117 Galtung, “Peace,” 487.


120 Lederach and Appleby, “Strategic Peacebuilding,” 22.
according to the dictates of human dignity and the common good.”\textsuperscript{121} Giving equal weight to direct violence and structural violence allows for an “enriched understanding of the concept of justpeace—now understood to entail the reduction of violence in all its forms . . . and the simultaneous pursuit and cultivation of justice in the full range of its varieties.”\textsuperscript{122}

I would also mention that justpeace is a neologism derived from “justice” and “peace,” and my focus is on efforts made to include the concepts it represents. These efforts change within each context and rely on what is needed to transform conflict. Justpeace should be multidisciplinary in its approach, “does not betray a relativistic stance,” and moves away from portraying a “static or formulaic conception of justice.”\textsuperscript{123}

Understanding that justpeace is a neologism, it is important to bring in the collaborative contributions of Pierre Allan and Alexis Keller, who have also worked to redefine “just peace.”\textsuperscript{124} While they do not frame their discussion within the justpeace methodology, but they do contribute factors that are worth mentioning with regard to the Lebanese context and so can be added to our understanding of justpeace. More specifically, they contribute the notions of “thick recognition” and “thin recognition.” The former is an attempt to broaden the discussion of justice to include relationships that involve a group’s enemies as well as its friends, to aid in the re-imagination of identities

\textsuperscript{121} Lederach and Appleby, “Strategic Peacebuilding,” 23.

\textsuperscript{122} Springs, “Structural and Cultural Violence,” 169.

\textsuperscript{123} Omer, When Peace is Not Enough, 69.

without relying on old narratives to redefine identity through preconceived ideas.\textsuperscript{125} The latter relies on tactics of tolerance similar to those of negative peace.

Understanding justpeace, or concepts that support the neologism—bridging disciplines, incorporating practices beyond a negative peace, prioritizing social justice, and providing a basis for reconstructing nationalism to include all groups on equal footing—provides methods and sets goals for conflict transformation efforts in Lebanon. The need to form a more inclusive Lebanese nationalism that prioritizes social justice for all citizens, may lead to the deconstruction and reformation of a more inclusive Lebanese political system. In the past, Lebanese identity construction failed to diminish conflict because its main efforts focused on negative peace while disregarding other forms of violence that led to oppression, alienation, and the exclusion of religion in transparent means within peacebuilding discussions. Advocating for a long-term and systematic change may support a nationalism that is constructed with the intent to abate conflict through redefining and reincorporating narratives, which brings the discussion to the hermeneutics of citizenship.

Nationalism and the Hermeneutics of Citizenship

To set up the discussion of narrative and its effects on identity building and nationalism, I begin with the idea that identity is a construct and can be influenced by multiple players and their uses of narrative. However, the tactics they use, their situatedness, their ability to engage in the multiple factors on which people of varying backgrounds rely on (including a cultural understanding of religion), and their efforts

\footnote{\textsuperscript{125} Allan and Keller, \textit{What is Just Peace}, 195.}
toward a just peace to locate and tackle multiple forms of violence, will inform the success of which conflict transformation is achieved.

Relying on narratives that represent cultural violence, religious or otherwise, to garner support for identity building, politics, power, and other forms of violence is not unique to Lebanon’s case or to any particular community: “Both secular and religious nationalism rely on mythic narratives and sacred texts to justify their ‘undeniable’ and ‘undisputable’ claims to their homeland; national spaces are considered sacred.”126 In Lebanon, it seems that no one community or sect has the upper hand; each community is portrayed as having the right to that land, supported by a distinct history of oppression. Such narratives have been used to fuel conflict or support ethnic cleansing, “motivated not only by the defense of territorial integrity and sovereignty, but by the belief that the sanctity of a nation’s territory and/or culture is threatened . . . by the presence of some group of contrasting ethnic and religious identities.”127 This explains why attempts at universal identity formation have failed and why the ideologies behind these attempts are still imbedded in the Lebanese landscape. Cultural violence has reinforced and re-legitimized the need to defend confessional action against another confession.

When thinking of nationalism as modern and an identity associated with a specific region, Benedict Anderson defines nation as “an imagined political community . . . because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members . . . yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”128

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126 Omer and Springs, Religious Nationalism, 45.

127 Omer and Springs, Religious Nationalism, 45.

of nations and nationalism as imagined is a good tool because it speaks to the constructs from which they are derived and therefore lays the groundwork from which a new nationalism or nation could be considered. Anderson also speaks to the collective memory and myth embedded in each community, which can be a disadvantage when resolving conflict or forming nationalism because the memory and myth is embedded in the mind but is not always reality. However, an advantage to myth, which could lead to memory construction, is that myths that promote pluralism among communities can exist. The challenge is finding old narratives of cultural violence and reinterpreting them to become narratives of cultural peace and/or finding and incorporating new narratives that foster inclusivity.

This discussion culminates in what Omer defines as the hermeneutics of citizenship.129 Although she utilizes this approach to deal with the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, I applied it here to the Lebanese situation. Omer’s approach is useful to the Lebanese landscape because it is

a method for thinking about peacebuilding and conflict transformation in conflicts that are explicitly defined by ethno-religious national narratives and claims . . . grounded in a multidisciplinary orientation to the study of conflict and peace—that, in pursuing justpeace, illuminates the importance of engaging and transforming structural as well as direct manifestations of violence.130

She departs from the “we” as elastic and “contestatory . . . with the view of nationalism as a theory of political legitimacy that draws selectively on cultural, religious, and ethnic resources.”131 Reframing Lebanese identity relies heavily on all these factors, not only

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129 Omer, *When Peace is Not Enough*.

130 Omer, *When Peace is Not Enough*, 93.

131 Omer, *When Peace is Not Enough*, 93.
because of Lebanon’s internal landscape and context but also its context within the Middle Eastern region.

The hermeneutics of citizenship is important in this discussion because it is a method that builds nationalism “upon the necessity of contesting the boundaries of the ‘who’ to whom justice applies as well as the inextricability of religion, history, and culture in question.”132 By doing so, this method allows for the cultural studies approach of understanding religion (one of many factors) while recognizing and acknowledging oppression and the need for social justice for others. Justice for human beings makes room for the use of multiple narratives, demanding “a multifaceted, pluralistic, contextualized, and multiperspectival articulation.”133 These multiple factors that affect conflict in the Lebanese landscape need to be addressed in order to form a new, more cohesive and inclusive nationalism, which the hermeneutics of citizenship can theoretically accomplish. This will be pertinent to the communities of Lebanon that have been part of past recurrences and failed attempts to build a functional political system and form an inclusive nationalism.

This thesis identifies frameworks and methods that address the redefining and reformation of Lebanese nationalism, taking into consideration how narratives of oppression, colonial rule, violence, religious doctrine, and the religious/secular binary have impacted the failure to achieve justpeace. Conflict transformation in Lebanon relies on redefining a nationalism that unites the fractured landscape. Fostering approaches that redefine identity from multiple perspectives, with a focus on justice for all people, helps

132 Omer, When Peace is Not Enough, 95.

133 Omer, When Peace is Not Enough, 95.
locate cultural forms of violence and re-establish positive narratives between communities.

Case Studies that Exemplify the Implementation of Justpeace

I have discussed how events in the history of Lebanon have supported power dynamics, oppression, cultural violence, and sectarianism. Now I will point out players in history that have exemplified practices of justpeace and shown that this goal can exist in Lebanon. I provide case studies from Maronite, Sunni, and Shi’a perspectives to illustrate that efforts to transform conflict exist within each sect. These case studies (and there are many more than I can present here) also depict cross-confessional collaboration.

Muhammad Bayhum

Muhammad Bayhum’s actions exemplify the efforts taken to build justpeace. Bayhum was a Sunni intellectual who contributed to Arabist discourse from the 1920s to the 1970s. His writings, which supported an all-encompassing and multi-religious nationalism, illustrate his efforts toward justpeace. Kamil Salibi states that Bayhum admitted that “the modern Lebanese could legitimately take pride in the achievement of their Phoenician predecessors. But the Phoenicians . . . were Canaanites who came originally from the Arabian peninsula; they could hence be claimed, in a way, as

134 Firro, Inventing Lebanon, 38.

135 For purposes of this paper and due to my lack of knowledge of the Arabic language, I have used other authors’ synopses of Bayhum’s work.
Arabs.”136 This highlights Bayhum’s attempts to placate both Arabist and Lebanist discourses in an attempt to form a nationalism that supported both Phoenician and Arabic foundations. This is important because most Lebanist discourse relied on the idea that Maronites were not Arab but rather Phoenician.

Lebanese citizens speak Arabic and share similarities in culture and food regardless of religion. There is no denying the Arabic influence in Lebanon, so much so that the Ta’if Accord of 1989 affirmed that Lebanon was “Arab in its identity and association.”137 For the Maronite or Christian population, including Christians in an Arabic dialogue may blur the lines between Arabs and Islam in order to make room for a more plural nationality. This is a start to breaking down the narrative that causes sectarianism. However, this attempt can be taken even further to allow multiple perspectives to support a Lebanese nationalism, no longer relying on a binary of Arabic or Phoenician, but a multiplicity of Persian, Turkish, and Armenian.

Bayhum dedicated “the bulk of his historical record to Lebanon under the successive Muslim dynasties, to show how Christians had traditionally been well treated by Muslims . . . and European historians.”138 I see this as an effort toward justpeace because it tells of a time when Christians lived harmoniously with Muslims. Although forms of violence may have existed, this narrative does not revolve around them. Instead

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137 Rigby, “Lebanon: Patterns of Confessional Politics.”

it supports the idea that this symbiosis did and could exist in a present-day Lebanon. Furthermore, Bayhum’s Arabist discourse attempted to equate the communities. According to Firro, “Bayum’s Arabist discourse recognizes the Christians as ‘equal partners’ . . . [calling] for integration of the Christians within the ‘Arab nation.”’

Bayhum also wrote about the decline of Sunni Muslim hesitancy to join the political landscape of the newly forming state in the 1920s. In 1926, Bayhum and his Sunni colleagues changed their outlook and accepted the geographic division of the 1920s. Sunni Muslims became more active in the Lebanese political system, although they continued to support pan-Arab unity. This depicts a Sunni community’s capacity to change its thinking to support a greater cause for Lebanon and breaks down the narrative that Muslim communities wanted to crush the Lebanese state. Narratives from all Lebanese communities that depict such attempts are testimony that they would be willing to make compromises toward achieving a cohesive nationalism and efforts for justpeace, providing proof that cultural violence can shift toward cultural peace.

American University of Beirut

The American University of Beirut (AUB) is an institution that supports justpeace through its policies, employees, and collaboration of its students. Established in 1866 as Syrian Protestant College (renamed AUB in 1920), it attracted a wide range of students, including educated Iranians from both Muslim and Baha’i faiths. Using case studies from

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139 Firro, Inventing Lebanon, 39.
140 Firro, Inventing Lebanon, 39.
the Shi’a Muslim and Baha’i Iranian communities, I show how AUB’s welcoming of these diverse students into Lebanon was part of its efforts toward justpeace.

Baha’i followers were attracted to Beirut because of its proximity to their leader and founder of their faith, Baha’ullah. He lived much of his life (1868-1908) in exile in Akka (Ottoman Palestine), where his followers could visit him while on break from schooling in Beirut. Eventually “at AUB, the Baha’i faith was afforded the same respect as other religions, to wit an AUB textbook for citizenship, published in 1940, which included a full discussion of the Baha’i faith alongside other religions.” Although the Baha’i relationship with the Lebanese state was not always mutually beneficial, the faith has maintained a National Spiritual Assembly in Lebanon, something they were unable to pursue in Iran where their religion is not officially recognized. This can be seen as a form of structural violence. AUB’s respectful treatment of Baha’i students speaks to its efforts to abate cultural forms of violence to achieve justpeace.

From the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, Iranians were more familiar with the Arabic language, which made it easier for them to live in Lebanon. One factor that attracted Iranian students was the prospect of a “modern Western education without leaving the Muslim world,” because although AUB was a Christian institution, it welcomed students of all faiths. In a school ceremony in 1871, President Daniel Bliss said: “This College is for all . . . classes of men without regard to colour, nationality, race


142 Chehabi and Mneimneh, “Five Centuries,” 21.

143 Chehabi and Mneimneh, “Five Centuries,” 21-22.

144 Chehabi and Mneimneh, “Five Centuries,” 13-14.
or religion. . . All may enter and enjoy all the advantages of this institution . . . and go out believing in one God, in many Gods, or in no god.” This statement is another testament to the school’s plurality, popularity, and efforts toward justpeace. The president’s statement speaks to the school’s abatement of structural forms of violence.

AUB’s efforts toward justpeace also influenced external relationships with other countries in the region, which in turn had an internal impact. Iranian students educated in Lebanon would return to Iran with various fields of expertise. Mirza Hasan Tabrizi Roshdiyeh, who became “aware of the gap in literacy rates between Iran and Europe,” sought out an education in Beirut. After two years, he returned to Iran to establish two elementary schools, one in Tabriz and one in Tehran, which would become “the model for Iran’s incipient public educational system.” The “father of Iranian physics,” Mahmud Hesabi, was also born in Tehran but grew up in Lebanon where he earned a doctorate in physics. He returned to Iran and developed a teachers’ training college within Iran’s first university. This points to the benefits that can exist in a cross-cultural relationship. If the Middle East is going to exist autonomously, or as autonomous states, the players must rely on each other as neighbors and co-inhabitants of the region.

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146 This case study is discussed without considering a student’s economic standing vis-à-vis oppression.

147 Chehabi and Mneimneh, “Five Centuries,” 17-18.

148 Chehabi and Mneimneh, “Five Centuries,” 18.

149 Chehabi and Mneimneh, “Five Centuries,” 18.
Antoine Arida

Patriarch Antoine Arida was the head of the Lebanese Maronite Church and a leading figure in the uprising against the French-imposed tobacco monopoly of 1935, known as the Régie, “which cut across Muslim and Christian lines.”\(^{150}\) The uprising could be viewed as an effort toward justpeace because a majority of Lebanese families depended on tobacco production for their livelihoods. Comte de Martel, the French High Commissioner, announced his intention to put tobacco production under a state monopoly and tighten control of revenues because of “the treasury’s need for additional revenues to feed the expanding bureaucracy in the countries under their mandate.”\(^{151}\) Such a monopoly would have been a form of structural violence, threatening family incomes.

The resulting movement in Lebanon also showed the capability for cross-religious external support. The movement roused the support of thousands of Syrians in the nationalist movement where they shouted, “No God but God, and Arida is God’s friend.”\(^{152}\) This incident speaks to the potential for change and support between people who were taught by embedded and sectarian narratives that they could not live conflict-free with each other. This event proved that people from multiple faiths could support justpeace while coexisting in their mixed communities. Muslim Syrians were willing to support a Christian religious leader and a cross-confessional collaboration in Lebanon.


\(^{151}\) Abisaab, “Warmed or Burnt,” 297.

\(^{152}\) Abisaab, “Warmed or Burnt,” 279-278.
The threat that Maronites have felt historically may still exist today, but events like this show that there are Maronites who are willing to accept members of other communities as fellow citizens. Therefore, history and Lebanist discourse can be re-defined through thinking of defense as a right for the whole country. This could minimize the threat that Maronites might feel by lessening the pressure for their sole protection, which would redistribute defense responsibility to be shared with other communities. The Lebanese uprising is proof that there were Maronites who protested and questioned living under the French mandate, which created a positive image and displayed support for justpeace. This can influence a dialogue from multiple perspectives, to discuss similar interests within and regarding Lebanon as a homeland.

Michel Aoun

Michel Aoun, Lebanon’s current President, is perceived as willing to work toward promoting healthier relationships between the communities of Lebanon. His statements, citizens’ accounts, and his efforts to form ties with Hezbollah, provide evidence that he is working toward a justpeace. In an interview in 1995, before becoming President in 2016, Aoun was quoted as conceiving a “new Lebanon, a modern state, a state of law, all while respecting public liberty; an honesty in the administration of the state; and very good relations with neighbors.”

In the same interview, Aoun spoke of peace and the de-escalation of “ethnic affinity” in the face of “economic issues becom[ing] more

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important.”\textsuperscript{154} This indicates his desire to focus on economic issues facing Lebanese citizens and not on ethnicity and religion. Today, he continues to speak of peace “while maintaining cultural identity” and achieving “development . . . on our own . . . to help make a new Lebanon, a modern state which lives in peace with others.”\textsuperscript{155} These statements support a common Lebanese nationality, coupled with peace and economic welfare, to support justpeace.

Aoun’s efforts to help Lebanon achieve good relations with its neighbors also speak to his understanding of the Christian threat and the need to locate and minimize it. He views Lebanon as a country within the Middle East as opposed to a country that needs to defend the Maronites from the Middle East. Clara, a Lebanese citizen, makes a statement, which provides evidence of Aoun’s intent and the people’s response to it. A student and trainee at Sawt al-Mada, Clara states that “he sent a message to the Christian[s] . . . ‘We are not alienated, we belong here.’ Before, we only thought that we were Christians, leaning towards Europe and the US rather than the Middle East.”\textsuperscript{156} His efforts to locate Christians within the Middle Eastern landscape, similar to Bayhum’s, protect the minority status of Christians in an inclusive rather than an isolationist manner.

Aoun’s efforts toward better relationships with other religious communities outside of Christianity and with Lebanon’s neighbors are also exemplified by his political organization, the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM). FPM promotes his image as defender of Christian heritage, who is working to minimize the Maronite threat. On the occasion of the Day of Saint Maroun, he organizes pilgrimages to Syria, where Saint Maroun, the

\textsuperscript{154} Aoun, “If Lebanon Fails,” 62.

\textsuperscript{155} Aoun, “If Lebanon Fails,” 62.

\textsuperscript{156} Lefort, “Good, Bad, Ugly” 10.
founding father of the religion, is allegedly buried. Clara states that “nine thousand people went with him to Syria!” This demonstrates Aoun’s efforts toward justpeace by motivating the Maronites to visit surrounding regions in order to historically locate them in the landscape. This promotes cross-confessional collaboration by way of Maronite situatedness.

Aoun’s efforts to reconcile relations with Hezbollah cannot be overlooked as acts of promoting justpeace. These efforts are neither perfect nor sufficient on their own; they may alienate the Sunni community, or they may be driven by ulterior motives. Nevertheless, they provide evidence of Aoun’s efforts to bridge gaps between communities and to deconstruct the religious/secular binary. Although FPM is believed to be a secular organization, the effort to draft a Document of Understanding between FPM and Hezbollah, a Shi’a Islamist movement, speaks to the efforts made to connect secular and religious ideology, coupled with Aoun’s religious efforts to garner Maronite support. These efforts are also an attempt to legitimize the Lebanese government, which may have lost popularity by cooperating with Hezbollah, which is gaining popularity. This highlights the Lebanese government’s ability to evolve under changing conditions. One step further toward justpeace would be to involve Lebanon’s other communities so they do not feel alienated by this Shi’a/Maronite collaboration.

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Sayyid Musa al-Sadr

Sayyid Musa al-Sadr was an important supporter of justpeace whose efforts bridged gaps between all confessions, political and religious, although he worked for “Shi’ite empowerment and modernism.” He was born in southern Lebanon but raised in Iran. He was responsible for Lebanon’s “Movement of the Dispossessed launched in 1974 . . . [which] inspired new connections between religion and power and must be considered a precursor to the Islamist movements of Hizbullah and Fadlallah and a rallying point for skeptics of secularism.” Efforts for justpeace were supported by his influence in Lebanon and the Shi’a community, his efforts to enter multi-religious spaces, and his commitment to the Lebanese state. People like Musa al-Sadr can advocate for pluralism, for continued efforts toward justpeace, and for support toward an inclusive nationalism.

Understanding the importance of finding commonalities between all Lebanese communities, Musa al-Sadr worked to build connections. In some cases, he was able to create ties by highlighting events from each community’s collective history that spoke of oppression. In other cases, he drew on simpler things that emphasized cultural similarities. He achieved some things by being a great orator, giving sermons at multiple places of worship, including churches. Fouad speaks of Musa al-Sadr’s efforts as drawing “on the common themes of the martyrdom of . . . Imam Hussein, and the crucifixion of

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161 Abisaab and Abisaab, *The Shi’ites of Lebanon*, 110.

162 Abisaab and Abisaab, *The Shi’ites of Lebanon*, 103.
This was an attempt to connect Shi’a Islam with Christian communities through connecting important religious figures within each community. Fouad continues, “On those occasions when he appeared with Sunni ulama, he said that there was no difference between his own black turban and the white turbans of his Sunni counterparts.” His methods exemplify the use of historical and religious narratives to point out similarities between people rather than differences.

Through his sermons and actions, Musa al Sadr had an impact on religious and political figures from various backgrounds. One of his admirers was a Maronite intellectual named Michel al Asmar who “joined him during a fast staged in a Beirut mosque to protest the violence in the country.” In a 1975 sermon attended by Catholic hierarchy, he was introduced by the former president of Lebanon this way: “The believers are here to hear the word of God from a non-Catholic religious guide. It is only natural that Lebanon is the country in which this deed is taking place.” This shows that cross-religious, positive, and beneficial relationships can exist in Lebanon, and that citizens will support a leader of any religious background as long as that leader supports their welfare. Maronites entered mosques, Shi’ites entered churches, and a former Maronite president spoke of a religious figure from another religious background in pluralist terms. Identifying similar narratives and actions could help repair sectarian divides in order to redefine past narratives as part of an inclusive nationalism.

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164 Ajami, *Vanished Imam*, 133.

165 Ajami, *Vanished Imam*, 134.

166 Ajami, *Vanished Imam*, 134.
The sectarian landscape of Lebanon is well known to the Lebanese people who increased their support of Musa al-Sadr\textsuperscript{167} to change the status quo. Would not the country benefit if its leaders, religious and secular, worked in a similar vein to identify commonalities and efforts for justpeace? Musa al-Sadr “claimed that his Movement of the Disinherited\textsuperscript{168} went beyond the confines of his own sect. He saw himself ‘as the ‘symbol,’ and the ‘rallying point’ of the cause of the disinherited.’”\textsuperscript{169} He utilized a new language and found more inclusive terms to bridge the gap between social classes so that “issues of equity and fairness were to be addressed without setting off the old sirens. Musa al Sadr found it in the popular feelings about fairness and disinherance.”\textsuperscript{170}

Musa al-Sadr accomplished that for which I advocate in this thesis: efforts that support and achieve justpeace by redefining nationality through narrative to be more inclusive. This steps away from past, unsuccessful efforts that continue to promote sectarianism. We, as citizens, leaders, thinkers, and activists need to start utilizing these methods in order to facilitate greater and longer-lasting conflict transformation that incorporates justpeace and plural understandings of both secular and religious ideologies.

\textsuperscript{167} Ajami, \textit{Vanished Imam}, 135.

\textsuperscript{168} Referred to earlier as the “Movement of the Dispossessed.” Translations differ according to sources.


\textsuperscript{170} Ajami, \textit{Vanished Imam}, 136-137.
Lebanese Islamists: Fadlallah, Nasrallah, and Hezbollah

The actions and ideologies of these groups vis-à-vis Islamism, from a Lebanese perspective, are seen as fostering inclusivity among all Lebanese citizens. The groups have pursued efforts for justpeace because they provide welfare for the oppressed and protection for the country from external conflict. Finally, they have broken down the religious/secular binary.

**Fadlallah.** Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah (1935-2010) was a prominent Shi’a cleric from a Lebanese family, although he was born in Najaf, Iraq. He was an important figure in conflict transformation because he “occupied an important place in the Lebanese Islamist movement. His scholarly training and political leadership provide insights into the experiences and intellectual resources of early Iraqi and Lebanese Islamists.”\(^{171}\) He emerged “as a major benefactor and institutional leader through the foundation of welfare, educational, and civil institutions. He devoted much effort to legal-religious instruction and Islamist socialization at his own madrasas and seminaries.”\(^{172}\)

Fadlallah, “the spiritual and intellectual leader”\(^{173}\) of Hezbollah, initially held beliefs that contributed to the Maronite threat, but eventually he backed away from those beliefs. He admired the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran in which Khomeini ousted the Shah and made himself Supreme Leader. Khomeini’s role was supported by doctrinal modifications that utilized “classical Imamate theory through the post of *wilayat al

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\(^{171}\) Abisaab and Abisaab, *Shi’ites of Lebanon*, 197.

\(^{172}\) Abisaab and Abisaab, *Shi’ites of Lebanon*, 197.

which gives the position of deputy of the state to a jurist. Thus ensconced, he pointed to Hezbollah’s support for an Islamic state, which questioned the group’s national loyalties to Lebanon. He believed that a Lebanese Islamic state would be better for all its citizens, including Christians, because it “safeguards the interests of all of its subjects.”

Fadlallah changed his tone and moved away from wilayat al-faqih after Khomeini’s death, expressing doubts about support for this post. “He denied that it could be supported by textual or rational legal proofs,” and instead advocated for “a formula of coexistence in Lebanese society that does not overemphasize the Islamic state . . . but to protect the Lebanese, civil society from infighting, defeatism, and external dangers.”

Further, a study conducted by a researcher at AUB and shared with Hezbollah’s leaders, showed that “less than a quarter of Shiites” wanted Lebanon to be an Islamic state. This shift in thought demonstrated the group’s ability to redirect allegiance toward the Lebanese state and its citizens while working for justpeace.

Fadlallah’s call for Muslim unity is much needed in order to achieve justpeace in Lebanon since major sectarian conflicts and narratives exist between Shi’ites and Sunnis. He calls for Muslims, “to come to grips with the current situation that poses a challenge to all of them [by means of] . . . Islamist unity. However, if they desire to raise

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174 Abisaab and Abisaab, Shi’ites of Lebanon, 200.
175 Abisaab and Abisaab, Shi’ites of Lebanon, 181.
177 Abisaab and Abisaab, Shi’ites of Lebanon, 200.
differences of doctrinal and legal nature, they must do so from a position of unity and not division.” Not only do Christian-Muslim relations need to be fostered in any efforts toward just peace, but so must non-sectarian divisions within each sect.

Nasrallah. Hassan Nasrallah (1960-present), was a co-founder of Hezbollah and is its current secretary general. Both Nasrallah and Fadlallah are prime examples of how people with power can influence the Lebanese landscape to minimize sectarianism and foster a more inclusive nationality. Fadlallah stated: “The question of the Lebanese south is not sectarian—neither Shi’a nor Sunni nor Christian, but symbolic of the larger problems facing the ummah nowadays.” He also stressed, “the importance of national unity,” in the face of what he terms Western aggression, adding that “all communities in Lebanon suffer from the same divisive political and social reality.”

Messages from Nasrallah also garner non-sectarian support, as evidenced by Lebanon’s response to his son’s death in 1997. Lebanese flags appeared alongside flags of Hezbollah at the ceremony and “battalions of Lebanese resistance” formed through a union of multiple faiths.

Hezbollah. Hezbollah is a resistance movement that came to power in 1982 when Israel invaded southern Lebanon in order to curtail Palestinian forces that Israel believed were getting stronger and threatening its security. At first, the Shi’ites of southern Lebanon welcomed this invasion as way to control the Palestinians. However, Israel’s

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prolonged stay and its commitment to the Christian community resulted in Iran sending its Revolutionary Guards to provide a majority Shi’a resistance movement with “ideological, organizational and financial infrastructure.”184 Israel’s withdrawal from most of southern Lebanon in 1985 gave legitimacy to Hezbollah power and led to a fostering of relations with the Lebanese state.185

Hezbollah and its thinkers and leaders outwardly shifted their beliefs to rely on internal Lebanese support, thus heightening the group’s image of national loyalty. The implementation of the Ta’if Agreement forced Iran to acknowledge the Lebanese system, while also limiting Iran’s once strong influence on Hezbollah. Nasrallah stated in 1994: “Hezbollah was not established to serve an Iranian plan . . . but to fight the occupation, and this is why it is more Lebanese than anyone.”186

As a resistance movement, Hezbollah has been the subject of multiple international calls to disarm. However, these requests were unsuccessful for a number of reasons. First, Nasrallah assured the Lebanese people that Hezbollah was mainly concerned with Lebanese security, and that the group’s weapons would not be used within the “Lebanese arena.”187 Second, the Lebanese government agreed to work with Hezbollah because it provided Lebanon with successful defenses. Hezbollah acquired even more political legitimacy in 2000 with the eviction of Israeli troops despite no agreement with Israel.188 This speaks to its efforts toward Lebanon’s security, its

collaboration with the Lebanese government, and the ability of the Lebanese to rely on each other internally.

Lastly, it could be argued that Hezbollah challenges the religious/secular binary. Each of Hezbollah, Fadlallah, and Nasrallah have each shown commitment to the Lebanese state and the unity of its citizens. Each has eased back on its support of an Islamic state because doing so might invite the Christians into the mix to discuss uniting secular and religious ideologies of all faiths. All sides have made efforts in support of cross-confessional dialogue. Their willingness to work with Lebanese President Michel Aoun shows that the groups call for “rejoining agency to God and giving religious morality a central role in the organization of modern life”\(^{189}\) is meant to include all faiths as well as secularism.

\(^{189}\) Abisaab and Abisaab, Shi’ites of Lebanon, 203-204.
Chapter V
Conclusion

In this thesis, I identified frameworks that could help address the conflicts that exist in Lebanon. This is a timely endeavor because, although there has been some success in abating conflict, it is apparent that oppression, fractions, and sectarianism still exist. After identifying sources that affect tensions—narratives, history, politics—the purpose of my research was to provide a place to begin redefining these sources to achieve justpeace and to begin the process of the hermeneutics of citizenship. I believe my research is a key part of this endeavor and needs to be integrated into the current history and politics of Lebanon to move forward and away from recurrences of unsuccessful tactics used in the past to deal with dilemmas existing in Lebanon today.

I discussed Galtung’s typologies of violence in order to expand the understanding of violence beyond the more obvious direct forms. By providing a framework from which to identify multiple forms of violence, I showed why conflict transformation in Lebanon is so challenging. The framework helped locate the oppressive use of narrative (cultural violence), which has promoted power grabbing and excused human rights injustices (direct and structural forms of violence). Understanding these typologies will lead to implementing peacebuilding and further efforts toward justpeace.

I argued that efforts toward justpeace are effective in conflict transformation because such efforts seek to abate all forms of violence in the name of justice and peace. Thus, locating forms of violence and working toward conflict transformation by
addressing both positive and negative peace will lead to a more cohesive Lebanese nationalism that embraces multiple lenses in the attempt to create a hermeneutics of citizenship.

Religion is a key factor in Lebanon, and the oppression of religion is a form of violence that needs to be addressed as a factor in justpeace efforts. For this discussion, I relied on Moore’s cultural studies approach to understanding religion. This approach treats religion as a living, breathing factor—one of many that contribute to the socio-political landscape of a given region. It is my hope that a more literate understanding of religion will be achieved by incorporating the tactics and steps that Moore provides as a basis. This means that we can be better equipped to identify the problematic use of religion to explain conflict, as well as to locate other factors that have been covered.

Sectarianism in Lebanon has occurred as a result of many events, including the use of narratives, identity building efforts, internal and external relations, and the confessional political system. Efforts to abate sectarian conflict have relied on similar tactics that result in recurring and unsuccessful attempts—all ending in essentially the same dysfunctional political system that continues sectarianism. In the trajectory of working toward justpeace, the political system must be revamped to refrain from emphasizing religious differences between political parties. In doing this, the religious/secular binary must be avoided because this binary also contributes to non-sectarian divisions. All ideologies must be brought into the process of redefining a future political system that maintains efforts for conflict transformation at the forefront.

I discussed cultural violence in Lebanon as representing the historical use of narratives, providing specific examples that were problematic to conflict transformation. I
showed how these narratives contributed to excusing multiple forms of violence and problematic understandings of religion. Cultural violence also contributed to strong collective feelings of threat for any given community, resulting in strong attempts to protect that community. Understanding that the use of history and narrative are human constructs, I advocated for a hermeneutics of citizenship as a means to incorporate multiple lenses in future attempts to redefine Lebanese nationality to be more inclusive. In this way, Lebanese actors can reconstruct a history that includes narratives that represent cultural peace, which will legitimize forms of peace rather than violence.

By providing examples of people who have made significant contributions to efforts of justpeace in the Lebanon, I provided proof that such attempts occurred, were successful, and are supported by the Lebanese people. In this effort, I showed that players from several different religious backgrounds contributed to these efforts. My examples were just a few of many that could be cited. My goal was and remains to advocate for future attempts to work on and mitigate the factors that contribute to sectarianism, disunity in nationalism, and other forms of violence.

I advocate for addressing conflict in Lebanon during a time when direct forms of violence seem to be at a temporary lull. This point is critical because if all forms of conflict are not located and transformed into efforts toward justpeace, then tension will continue, resulting in future occurrences of direct forms of violence. Lebanese history is riddled with periodic resurgences of conflict, which will likely continue unless present and future steps are taken to disrupt the status quo. Efforts must be made to locate conflict, achieve a literate understanding of religion in the Lebanese context, deconstruct
the religious/secular binary, redefine the confessional political system, and form a cohesive and inclusive nationalism through a hermeneutics of citizenship.

Future research along the lines of what has been done in this thesis could lead to a more in-depth understanding of the detrimental and negative impacts of the confessional political system, as well as how it could be redefined to incorporate the frameworks and efforts discussed here. Such research might include a discussion of how a future system could abate sectarianism and the threat felt in individual communities while working toward bridging religious and secular ideologies. This could lead to accepting and even embracing differences, as opposed to isolationist nationalism, and bringing Lebanon a step closer to redefining its sense of nationalism.

Further research might also identify more narratives that could be used to implement a hermeneutics of citizenship in Lebanon. Narratives that represent cultural violence, which contribute to difference, the perception of threat, and the excuse of forms of violence, could be redefined to support acceptance and understanding of differences. I provided examples of how Musa al Sadr (among others) used differing religious narratives to achieve sectarian similarities. In this vein, narratives from multiple communities—Shi’a, Sunni, Maronite, Druze, Greek Orthodox, etc.—must be identified and discussed to define similarities.

Diversity must also be maintained in order to humanize and bridge connections. This may incorporate the use of some of the same narratives used in the past that caused sectarianism and conflict. A hermeneutics of citizenship will unite the current citizens of Lebanon but can also be so inclusive that, if successful in the future, will leave room for the entry of new citizens into Lebanese nationalism.
Bibliography


