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Peace of Mind and Peace –Exploring Psychosocial Peacebuilding for the Issue of the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared in Lebanon

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Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.

(UNESCO Constitution, 1945)

Abstract

The unresolved fate of several thousand people who went missing during the conflict is at the heart of the legacy of the Lebanese civil war. Due to shortcomings in the peace process and top-down approaches, there has not been room for meaningful reconciliation and strategies to deal with the violent past of the country. Individual sufferings, which result from past violations, such as enforced disappearance, continue to affect the lives of those affected, their families and wider societal relations. Within this context, it is this study's aim to explore the connection between healing and reconciliation as a core concept of Psychosocial Peacebuilding. In the absence of state-led initiatives, civil society organisations mobilised in order to address the fate of the missing and their relatives. Their efforts were explored and analysed through a case study angle, which incorporated primary and secondary data. The secondary data was identified and retrieved through a mapping of stakeholders and the application of sampling criteria. Primary data was collected through a limited amount of semi-structured qualitative interviews with stakeholders. The combined data then informed an analysis, which concluded that there is a close connection between reconciliation and healing, thus, both must be addressed simultaneously. The activities of the civil society, which promote the needs and demands of the families of the disappeared, contribute to Psychosocial Peacebuilding. The results of the case study indicate that the efforts of civil society to integrate peacebuilding, mental health and psychosocial support mechanisms with foster the prospect of sustainable peace in Lebanon.

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List of Abbreviations

CLDH	Lebanese Centre for Human Rights
FELM	Finish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICPPED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICTJ	International Centre for Transitional Justice
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IJR	Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
IOM	International Organization of Migration
KRP	Kataeb Regulatory Forces
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PTSD	Posttraumatic Stress-Disorder
SOLIDE	Support of Lebanese in Detention and Exile
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNIFL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WHO	Wold Health Organization

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1 Introduction

> *Mental health is an invisible barrier to building peace. If we are trying to create new patterns for how people from conflicting groups work together, we have to look at the full legacy of conflict, which includes mental health.* (Bubenzer, van der Walt & Tankink, 2017, p.6).

Armed conflicts always cause human tragedies and leave behind trauma and loss. It is well documented that such violence has drastic and long-lasting effects on communities. After a conflict has come to an end, all parts of society - individuals, families, communities and government departments - are faced with the task of reconstruction, recovery and reconciliation. The process of transition from war to reconciliation is shaped by many factors and can be hindered when individual suffering of the past remains unaccounted for. Consequences of violence for the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of citizens impact their engagement, participation and belonging in the emerging post-conflict society (Bolton, 2017). Further, this suffering does not only challenge the survivors of violence, but also has long-term transgenerational implications. Societies with complex histories of conflicts are fragmented, which can lead to social tensions and negatively affects the social stability. This has effects not only on the individual level, but also on the entire social and learning behaviour of those affected and it shapes dynamics of interpersonal relationships in families, communities, and in society as a whole (Dobrić, Purić &Vukčević, 2014). Exposure to and recognition of trauma affects how survivors of violence perceive peace and reconciliation processes as well as their ability and willingness to engage in them.

If psychosocial aspects are under-acknowledged, this can weaken the capacity for recovery and the opportunities for reconciliation. In the context of peacebuilding, it is, therefore, a vital interest to address suffering of individuals and families as a legacy of conflict. The idea of *Psychosocial Peacebuilding* aims at highlighting this connection between healing and reconciliation. Psychosocial Peacebuilding argues that psychosocial distress and needs that are caused by trauma and loss, must be incorporated in peacebuilding processes (Bolton, 2017). The concept follows the logic, that individuals and communities are more likely to be caught up in cycles of violence unless historical and intergenerational traumas are acknowledged and integrated into long-term post-conflict reconstruction and social transformation efforts (Tankink & Bubenzer, 2017).

This thesis explores the connection between healing and reconciliation in the context of post-war Lebanon with a focus on missing persons. The country's religious, social, economic and ideological tensions, that have ultimately led to 15 years of civil war (1975-1990), remain volatile to date and cause a fragmentation of society (Bou Khaled, 2018). In Lebanon, a long history of political violence, instability, social hostility and harsh living conditions have had major impacts on the social cohesion of communities and psychosocial wellbeing of those affected. Past and current conflicts have led to social stagnation and lethargy, as well as a lack of solidarity and deep divisions among and between different groups and communities (Knudsen, 2005). This fragmentation is widely explained with a lack of meaningful reconciliation at the societal level, while former warlords and political reconciled among themselves. Strategies of silencing and top-down peacebuilding left little room for individual or collective healing. Therefore, unresolved trauma is transmitted across generations, reinforcing mistrust and further disrupting the precarious civil peace (Nagle, 2019). Some even have the impression that "the war will continue to feel as if it never ended as long as we fear its possible return at any moment and talking or writing about it remain almost a taboo" (Abou Jaoude, 2017, p.6). Unspoken suffering between family members can lead to an atmosphere of silence and secrecy and may influence subsequent Lebanese generations.

At the core of the legacy of the Lebanese war lies the unresolved case of thousands of missing and forcibly disappeared persons. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) defines a person as *missing*:

> *whose whereabouts are unknown to his/her relatives and/or who, on the basis of reliable information, has been reported missing in accordance with the national legislation in connection with an international or non-international armed conflict, a situation of internal violence or disturbances, natural catastrophes or any other situation that may require the intervention of a competent State authority.* (ICRC, 2009, Art. 2).

This thesis will primarily focus on the issue of missing persons due to armed conflict and internal violence. In the context of armed conflict, missing persons include combatants who go missing in action, victims of mass killings and individuals who bodies were not properly identified before burying. This term also includes acts of abduction, also referred to as *forcibly disappeared* or *enforced disappearance*. According to the International

Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED), enforced disappearance is defined as the:

> *arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.* (ICPPED, 2006, Art. 2).

Both cases of missing and enforced disappearances are prevalent in the context and aftermaths of Lebanon's civil war. This thesis uses the terms "missing", "kidnapped" and "disappearance" on a rotating basis in order to avoid repetitive expressions, but always refers to cases of missing and forcibly disappeared persons.

Article 24, Paragraph 2 of the ICPPED (2006) reaffirms the right to know the truth of the victims and their relatives "regarding the circumstances of the enforced disappearance, the progress and results of the investigation and the fate of the disappeared person." Moreover, in Paragraph 3 of the same Article, the responsibility of each State Party foresees to "take all appropriate measures to search for, locate and release disappeared persons and, in the event of death, to locate, respect and return their remains (ICPPED, 2006, Art. 24). Even though Lebanon has signed the Convention in 2007, it has not yet ratified the ICPPED. To this date, the Lebanese state has not taken serious measures to restore the rights of victims of enforced disappearance and their families. Families are suffering from long-term effects of unresolved disappearances, which has multidimensional implications for their lives, including socio-political, legal, financial and psychological impacts.

1.1 Research Aim and Structure of Thesis

In the course of this thesis, shortcomings of peacebuilding in Lebanon will be viewed through the example of the issue of the missing and disappeared persons and their families. The investigation will focus on efforts and demands of the families of the disappeared and other civil society actors, who have been fighting for decades to keep the issue of the disappeared on the agenda. There are numerous Lebanese and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that are strongly advocating for official acknowledgment of the issue and the implementation of independent mechanisms to investigate the cases of disappearances. The comparison of governmental strategies with the

needs and demands of the civil society, reveals a large discrepancy. The peacebuilding process in Lebanon did not take into account communal and societal reconciliation. In the absence of state-led initiatives, families and communities are fighting for the acknowledgment of their suffering. It is exactly this discrepancy that the notion of Psychosocial Peacebuilding seeks to highlight.

The objective of this thesis is to apply the concept of Psychosocial Peacebuilding to the case of disappearances in Lebanon. The research aims at analysing the efforts of civil society actors in the context of the missing through the lens of Psychosocial Peacebuilding. To this end, primary and secondary data, which were retrieved from and with civil society organisations, will be analysed. Data gathering and analysis were guided bythe following questions: 1. How are efforts of civil society organisation contributing to Psychosocial Peacebuilding? 2. How are healing and reconciliation connected when addressing unresolved disappearances? 3. How does an integrated approach of peacebuilding, psychosocial support and mental health, foster the prospect of sustainable peace in Lebanon?

To answer the research questions outlined above, the analysis will proceed as follows. After the introduction into the topic, the methodological approach will be explained in the subsequent part of this chapter. Psychosocial Peacebuilding incorporates both concepts of peacebuilding and psychosocial support. Therefore, an extensive literature review of both fields was conducted. The second chapter displays a summary of theories of peacebuilding in post-conflict societies, which includes concepts of violence, conflict and conflict dynamics. Moreover, the transition from war to peace will outlined by summarizing approaches to peacebuilding, dealing with the past and reconciliation. In the third chapter, psychosocial implications of armed conflict and violence will be described by considering individual, societal and transgenerational implications. In concordance with the focus of this thesis, psychosocial implications a result of unresolved disappearances will be described as well as mental health and psychosocial support services in (post)conflict settings. The third chapter will conclude by putting the main findings of the literature review with regards to reconciliation and healing in connection by stressing their reciprocal relation and making the case for Psychosocial Peacebuilding.

In the fourth chapter of this thesis, the socio-political and historical aspects of the Lebanese civil war will be examined through a literature review. To provide a broad understanding of the context, the outbreak and course of the war and the post-war period

will be summarised.The process of peacebuilding and its shortcomings for reconciliation will be the focus of this review. The findings on the post-conflict setting in Lebanon will be completed by assessing the legacy of the war and its implications on the social fabric of the country.

Chapter 5 will be delving into the case study on the issue of missing persons in Lebanon. In an introductory part, background information on the case of the missing will be provided, including an overview on the circumstances and the scale of disappearances as well as the perpetrators. Additionally, the strategies and measures of the government during the post-conflict period and the evolvement of civil society actors will be explained. This introduction gathers all information needed to relate to the succeeding analysis. Afterwards, the findings of the analysis of primary and secondary data will be presented,interpreted and discussed with reference to the theoretical knowledge on healing and reconciliation and by taking into account aspects of Psychosocial Peacebuilding.

In the final chapter, the findings of the analysis will be summarised and discussed in their significance to answer the research questions. Additionally, the limitations of this study will be reflected. The thesis concludes with possible further steps and considerations regarding the issue of the missing and forcibility disappeared persons, and how their case is embedded in the larger process of reconciliation in Lebanon.

1.2 Reflective Methodology

This chapter explains the choice of research methodology for this study. Firstly, it will be clarified why a case study approach was chosen and why this methodology is appropriate for the research questions that are set up for this thesis. Secondly, the steps of identifying and collecting data and how it was then processed and analysed will be described.

An important strength of the case study is the ability to investigate a phenomenon in its context. Accordingly, Yin (2009) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). The premise of this study is to investigate the mobilisation of civil society organisations in the specific context of Lebanon and in their reaction to and interaction with governmental and societal actors. It includes the analysis of how the unresolved cases of disappearances impact the real-life context in Lebanon and the wellbeing of concerned families. Therefore, the

ability of a case study to investigate a phenomenon in its context is ideal, given the scope of this study.

In case study research, the case can vary from addressing “an individual, a group of individuals, an organization, or multiple organizations” (Ellinger, Watkins & Marsick, 2005, p. 328) to the examination of an implementation process or decision. Therefore, the definition of a unit of analysis is the basis for the case, as it sets the boundaries for the sources of evidence and the collection of data. The selection of the unit is determined by the accessibility of the data, the resources available for data collection and by the time frame of the study (Rowley, 2002). For this thesis, the unit of analysis was chosen to be non-governmental and civil society organisation that are addressing the issue of disappeared persons and their families in Lebanon. However, the boundedness of a case is crucial in order define and limit the collection of data. The phenomenon of interest is bounded through the choice of research questions, which arise from the theory (Ellinger et al., 2005).

The research questions of this thesis, which have been outlined above, guided the process of the case study and were derived from theoretical concepts of peacebuilding and psychosocial wellbeing. Yin (2009) advises that case study inquiry “benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (p. 18). Therefore, the findings of the theory in this study were constructed into an analytical framework that informed the data collection and analysis.

To achieve an informed boundedness of the unit of analysis, a mapping of relevant stakeholders was conducted as a preliminary step, which was drawing from a database of initiatives addressing the past in Lebanon (Lebanon Support & Forum Civil Peace Service, 2018). Since 1990, the database documents initiatives that aim at addressing past conflicts and their aftermath in Lebanon and includes a total of 156 entries. The number of initiatives was then reduced to include only those approaches that are connected to aspects of missing and disappeared persons. After screening the database, nine categories of approaches were identified as relevant to the scope of this research: Amnesty and Law, Awareness Raising, Compensation and Restitution, Dialogue and Reconciliation, Documentation, Memorials and Commemorations, Missing persons, Psychosocial Support, Tribunals and Prosecution. These initiatives were sorted by their respective organisation, excluding local government, political parties and the UN as a type of organisation. This process resulted in a mapping of 40 Lebanese and international non-governmental organisations, research institutions,

individual and collective initiatives. A complete list of the mapping can be viewed in the appendix (see 8.1). In order to reduce the number of organisations to include only those in the case study that can answer the research question, the following criteria were applied. The websites and publications of the organisations were searched and sorted by the condition to: (a) directly refer to the case of the missing and disappeared and/or their families; (b) being published in the period of 1990 and 2020; (c) available in English; and (d) accessible online. The application of these four criteria led to a condensed sample of 13 organisations that form the unit of analysis for this case study. The complete list of the case study sample is attached in the appendix of this thesis (see. 8.2).

Typically, case study research uses a variety of evidence from different sources. The most common are documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation and physical artefacts. However, the complete list of sources is extensive and also includes for example, films, photographs and psychological testing (Yin, 2009). The variety of resources in case study approaches suits the scope of this study, as it allows to collect data that was produced and published by civil societies in the form of reports, articles, cultural programmes, as well as testimonies in written form and as part of films and documentaries. Following the criteria that were described above, a total number of 36 sets of secondary data were retrieved through the search of online material of the organisations. In cases where no written data were available, e.g. in filmed interviews and testimonies, what was said by the respective speakers was written down verbatim and thus transformed into transcripts.

In the next step, qualitative interviews with stakeholders were performed in order to consolidate the findings of secondary data with primary resources. Qualitative research seeks to understand an individual’s perspective of their world, which reflects their lived experiences and perceptions in a specific context (Gläser & Laudel, 2010). Experts are crystallization points for practical insider knowledge and were interviewed to gather in-depth information regarding the civil society initiatives (Bogner, Littig & Menz, 2009). For this study, qualitative interviews are an appropriate method, as they allowed an explorative approach based on individual experiences and opinions among a smaller sample. Participants were selected based on their experience of the phenomenon under investigation and their ability to answer the research question (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). The case study aimed to gain access to staff and members of the community and organizations that address the issue of enforced disappearances in Lebanon. Based on the 13 organisations that form

the unit of analysis in this study, potential interview respondents were identified and contacted.

For this thesis, semi-structured interviews as outlined by Pole and Lampard (2002) appeared to be a suitable method. Based on the analytical framework of this case study, interview guidelines were developed (see appendix 8.4). The interview guidelines provided orientation during the interviews, while at the same time, leaving room for experts to talk about their individual opinions and experiences. Thus, semi-structured interviews hold the characteristics of conversations, trying to deal with the individual case in-depth (Pole & Lampard, 2002). For this study, a small sample of three key informants was interviewed. Therefore, the focus was on individual assessments of the interview partners rather than on comparing cases. The interview respondents were comprised of representatives of two Lebanese NGOs and one international NGO (see appendix 8.3 for an overview of the interview respondents). Aiming at a maximum variety of expertise, the three interview participants had different academic backgrounds in social work, religious studies, law and political sciences. Moreover, the respondents held different positions in their organisations as project coordinator, projector manager and member of the advisory board.

All interview respondents were fully informed about the research topic and process. They provided oral consent to their participation, while two of the respondents wished their identity would be kept anonymous. The interviews were conducted online through the applications Skype and Microsoft Teams and were held in English. The data was collected through recordings of the online-meetings and later on transcribed into written form to process the information for a subsequent analysis.

The data that was retrieved online and through the interviews was then combined and formed the basis of the case study analysis. The analysis of the texts was approached systematically by structuring and filtering the text through the steps of qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is a process of reducing the volume of collected texts by identifying thematic categories, in which both the context in which the material was collected, and the theoretical background of the research are considered (Mayring, 2009). Guided by the analytical framework, the data was structured and filtered into meaning units by arranging text citations, phrases and themes into an analysis matrix. Over several runs through the data, all text units that were relevant regarding the research aim, were derived and sorted. The results of the case study analysis will be presented and summarised in

Chapter 5 of this thesis. At times, direct citations from the interviews and the secondary data are used to illustrate specific aspects and citations were chosen due to their exemplary character. Elsewhere, citations were used for contrast in cases when statements, opinions or assessments among the interview partners differ. Subsequently, the results of the analysis are interpreted and discussed with reference to the theoretical knowledge and the research question of the thesis.

2 Theories of Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Societies

2.1 The Concepts of Violence and Conflict

In the following chapter the concepts of *violence* and *conflict* will be explored. Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist and renowned pioneer of peace and conflict studies, was the first o conceptualise violence, peace and peacebuilding. He emphasises that violence is to harm, hurt and humiliate, it leaves behind trauma, and is not considered inevitable nor a positive dimension of human interaction. Conflict, however, is rooted in incompatibility and contradiction between goals or interests and is driven by attitudes and behaviour of the conflict parties (Galtung, 1969).

2.1.1 Dimensions of Violence

Galtung refers to violence as being present "when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realization" (Galtung, 1969, p. 168). In Galtung's milestone publication of 1969, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research", he emphasised the differentiation between direct and structural violence. In 1990 he added the concept of cultural violence, which resulted in a comprehensive typology of three main forms of violence that relate to each other, are dependent on each other and appear together (Galtung, 1990).

Direct or personal violence is the most visible form of violence and instantly recognizable as such, because it occurs as physical or verbal force and the use of violent means to inflict harm or pain to an individual or a group. Direct violence may either be exhibited physically, e.g. by being hurt and restricted somatically, or psychologically, e.g. through lies, brainwashing, indoctrination or threats that serve to limit mental potentialities (Galtung, 1969).

In addition, Galtung emphasises the impact of *structural violence* that is caused by unjust structures; therefore, also referred to as "social injustice". It represents the systematic ways in which individuals are prevented from achieving their full potential and hindered to access their basic human needs (Galtung, 1969). Underlying causes of structural violence are unequal power relation within a society, that are carried out by strategic actions or manipulation that are based on values, norms and institutions. In summary, structural violence is "the fundament on which economic and social inequalities are built, followed by unequal life-chances" (Schilling, 2012, p. 151). He argues that *cultural violence* is

represented by certain cultural norms and symbols which justify or legitimise direct and/or structural violence, thus creating an environment in which violence seems more acceptable. Some aspects of culture, e.g. in the form of religion, law, ideology, language, art and science, can build a breeding ground for other forms of violence by influencing individuals and groups to accept, tolerate or execute it (Galtung, 2002). Cultural violence tends to be reproduced across generations, further manifesting its righteousness and the belief that certain narratives or practices are right and rational.

When applied to the lens of this thesis, psychosocial perspectives on peacebuilding, Galtung's concepts illustrates that violence goes far beyond direct physical actions. He emphasises that violence hurts and harms the body, but also the "mind and/or spirit" of someone and leaves behind trauma and traces that are difficult to remove, often indelible. Galtung acknowledges that "the harm and hurt of the mind and the spirit may leave behind the most important trauma", and that trauma has long-term effects that shape conflict, "when shared with others, particularly the bereaved, in the same nation, we can talk about a collective trauma, raw material for a national culture of revenge/revanche" (Galtung, 2002, p. 5, see also 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). This comprehensive understanding of violence highlights that individuals are being hindered in the satisfaction of their human needs, which includes survival, identity, freedom, but also wellbeing.

2.1.2 Theories of Conflict

Like all social phenomena, conflicts are complex and have their own history, characteristics and dynamics. They have different scales, including intra-personal, intra-group, intra-state, inter-state and inter-regional levels of conflict. While some are primarily limited to one, others stretch across all layers of society; they may have a predominantly civil or internal dimension or take on international, regional or even global forms (Jäger, Ritzi, Romund & Nolden, 2015)

Furthermore, there is a variation in the causes of conflict, from clashes of needs and interests to ideologies, identity and beliefs. Conflicts do not appear out of nothing, tend to have multi-layered causes and may even shift throughout the conflict. Ideological, religious, ethno-national aspects shape a cultural dimension of conflicts, whereas psychological dimensions include the perception of rival groups, collective images, communication, emotions and affect (Levinger, 2013). While there are physical and visible issues of the

conflict, like the fight for territory, positions or resources, there are underlying and less visible root causes. These triggers for the rise of the conflict are often difficult to grasp.

Figure 1. Volcano model, sources of conflict. Adapted from Schilling, 2012, p. 103.

Many of the invisible drivers of conflict can be allocated to a psychosocial level. Even though they often remain hidden or und unspoken, they are subliminally present and need to be revealed and addressed for sustainable solutions. For example, fears, taboos and hostile feelings shape the dynamics of conflict and the perception of the actors. Recognizing and analysing these dynamics, on both the psychosocial and the tangible level, helps to understand their reciprocal influence and reveals opportunities for conflict transformation (Schilling, 2012).

Societies and their structures are agitated and torn up in the course of armed conflict. And even after the open violence of a conflict has ended, the causes of interpersonal conflict might still be present or have been aggravated by acts during the violent period. Many countries that have emerged from or have been transformed by conflicts return to conflict, which becomes more likely in cases of large-scale violence, destruction, displacement and personal loss, and when traumatic memories of war and conflict have not been addressed. If causes of interpersonal and intergroup conflicts still exist, they might hinder social change

and transformation towards productive and peaceful lives of those affected (Tankink, Bubenzer, van der Walt, 2017).

2.1.3 Dynamics of Conflict – Escalation and Transformation

The most common illustration of an “ideal” type of conflict process is that of a “wave-like timeline” (Lederach, 2005, p.43) or a “smoothly curving bell” (Lund, 1996, p. 40). The life history of the conflict is processing gradually along the curve, from its emergence to successful transformation, depicting the change in conflict intensity over time.

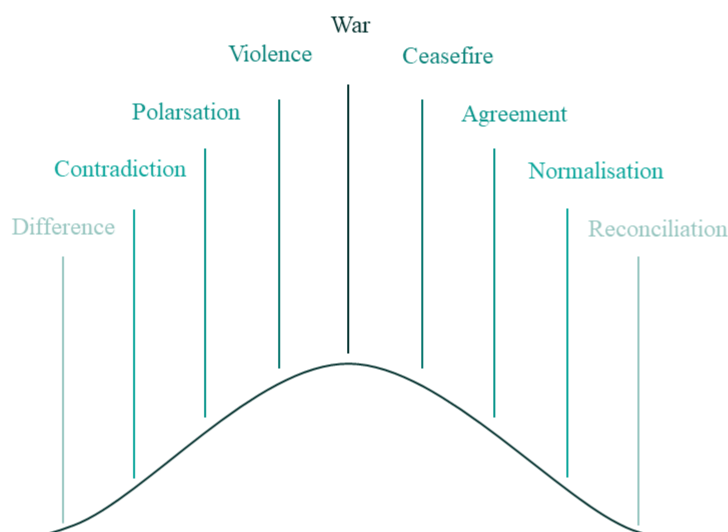

Figure 2. Conflict escalation and de-escalation. Adapted from Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011, p. 13.

A high number of conflict transformation manuals rely heavily on the conflict curve model, for example Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2011, p. 13) identify four stages of escalation, the peak of the curve, and four corresponding stages of de-escalation.

With intensifying tensions, a conflict arises from difference and contradiction and leads to polarisation and violence and reaches its climax with the outbreak of warfare. Interventions can establish ceasefires and agreements, that de-escalate the conflict, normalise the relation between hostile parties and in the best-case scenario, promote reconciliation (Ramsbotham et al., 2011). Many of the most recent works on conflict dynamics still use the conflict curve as a basis for their approaches, while simultaneously recognising that such idealised patterns cannot mechanically applied to complex and often unpredictable and protracted social conflicts (Dudouet, 2006). Conflicts can move back and forth, skip phases or different phases may overlap. Moreover, some phases can take long

periods of time, while others develop with dramatic speed. The same is true for the de-escalation process. Unexpected breakthroughs and setbacks are changing the dynamic as advances at one level may lead to relapses at others, while unforeseen interventions of third parties might influencing the outcome (Ramsbotham et al., 2011). Still, such models provide "simplistic but operational tools for mapping the dynamics of conflict" and even if "actual violent conflicts do not usually follow a unidirectional linear path, most of them pass through similar stages at least once in their history" (Dudouet, 2006, p. 7).

The escalation and de-escalation of a conflict generally refers to a social setting and how the conflict parties interact with each other (Abdelaziz, Göldner-Ebenthal, Azzam & Schützko, 2019). The longer a conflict prevails, the more communication between the opponents deteriorates and the more the conflict escalates. This brings a growing distrust among the conflict parties and finding a solution is often no longer seen as a joint responsibility. At this point, a conflict can easily spiral out of control, fewer and fewer alternatives for actions are available and the emphasis lies on the defeat or destruction of the opponent, while emotions take the upper hand. If no solution is found, the conflict will likely broaden, widen and intensify, when unmet needs turn to problems, to conflict and ultimately to crisis (Schilling, 2012).

Based on the idea that conflicts are linked to deeper societal structures at both the national and international level, the concept of conflict transformation emerged in the context of conflict and development research. Although the term was used by several scholars of peace and conflict studies, among them Adam Curle (1971), Johan Galtung (1969), Raimo Väyrynen (1991), and Kumar Rupesinghe (1995) the works of Jean Paul Lederach (1995; 1997) serve as one of the most comprehensive statements. In the words of Lederach conflict transformation is to "envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships" (Lederach, 2014, p. 14). Conflict transformation aims to support conflict parties in building, restoring and maintaining constructive relations to dismiss the use of force and violence. Moreover, conflict transformation assumes that the reason for such violence is of structural nature (Goetschel, 2009). Conflict transformation, therefore, seeks to make visible what is invisible by exploring historic patterns and other roots that can create the visible signs of conflict (Schilling, 2012).

2.2 Building Peace and a Culture of Peace

In debates about peace definitions, two distinctions have gained broad acceptance. The contrast *of negative and positive peace* was coined by Galtung in 1964. He defines negative peace as the absence of war or direct violence, in other words, direct peace. Positive peace, on the other hand, is more than the absence of such overt violence, but increased social justice among people within and across societies. Positive peace means the removal of structural violence in favour of a structural integration of individuals and groups living in a society, and is thus, sometimes also referred to as structural peace. When Galtung extended the concept of violence by adding the dimension of cultural violence, he also put forward an element of cultural peace (Galtung, 1990). Cultural peace is the reflection of peaceful moral characters and values that are located at the root of a culture. When the three elements of peace come together, Galtung considers the *culture of peace to be* prevalent (Galtung, 1996).

The term *peacebuilding* emerged over decades and resulted in many possible definitions. Drawing on work by Johan Galtung (1976) and other peace researchers, the term peacebuilding was later popularised by former United Nations (UN) Secretary Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his *Agenda for Peace* (1992) to characterise the procession towards positive peace following the end of war. In the agenda, the terminology "post conflict peacebuilding" was defined and introduce into the UNs' framework and became part of the official discourse. It contributed to the openness of the UN for the concept of peacebuilding and to the acknowledgement that the key factor for conflict resolution is "to include comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people" (UNGA, 1992, para. 55).

At that time, the concept of peacebuilding was associated particularly with the post-conflict phase and was later developed further by several scholars and practitioners inside and outside the UN. Over the 1990s, the concept of peacebuilding became more expansive by emphasising that peacebuilding is a long-term and structured endeavour that needs to identify and address root causes of conflict. The focus on post-conflict was dropped and peacebuilding was extended across the conflict spectrum, including pre-conflict prevention, activities during warfare and post-conflict measures (Call & Cousens, 2008). Even though there has been a turn towards this all-encompassing approach, the UN Security Council (UNSC) continued to use the term post-conflict peacebuilding. This narrowly defined approached was criticised in 2015 in the UN "Report of the Advisory Group of Experts" that

was assigned to review the peacebuilding architecture (UN Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture). The group proposed the term *sustaining peace* to liberate peacebuilding from its limitation to post-conflict contexts. Sustaining peace focuses on the importance of having a long-term, comprehensive vision in all responses to violent conflict, to end vicious cycles of lapse and relapse (Martínez-Solimán & Fernández-Taranco, 2017). An environment of sustained peace is characterised by self-sustainability, wellbeing, the absence of physical and structural violence and discrimination; positive peace.

Under the framework of sustaining peace, the General Assembly and Security Council unanimously adopted parallel resolutions (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016) respectively) as a key foundation to a new peacebuilding architecture of the UN-system. This paradigm shift has come about in the course of the adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]), which acknowledges that there can be no sustainable development without peace and vice versa. The SDGs and the resolutions on the UNs peacebuilding architecture call for a strongly coherent and integrated approach on peacebuilding, which is simultaneously recognizing that peace is in a reciprocal relation with development, security and human rights (Martínez-Solimán & Fernández-Taranco, 2017).

2.3 Approaches to Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding has become a broadly used term that finds application in practice in a variety of areas. It is referred to in a wide range of programs that address the causes of conflict and grievances of the past to promote stability and justice. The recurrence of violence is prevented by promoting, e.g. reconciliation, just governance modes and institution building (Sliep, Tankink & Bubenzer, 2019). Due to its wide scope and overlapping areas of engagement with other approaches, there is no simple clear-cut definition of peacebuilding. In this regard, Lederach (1997) proposes to consider the affected population in relation to different levels of actors and leaders and the available approaches in terms of a pyramid.

On the left side, grouped into three levels, are the leaders and the sectors from which they come. On the other side of the pyramid, Lederach lists the peacebuilding approaches and activities that the leaders at each level may undertake.

The top leadership level comprises the key military, political and religious leaders in the conflict, that have a high visibility. Leaders at the *top level* are the highest representatives of governments or oppositions movements, or at least the present themselves as such. Peacebuilding at that level can be described as “top-down” approach in which actors at that level emerge as peacemakers are seen as mediators. They are often supported by governments, international organisations, such as the UN in their goal to achieve a negotiated settlement between the principal leaders of the conflict parties.

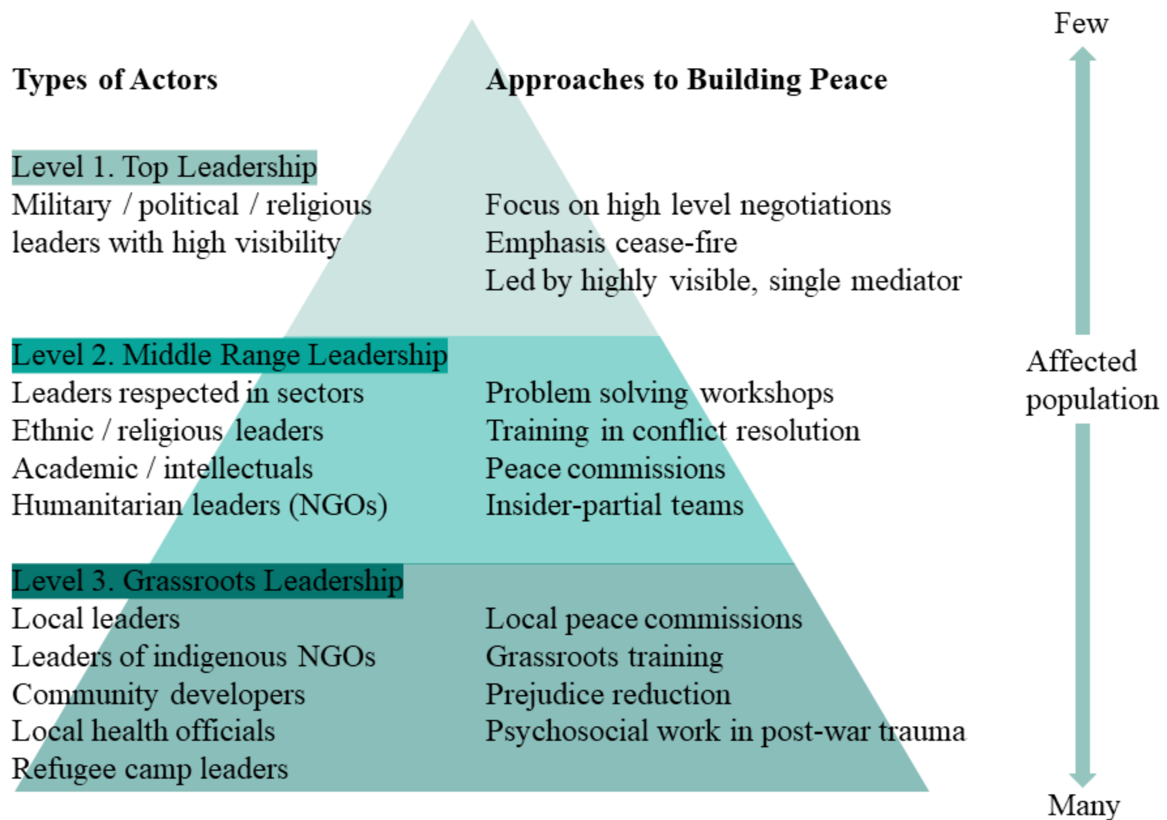

Figure 3. Actors and Approaches to Peacebuilding. Adapted from Lederach, 1997, p. 39.

The second level involves *middle range* leaders, e.g. academics, intellectuals and religious leaders with close links to government officials that allow them to influence political decisions and processes. Middle-range actors are far more numerous than their top-level counterparts and are both connected to the top and grassroots level through networks of influential people across “the human and physical geography of the conflict” (Lederach, 1997, p. 42). Peacebuilding at that level can be described as “middle-out” approach that holds the potential for establishing an infrastructure for sustaining the peacebuilding process.

The third and *grassroots level* includes local leaders, such as community developers or health officials, who are most familiar with the effects that the violent conflict has on the

population at large. Accordingly, the grassroots base of the pyramid represents the base of the society and the largest number of people. By being involved in local communities and carrying out relief projects for local populations, the leaders at the bottom level know and understand the fear and suffering from the general population. Peacebuilding at that level can be described as "bottom-up" approach that works at the community or village level on issues of peace and conflict resolution. At this grassroots level, programmes attempt to deal with the enormous trauma that violence and armed conflict has created. Lederach emphasises the importance of addressing those wounds at the grassroots level, as it is this level of society where war is experienced most immediately:

> *I can attest to the fact that the process of advancing political negotiation at polished tables in elite hotels, while very difficult and complex in its own right, is both a more formal and a more superficial process than the experience of reconciliation in which former enemies are brought together at the village level*. (Lederach, 1997, p. 55).

When combining the elements of the framework that were described in this chapter, it becomes clear that peacebuilding is understood as a process-structure. In the words of Lederach, a process-structure of peacebuilding means the transformation of "a war-system characterized by deeply divided, hostile, and violent relationships into a peace-system characterized by just and interdependent relationships with the capacity to find nonviolent mechanisms for expressing and handling conflict" (Lederach, 1997, p. 84). A peace-system is identified by its continuous, dynamic and self-generating character that is capable of adapting to environmental changes. Taking place at all levels of society, peace requires a web of people, their relationships and activities, and social mechanisms to sustain social change.

Additionally, Lederach emphasises that an infrastructure for peace must be *context-responsive* and that the greatest resource for sustainable peace is always rooted "in the local people and their culture" (Lederach, 1997, p. 94). Another term used in that discourse is that of *local ownership*. It stresses the role of civil society, local communities and actors at the level of grassroots peacebuilding. Both domestic and international actors at different societal levels account for a holistic perspective on peacebuilding. However, it is crucial for the international community that is engaged in an armed conflict, to recognise that the local people are the inherent resource and not merely recipients in peacebuilding (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015). While external agents can facilitate and support peacebuilding, it cannot be

imposed from the outside and needs to be driven by internal actors (Doyle & Sambanis, 2000).

2.4 Reconciliation, Dealing with the Past and Transitional Justice

Reconciliation is an extensively discussed and applied term in academic literature, which resulted in a multitude of definitions. Nevertheless, it can be summarised that reconciliation generates a process for mutual acceptance among two or more groups after a period of conflict. At a minimum, reconciliation means nonviolent coexistence, while a shared vision of a common future is set on the other end of the scale. In between, reconciliation is understood to create conditions in which former conflict parties may continue to disagree but respect each other as citizens with equal rights (Suhrke, Skaar & Gloppen, 2005). Reconciliation is therefore a process through which a society moves from a divided past to a shared future by finding a way to "live alongside former enemies – not necessarily to love them, or forgive them, or forget the past in any way, but to coexist with them" (Bloomfield, Barnes & Huyse, 2003, p. 12) and to respect each other as citizens with equal rights.

The process of collective reconciliation occurs on communal, regional or national layers of society. By changing the relationships between conflicting parties from hostile to respectful, peaceful coexistence and social stability can be restored (Cochrane-Buchmüller, Megalaa, Davis & Austin, 2019). At the individual level, reconciliation means coming to terms with one's self and bringing about personal healing after experiencing violent events. The way in which the violent past is remembered, on both the individual and national level, can contribute to rebuild and reconcile post-conflict societies or foster further cycles violence (Suhrke et al., 2005). Bloomfield et al. (2003) point out that the effort carries a great reward, because "effective reconciliation is the best guarantee" that violence of the past will not reappear (p.12). While political processes deal with the issues that have divided a conflict-affected society, reconciliation is a parallel process that redesigns the conflictual and fractured relationship between groups and individuals of said society (Kelly & Hamber, 2004). Reconciliation is only possible when the structural causes of conflict have been dealt with. If power structures continue to be managed in an undemocratic matter, peace is threatened. Social justice is vital in overcoming the past; however, social justice can only be achieved through a long-term process. Therefore, the reconciliation process calls for the

participation of the people so that they learn to cultivate tolerance (Becker & Weyermann, 2006).

In connection with reconciliation, the notion of *dealing with the past* is often quoted. It is an overarching term that refers to measures that address and reflect past injustice and harm. These efforts can range from learning about the other sides' grievances and acknowledging injustices to rewriting a collaborative textbook as a multiperspective educational resource on the past conflict (Cochrane-Buchmüller et al., 2019). The aim is never to forget the past nor to compel survivors of violence to forgive the crimes. To rebuild societal relations, individuals and institutions need to acknowledge their role during the conflict of the past, accepting and learning from it in a constructive way (Kelly & Hamber, 2004). Various approaches and methods, including *transitional justice*, can be subsumed under the label of dealing with the past. Transitional justice addresses large-scale and systematic violence and human rights abuses by implementing judicial and non-judicial measures. Thus, the primary goal of transitional justice is to consolidate reconciliation. These measures support the process of coming to terms with the legacy of the violent past and include, e.g. criminal prosecution, vetting, truth commissions, amnesties, memorials as well as material and symbolic reparations programmes (Mihr & Sriram, 2015). Transitional justice processes have been developed and extended domestically and internationally with the goal of ensuring accountability and achieving reconciliation.

The rationales of transitional justice stem from the *Principles against impunity* developed by UN Special Rapporteur Louis Joinet (1997), who was a member of the commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities within the former UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). The principles were approved in 1997 (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/20) by the UNCHR in recognition of the rights of victims and the obligations of states in the fight against impunity after massive violation of human rights have taken place. They encompass the following areas (Sisson, 2012):

- *the right to know* (the right of victims and of society at large to know the truth and the duty of the state to preserve memory)
- *the right to justice* (the right of victims to a fair remedy and the duty of the State to investigate, prosecute, and duly punish)
- *the right to reparation* (the right of individual victims or their beneficiaries to reparation and the duty of the state to provide satisfaction)

- *the guarantee of non-recurrence* (the right of victims and society at large to protection from further violations and the duty of the State to ensure good governance and the rule of law)

Joinet's principles have become the foundation for all other UN initiatives that aim to strengthen victims' rights. They have been established in many other bilateral and multi-lateral stakeholders and re-affirmed by Diane Orentlicher's UN report in 2005. In her role as an independent expert, she was assigned to update the set of principles for the protection and promotion of human rights through action to combat impunity (E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1). Regarding the framework of this thesis, a focus is set on the right to know, which refers to the documentation and dissemination of individual and collective knowledge regarding human rights violations of past conflicts and the governmental duty to preserve and make such information available.

Swisspeace, an associated Institute of the University of Basel, and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs developed a conceptual framework on dealing with the past. Illustrated in the form of a circular diagram, the framework provides a comprehensive overview of transitional justice measures. It incorporates the four main areas of the principles against impunity in which all rights mutually influence and depend on each other. The framework illustrates that dealing with the past is a long-term process that seeks to establish accountability, a rule of law and reconciliation (swisspeace, 2016). In the centre of the diagram, victims and perpetrators are depicted, who become citizens with equal rights in the course of conflict transformation. By this, it is highlighted that when dealing with the past, initiatives should be designed to address the needs of victims and the accountability of perpetrators simultaneously (German Federal Foreign Office, 2019). In the second circle of the diagram, the four principles against impunity are shown with concrete activities for each area.

The third circle deals with long-term effects of dealing with the past. By ensuring accountability, the implementation of the principles of impunity serves to strengthen the public confidence in state institutions and the rule of law. Finally, the outer circle is defined by reconciliation and the prevention of systematic and large-scale atrocities of the past. The diagram attempts to illustrate the transformative dimension of dealing with the past as part of a political and social process of democratisation in post-conflict settings (Sisson, 2010).

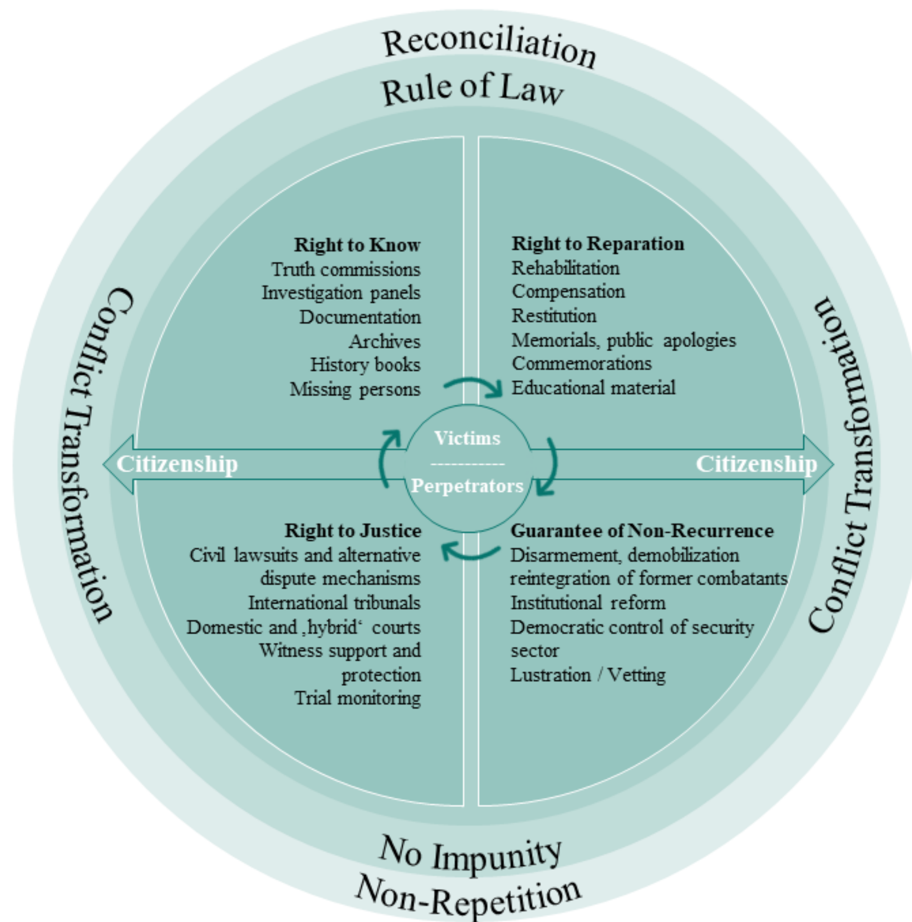

Figure 4. Conceptual Framework of Dealing with the Past. Adapted from swisspeace, 2016, p. 6.

The transformation also finds expression in the changed identities from victims and perpetrators into that of citizens, including their rights and duties as part of a new social contract. With that in mind, reconciliation in the conceptual framework of dealing with the past advocates for a comprehensive understanding and confrontation of past injustices. “Reconciliation does not mean forgetting and forgiving, but rather remembering and transforming” (Becker & Weyermann, 2006, p. 28).

In the broader picture of establishing sustainable peace after violent conflict, programmes of reconciliation and dealing with the past aim to transform damaged relationships through the means of transitional justice. By this, they put the spotlight on the non-material effects of violent conflict.

3 Psychosocial Implications of Armed Conflict and Violence

3.1 Holistic Perspectives on Psychosocial Wellbeing and Health

While purely social approaches focus on the society and the interaction and relationships of a person or a group, psychological considerations put emphasis on the mental or emotional status of a person. The term *psychosocial* denotes the relationship between psychological and social processes of human experiences. Psychosocial methodology focuses on the understanding of the relationship between individuals and their environment in order to link individual and collective dimensions of reality (Becker & Weyermann, 2006). By this, e.g., the thoughts, emotions, stress and behaviour, as well as tradition, culture, and relationships of an individual are being taken into consideration. Social circumstances and psychological dispositions are inter-connected, each interacting continually with and influencing the other.

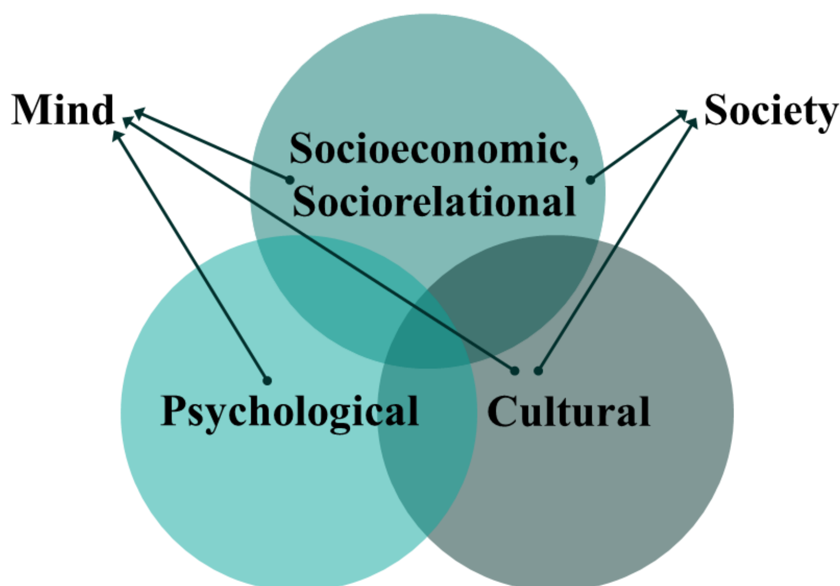

Figure 5. The model of a psychosocial approach to programming in emergencies and displacement. Adapted from International Organization of Migration (IOM), 2019, p. 20.

When it comes to addressing mental issues, both elements should be viewed with reference to each other (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2010). There is a fundamental interrelation of psychological, socioeconomic and cultural factors that are equally important in defining psychosocial needs, resources and responses. The social sphere, which determines the interaction between individuals and their communities, focusses on two complementary elements. It includes socioeconomic circumstances that are

linked to the availability of and access to resources, e.g. livelihood and health care services. Moreover, it refers to the quality of relations between an individual, her/his family and wider social systems and communities as sociorelational aspects (IOM, 2019).

The World Health Organization (WHO) adopted a definition of *health* in its constitution in the year 1948, in which health is conceptualised as a human right and defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (p. 1). This concept widens the traditional bio-medical model, that centres around the absence of illness or disease and the role of clinical diagnosis and intervention. The WHO links health explicitly with wellbeing, framing health as a positive rather than a neutral state, which requires physical and social resources to be achieved and maintained and is consistent with the psychosocial paradigm.

Mental health is the level of wellbeing in which an individual can cope with normal stresses of life and is able to build positive and productive relations to his or her community. The holistic concept of *psychosocial wellbeing* refers to an understanding of “health in all its dimensions: physical, cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual” (INEE, 2010, p. 1). Psychosocial wellbeing is a lifelong dynamic process that encourages personal growth and consists of “participating in a meaningful social role; feeling happy and hopeful; … having positive social relations and a supportive environment; coping with challenges through the use of appropriate life skills; and having security, protection, and access to quality services” (INEE, 2010, p.1).

3.1.1 How Armed Conflict and Violence affect the Mental Health of Individuals

There is a great deal of human suffering related to violent conflicts, political instability or unjust policies and practices. The experience of violence is often traumatizing and can trigger psychological processes and symptoms. During war and armed conflict, key social processes correspond to certain mental processes.

Figure 6. Key words in the psychosocial approach. Adapted from Becker & Weyermann, 2006, p. 13.

While a threat arises from the environment of a person, fear is a psychological and physiological process that helps to sense such danger and avoid it. Violent conflict always leads to destruction on the material, the emotional and relational level. The psychological equivalent of destruction is called *trauma*. Trauma strongly impacts one's life and changes the worldview. Threat and destruction always imply loss and are experienced on the psychic level as grief, which is the way in which individuals deal with loss.

A traumatic situation causes helplessness, insecurity and destroys the belief in one's self and the other as it is a life-threatening event that goes beyond one's coping ability (Fisher, 2007). The trauma theory distinguishes between traumatic situations, the trauma itself and the symptoms of trauma. "A traumatic situation is defined as an event or several events of extreme violence that occur within a social context: exemplified by war" (Becker, 2004, p.3). There is a multitude of burdens that individuals are faced with during armed conflicts, such as combat, abuse, kidnapping, imprisonment and possibly torture. Resulting from such events, a trauma includes the destruction of individual and/or collective structures, however, traumatic symptoms do not always follow such destruction immediately (Makwana, 2019).

Due to high levels of stress, a traumatized person can experience symptoms of hyper-arousal, including difficulties to sleep and concentrate or may easily feel startled, irritable, anger or panic. Another symptom of trauma is psychic numbing, which describes the tendency to draw away attention of the past traumatic experience. Psychic numbing can manifest in loss of interest, detachment from other, hiding or escaping from the outside world. By distorting or suppressing the memory of the incident, a trauma helps to psychologically cope with the traumatic events (Feeny, Zoellner, Fitzgibbons & Foa, 2000). However, these responses can hamper recovery by reducing the emotional engagement with a traumatic memory. The avoidance of specific triggers does not work in the long term as affected individuals become more vulnerable to being negatively confronted with triggers.

Trauma affected persons may also switch between hyper-arousal and numbness. The pendulum of over- and under-stimulation results in a vicious cycle that can further reinforce stress, avoidance and conflicts between individuals, families and groups (Reuben-Shemia & Modalal, 2019).

The most-common classification of symptoms that occur after trauma is the *posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)*, which does not only persist with the victims of traumatic situations, but also with witnesses, close relatives or friends. A PTSD is characterized by re-experiencing symptoms (e.g. flashbacks, bad dreams and frightening thoughts), persistent avoidance of stimuli, negative changes in cognition and mood, emotional dullness, as well as altered levels of arousal, sleep disturbances and reactivity (APA, 2013).

Research suggests that there is a 25% probably of developing PTSD after being exposed to violence. For survivors of war, displacement and torture, the percentage is even higher at 50%. Moreover, these populations are at an increased risk for anxiety disorders and depression (Sareen, 2014). After large-scale humanitarian disasters and war, between 30-50% of the population develop moderate or severe psychological distress, while the rate of moderate mental disorders increases by 5-10% (O'Hanlon & Budosan, 2015). In fragile, conflict and violence situations crisis affected populations experience high levels of insecurity, uncertainty, loss and disruption of daily life, and thus are more likely to develop extreme distress, somatic symptom disorder, alcohol or drug abuse (Dong, 2018). Traditionally, research efforts have defined PTSD as the most important mental health consequence after disaster and war by focussing on the correlation of exposure to crisis-related events and PTSD symptoms. However, recent discussions have been challenging this focus (Tol & van Ommeren, 2012).

Trauma means a complete psychological breakdown of the individual, the experience of endless fear and total helplessness in a hopeless situation. It arises in specific historical, economic and sociocultural circumstances and can only be understood in relation to this context (Hamber et al., 2015). The perception of as well as diagnosis and services for mental health vary across regions and requires culturally and socially tailored solutions. Whether or not the experience of violence and loss is reflected as a disease depends largely on the social environment (Dong, 2018). Therefore, the emergence of psychosocial problems in settings of war and armed conflict varies and depends on individual experiences and

resources available to support coping. In this regard, an understanding of trauma as a process offers advantages over a more static, symptom-oriented model such as PTSD, because it considers the complex interactions between the individual and his or her social reference group. The diagnosis of PTSD describes the impact of human-induced violence insufficiently. It individualizes and pathologizes the consequences of traumatic experiences, which are normal reactions to 'abnormal' disturbing experiences. Moreover, it assumes a post-traumatic situation that follows the traumatic event (Becker & Weyermann, 2006). It makes more sense to speak of a traumatic process, which occurs in changing phases of traumatic situations, coping conditions and perspectives for recovery.

In this regard, Hans Keilson's model of *sequential traumatization* (1992) describes a pioneering comprehension of trauma. Understanding trauma as an interplay of different sequences rather than focusing on a single original experience of violence offers a more comprehensive picture of the sequences of various traumatizing experiences and their effects on psychosocial wellbeing. Keilson developed the term sequential traumatization with reference to Jewish war orphans in the Netherlands. He found that the time after the persecution, when coping begins, is an essential part of the traumatic experience and was described by many "as the most intrusive and most painful experience of their lives" (Keilson, 2005, p. 58). Keilson was able to show that the long-term mental health of war orphans was not necessarily determined by the severity of the first traumatic phase, but by how their suffering was recognised and considered in retrospect. This illustrates that the conditions of the "post-trauma period" have a significant impact on long-term health perspectives, the development of symptoms and the degree of traumatization that may occur immediately or years later (Becker & Weyermann, 2006).

Populations that experience a disruption of their social and living conditions, as well as their self-images and their conceptions of the world are likely to suffer from feelings such as hopelessness, helplessness and anxiety. Chronic fear is the social by-product of living in areas of war and armed conflict. Constant tension is expressed by increased irritability and aggressiveness. This is a common and normal reaction to extreme circumstances and does not necessarily imply a mental disorder. Traumatic experiences never disappear completely from the mind of affected people; therefore, the goal of *healing* is not to erase those experiences. Those affected by trauma may, however, learn to integrate the traumatic experiences into their lives and find a way out of the role of the victim (Becker & Weyermann, 2006). Remembering the past involves the interpretation of memories and by

inscribing traumatic experiences into larger patterns of meaning they are integrated in one's narrative and identity.

Every person is unique in his or her ability to deal with stress and most people develop or exhibit personal resources and recover over time using their coping mechanisms, which can be enhanced by supportive environments (Dobrić et al., 2014). "Healing perspectives for victims always require the acknowledgement that their individual suffering was a part of the social process and is a collective issue. This de-individualises suffering" (Becker & Weyermann, 2006, p. 28). Even though many people need individual treatment, it is equally true that through the acknowledgment that victims receive in the collective memory process, social integration is promoted. The concept of trauma as a process, shifts the responsibility for coping with the traumatic experiences from the individual as the bearer of the issue to society and policymakers, and thus is also highly relevant to actors of both the mental health and peacebuilding sector.

In summary, the experience of war can be described as extreme disempowerment. It changes a person's self-perception and world view, as well as their relationship with other people (Dobrić et al., 2014). The implications of trauma as a result of war and armed conflict include a notion of destruction, rupture and structural breakdown. People lose their homes, entire cities are destroyed, family members, and friends die. People lose their life projects, their hopes and aspirations for the future (Becker & Weyermann, 2006). Trauma is a process that develops sequentially and can only be understood with reference to a specific context (Becker, 2004). Finally, trauma contains individual but also collective dimensions, which are intertwined. For this reason, purely clinical observations cannot fully grasp the different manifestations of psychological stress, which calls for a broader perspective on trauma and its consequences.

3.1.2 Societal and Generational Implications of Armed Conflict and Violence

Effects of war and violence are not confined to individuals, but also extend to their immediate and wider relationships and shape the dynamics of interpersonal relationships in families, communities and societies (Dobrić, et al., 2014).

Avoidance behaviour, feelings of estrangement, social withdrawal and lethargy can have a negative impact on the level of trust and intimacy among couples or the attachment between parents and children. Unspoken suffering between family members can lead to an

atmosphere of silence and secrecy. Within families and communities, forms of transgenerational, gender-based and domestic violence can manifest themselves (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit [German Development Agency], 2015). Negative effects not only relate to the people who are exposed to conflict and violence directly but are also transmitted to further generations through memories of trauma and violence.

Collective trauma relates to the psychological reaction to traumatic events that affect larger groups and parts of society by recollecting the violent, traumatic or terrible incident. The collective memory of the group comprises a reproduction of the event as well as an ongoing reconstruction of the trauma and persists beyond the lives of the immediate survivors of the traumatic event (Hirschberger, 2018). To speak of a collective trauma, certain trauma patterns need to be framed as a collective identity marker, that becomes part of a shared group reality. A collective can be constitute a family, an identity group or society. Social dynamics and structure of a collective are impacted and may leave people stuck in conflict dynamics, becoming a threat to themselves or others (Reuben-Shemia & Modalal, 2019).

Transgenerational or intergenerational trauma is understood as a particular expression of collective trauma, that is transmitted from one generation to the second or even third generation (Reimann & König, 2017). Insufficient coping mechanisms, e.g. silencing the past, become a difficult legacy as psychological consequences affect family or society members. Children or grandchildren may experience symptoms or are “living out” certain experiences of the first generation and the original trauma incident (de Mendelssohn, 2008). This is how family members who are born years after the initial traumatising event can still become part of the traumatic process (Becker & Weyermann, 2006). Collective or transgenerational trauma is one longitudinal aspect of trauma, which has far-reaching effects and functions as a catalyst that can shatter the basic fabric of communities and society and is understood to severely hinder the ability of individuals and communities to heal and function properly (Hirschberger, 2018).

In conflict situations, the *social fabric* of society is often severely disrupted. The fabric of a society constitutes norms, experiences and expectations that govern social interactions, links and relations. These social structures build the capacity for unity, harmony, recovery and peace (Alcock & Sadava, 2014). War and conflict weaken social

fabric and stability. Further, in the aftermath of war and conflict, the causes of conflict might still be prevalent or have even worsened as a result of violence during the conflict. A return to conflict is more likely to occur in settings where people were exposed to large-scale violence and where the traumatic experiences and memories have not been addressed constructively (Tankink & Bubenzer, 2017). Societies with complex histories of conflicts are fragmented, which can lead to social tensions and negatively affects *social cohesion*.

The term social cohesion denotes the quality and nature of relations between individuals and groups. It serves as an essential element for collective actions and connections by providing predictability and certainty for social interaction. Social cohesion does not mean that all groups agree on all issues, but at a minimum it offers incentives for groups to coexist. A precondition for social cohesion to build is that individuals and groups trust in the fundamentals of the system in which they operate (Marc, Willman, Aslam, Rebosio & Balasuriya, 2013). Experiences of violence and war also manifest in the disruption of social cohesion and solidarity, which means that communities and families are no longer able to perform their key supporting roles, further destabilising individuals and groups (Becker & Weyermann, 2006). Furthermore, community structures, social networks, resources and traditional support mechanisms are being undermined. In consequence, communities suffer from social blunting, mistrust and fear alongside rigid mindsets that lead to social cleavages and impedes cohesion for prolonged periods (Inter-Agency Standing Committee [IASC], 2007).

3.1.3 Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons after Conflict - A State of Uncertainty

Many people go missing during the acts of war, be it through politically motivated disappearance, hasty burials or fighters going missing during combat action. The uncertainty about the fate of loved ones is a harsh reality for countless families during and in the aftermath of violent conflict (ICRC, 2003). These circumstances may constitute an important risk factor for the psychosocial wellbeing and mental health of concerned persons. Many families experience feelings of helplessness, depression and anxiety (Boss, 2002). Powell, Butollo and Hagl (2010) have found higher levels of traumatic grief and depression among a group of women whose husbands were missing after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in comparison to widows who were certain their husbands had died in the conflict. The results of this study, as well as multiple others (Heeke & Knaevelsrud, 2015; Quirk & Casco,

1994; Zvizdic & Butollo, 2001), propose that the relatives of disappeared persons experience more severe mental health consequences than persons who have lost a family member to accident or illness. Most of the studies that focus on the disappearances in the context of war or state terrorism describe the psychological distress for relatives in terms of trauma, PTSD and depression. The symptoms of trauma and PTSD can be wide-ranging (see 3.1.1), which can be seen, to different extents, in relatives of people who have been missing (Lenferink, Keijser, Wessel, Vries & Boelen, 2017). However, loss due to disappearance is rather relational in nature than an individual mental illness as in the case of PTSD, as it results from the situation of now knowing where a family member or close friend is. With that in mind, the concept which provides a more comprehensive understanding of the specific loss associated with disappearance is that of *ambiguous loss* (Holmes, 2016).

The term was first used by American family therapist Pauline Boss (1999), who developed a framework that helps to understand the complicated loss associated with missing incidents. Ambiguous loss occurs under two conditions. First, when individuals are confronted with someone who is psychologically absent but physically present, e.g. as in the of dementia. Second, when in turn a person is psychologically present for their relative but physically absent, e.g. as in the case of missing persons. This thesis puts a focus on the second condition, which relates to family and friends of disappeared persons in the context of conflict. According to Boss, the circumstance of "not knowing whether a loved one is dead or alive defies emotional comprehension" (2002, p. 39). Ambiguity is confusing, people are unable to make cognitive sense of the situation. These relatives find themselves in a liminal space, in a status of the in-between as the absence of the loved one - neither dead nor alive - is not definite; the resolution open-ended (Wayland, Maple, McKay & Glassock, 2016).

If no resolution is found, ambiguous loss becomes a prolonged or chronic trauma (Holmes, 2016). After a certain time, some people assume the death of the missing person, while others continue to believe or maintain hope that the loved one is still alive. How can relatives be expected to move on if there is even a remote possibility that they will be reunited with their loved one? This results in a dilemma for the families and friends of the disappeared as they remain in a state of uncertainty. They have no information or, at best, conflicting information regarding the fate of their loved ones. It is therefore up to them when to decide to give up hope for a return, which might leave them with a feeling of betraying the disappeared. On the other hand, if they carry on their life as if the disappeared person

was still alive, they are denying the reality of loss. This entraps the families in an inevitable dilemma (Becker & Weyermann, 2006).

Due to this paradox, persons suffering ambiguous loss are unable to move on to personal or community rehabilitation. Their anxiety remains with them maybe even after the conflict has ended and peace is in the making. Feelings of guilt and responsibility for not adequately protecting their family member from danger often prevail, even many years after the disappearance. Emotionally, people report shame, embarrassment, shock and helplessness. This way, the relationship of those left behind are also affected by a breakdown of trust and expressions of anger (Waring, 2001). However, not knowing whether a family member will return prevents the reconstruction of family and marital roles. Often, people around them are overwhelmed and do not know how to deal with the persons that are mourning their missed ones. Years after the incident, other community members may lose patience with the lack of closure and expect the family members to finally move one (Boss, 2002). When their losses are unacknowledged or invalidated family members and friends of missing persons experience isolation and even disenfranchisement. At times, they may feel stigmatised by becoming an object of pity and avoidance (Waring, 2001).

Some relatives of disappeared persons are subject to massive intimidations and threat when they are seeking to find out the whereabouts of their relatives. This is particularly the case when state agents or members of militias are responsible for forced abduction (Becker & Weyermann, 2006). In several countries, especially during violent conflicts, "forced disappearance is used as an instrument of political repression to weaken political opponents and to create an atmosphere of silence and fear" (Heeke, Stammel & Knaevelsrud, 2015, p. 59). The bafflement following traumatic experiences during armed conflict, that are shattering one's assumptions about the world, are exacerbated by the responses of the environment (or the lack thereof). The family and friends of forcibly disappeared are in a vulnerable state, which coincides with the already challenging conditions of the post-conflict setting (Hamber & Wilson, 2002).

The biggest emotional challenge for the relatives of missing persons may be the lack of closure, "the pain of not knowing and the mental torture of perhaps never knowing" (Waring, 2001, p. 23). Traditionally, models of grief have described the process in terms of stages through which people typically pass: Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally, acceptance (Kübler-Ross, 1997). The course of the mourning process settles whether

a loss is integrated and accepted psychologically, or whether it continues to affect life negatively. Cases of disappearance lead to a complicated mourning process, in which grief can be experienced differently. Affected persons must cope with the constant uncertainty about their loved one's fate (Becker & Weyermann, 2006). This puts the wellbeing of mourning individuals at risk because they cannot let go emotionally and in severe cases, do not engage with their lives as before. In many cases, only the confirmation of the death of a person may allow for the process of mourning to begin.

Even when the relatives presume that their loved ones have passed away and do not expect them to come home, they at least wish for evidence of the death. Boss (2002) suggests that people need to see a body to participate in rituals of honour and farewell due to cultural conditions. These procedures and customs provide a cognitive certainty and understanding that death has occurred and being able to bury a body (or body parts) helps relatives to let go of their loved ones (Holmes, 2016).

The persons who are left behind can be in a vulnerable state and may require financial, legal, administrative, psychosocial support and the need for recognition and justice. Inevitably, the primary need of the dependants of the disappeared persons is to learn what happened to their relatives and whether they are alive or dead. Recognising the ambiguous situation in which relatives of disappeared persons live is essential for the mental health of those concerned (IRCR, 2003). The issue is, however, also of political significance, as "the right to know" of the families is part of the peacebuilding process (see 2.4). The condemnation of forced disappearance and the support of the relatives of the missing person are significant aspects for appropriate mourning processes, and for the transformation of conflict (swisspeace, 2016).

3.2 Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services

MHPSS is an international abbreviation which stands for *Mental Health and Psychosocial Support* and includes a wide range of activities and support systems that aim at protecting or promoting psychosocial wellbeing and/or the prevention and treatment of mental disorders (IASC Reference Group for Mental Health in Emergency Settings, 2010). The commonly used term of MHPSS was the result of a vast debate on psychosocial work in which the guidelines of the IASC were defined. The IASC was established in 1992 in response to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 on the strengthening of humanitarian assistance. Under the leadership of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator,

the committee involves key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners, serving as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination relating to humanitarian assistance in response to complex and major emergencies (IASC, 2007).

The IASC guidelines advocate the combination of clinical support by professionals and holistic, community-based support, which before have often been polarised approaches dividing psychosocial work into two separate areas. The guidelines put emphasis on the benefits of a multi-layered system of comprehensive support by integrating and coordinating both approaches in the field to organise a system of complementary MHPSS support (IASC Reference Group for Mental Health in Emergency Settings, 2010).

Within the guidelines, the multi-support system is illustrated by a pyramid in which all four layers are interconnected and should ideally be implemented concurrently. This IASC intervention model has been seen internationally as a reference framework for psychosocial work in the context of crises and conflicts (2007):

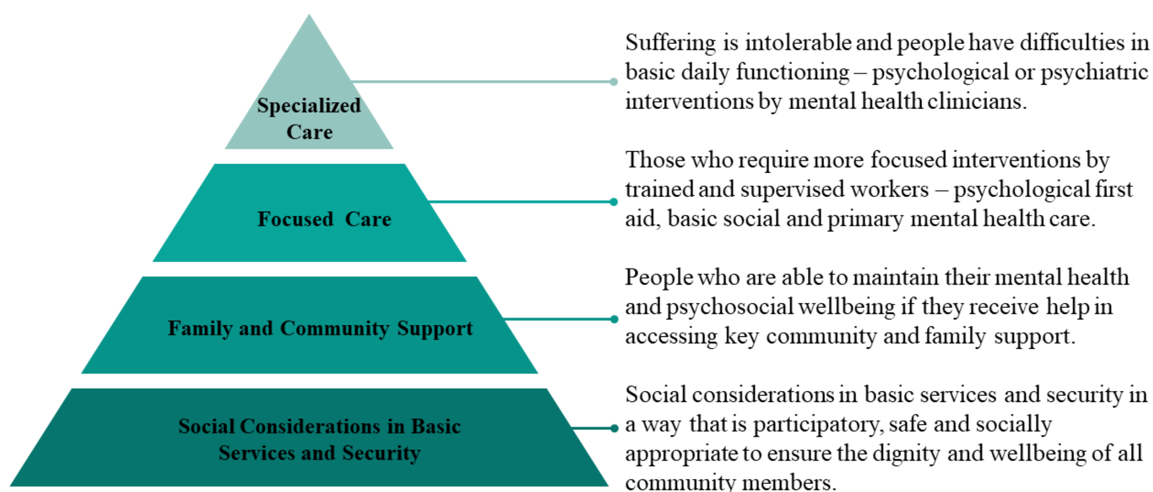

Figure 7. Intervention pyramid for mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies. Adapted from IASC Reference Group for Mental Health in Emergency Settings, 2010, p. 12

Services on the bottom layer of the pyramid promote the wellbeing of people by establishing or restoring security, adequate governance and services that provide for basic physical needs (food, water, shelter and basic health care). Without the guarantee of access to these essential resources, people are in tension and worry over their survival. Therefore, MHPSS response at this level includes advocating that these services are installed and delivered in a way that promotes mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.

The second layer represents support for families and communities to stabilise relationships that are, due to violence, family separation and loss, often disrupted in conflict settings. This layer puts emphasis on creating or strengthening safe spaces, activating social networks, assisting communal healing ceremonies, advocating education and livelihood activities in order to foster social cohesion and community-based structures. Psychosocial support does not only refer to individuals, but also considers the affected person in his or her social and emotional relationships. Thus, measures to promote psychosocial health are not only aimed at individuals but also include their immediate networks of family and friends, as well as other structures of communities and groups (Hassan et al., 2015).

Focused, non-specialised support mechanisms on the third layer include basic mental health care, group support and psychological first aid for individuals, families or a smaller group of people, who are having difficulty coping by only using their personal strengths and their existing support networks. These more targeted emotional and practical interventions can be administered, e.g., by trained and supervised community and social workers (IASC, 2007).

The fourth and top layer of the pyramid relates to additional and specialised treatment options for a small percentage of the population who require long-term psychological or psychiatric support. Mental health care by specialists, e.g., psychiatric nurses, psychologists and psychiatrists can be necessary if people are still suffering significantly and face serious difficulties or severe symptoms in their daily lives, despite the support mechanisms already mentioned on the three lower layers (IASC, 2007).

The IASC intervention pyramid refers to a holistic approach and understanding of psychosocial wellbeing by providing mental health as well as supporting basic physical needs. Simultaneous and inclusive MHPSS interventions on all four levels are essential to meet the specific needs of various groups and must be suitable to the context. A psychosocial perspective also emphasises a culture-, context-, and trauma-sensitive approach.

Psychosocial interventions also entail the strengthening of resilience of affected communities and individuals and to promote healthy coping strategies. Strong relationships with family members and friends as well as a sense of safety and security are vital for resilience that MHPSS interventions can build on in order to break perpetuating trauma and conflict dynamics (Reuben-Shemia & Modalal, 2019). The IASC support model of MHPSS interventions recognises the severity and depth of injuries and trauma, while also promoting

the ability of those affected to act as independent subjects. Globally, there has been a shift within the MHPSS programming from vulnerability-frameworks towards resilience and recovery-based approaches, recognising individuals as active agents of their life (Hassan et al., 2015). A lack of recognition and treatment of psychosocial suffering on an individual and collective level impairs the stability of persons, families and communities and reciprocally also the structures and cohesion of societies.

3.3 Making the Case for Psychosocial Peacebuilding

In the previous chapters, theoretical ideas concerning peacebuilding and psychosocial support were outlined. In the following, the relation between the two fields will be illustrated in order to reveal their connections and overlaps regarding aims and understandings. The two fields have different methods and approaches, but also indicate significant overlaps, e.g. in the MHPSS field elements of reconciliation and transformative justice are implemented, while peacebuilding includes trauma healing.

A literature review conducted in 2017 by Tankink and Bubenzer, analysed articles in which both MHPSS and peacebuilding were referenced. The study aimed at exploring how the integration of both fields can contribute to building sustainable peace. The body of the literature that provided the basis for the study was comprised of 108 papers and reports that have been published in the period after 1992 (since the Agenda for Peace). Tankink and Bubenzer conclude that there is plenty of research on peacebuilding and psychosocial support, however, the research rarely draws from both fields. Moreover, it was stressed that psychosocial interventions are largely disconnected from peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. Even though the two fields refer to one another, they work mostly isolated and an integration of MHPSS and peacebuilding is only done sporadically (Tankink & Bubenzer, 2017). The importance of healing individuals and communities as foundation to peace has been acknowledged by numerous organisations and scholars (e.g., Bubenzer et al., 2017; Darweish, Rank & Giles, 2012; Grove & Zwi, 2008; Hertog, 2017). Despite these articles and papers based on the work and research of NGOs and scholars that combined psychosocial interventions and peacebuilding, it must be stated that the recognition of this linkage is relatively new.

The promotion of stability and justice on all levels of society reveals the connection to the psychosocial wellbeing of individuals. Economic, political and social stability are the "foundation for justice and human flourishing and are built by addressing the intangible and

tangible, psychological, relational, and structural factors which shape individuals and society" (Sliep et al., 2019, p. 1). Both peacebuilding and psychosocial interventions aim to counter the effects of conflict through societal transformation and reconciliation to limit the repercussions of violence, and both follow the intention to heal wounds, build capacity for peace and to limit the effects of conflicts on the social fabric (Tankink & Bubenzer, 2017).

When addressing the sustainability of peace, it becomes eminent that a significant number of societies that emerged out of conflict have returned to conflict and violence. The cost of failing to build sustainable peace is severe and manifold as parties to the conflict often unleash greater violence than in the prior fighting (Call & Cousens, 2008). When exploring the reasons why countries fail to consolidate peace and ultimately relapse into violence, one must keep in mind the psychosocial impact of armed conflict. As illustrated above, destruction and violence have psychological and social consequences for the wellbeing of affected individuals, families and communities (see 3.1.1, 3.1.2). Additionally, it was stressed that the exposure to conflict poses significant risks to the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of conflict-affected populations. It disrupts daily lives and normal routines (Tankink & Bubenzer, 2017). Conflict-affected people and their relationships do not function optimally, which can impact all sectors of society, not only health, but also education, employment and the general development. Psychosocial implications, such as fear, hopelessness and social withdrawal affect the societal fabric and solidarity and can lead to violence and social stagnation. When families and communities can no longer fulfil their important stabilising functions, transgenerational violence and conflict manifest more easily. Further mistrust and intergroup disharmony pose a risk of a continuation of conflict (Finish Evangelical Lutheran Mission [FELM] & Institute for Justice and Reconciliation [IJR], 2018). Programmes aiming at stabilisation and development in a post-conflict setting might fail due to trauma-related psychosocial problems, a lack of cooperation and high levels of participation and interruptions brought about by erupting cycles of violence. As a consequence, a multisectoral and long-term approach is required to create a safe, just and democratic society.

Post-conflict peacebuilding approaches have been criticised for spotlighting the macro-level rather than including the individual and community level. In many approaches a dominant state-centric model of peacebuilding with a focus on political, economic, security and justice issues is applied, while psychosocial aspects are merely seen as an addendum. International peacebuilding perspectives often emphasise stability, security and national

unity, while individual suffering and needs are marginalised by scholars and practitioners of peacebuilding (Hertog, 2017). Survivors of violence are expected to align themselves with national reconciliation programmes, even though ignoring individual hardships will worsen them over time, rather than making them disappear. While it is undoubtedly important to build political and economic institutions in post-conflict settings, individuals and groups need to be supported so that they are capable of participating actively in building peace (Parent, 2011). There is a widespread understanding that infrastructure and political systems need to be rebuilt, nevertheless, peacebuilding and conflict transformation will not be sustainable without simultaneously addressing the psychosocial wellbeing of individuals and their social networks. Following the logic that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, individuals and their relations must be regarded at the basis of post-conflict repair (Tankink et al., 2017).

Whereas psychosocial interventions can be relegated to a second place, much psychosocial work in practice is not done comprehensive enough to impact peacebuilding in a fundamental way (FELM & IJR, 2018). The field of MHPSS advocates a conflict-sensitive approach; any intervention needs to be understood with reference to its context including its interaction with other interventions. However, it needs to be acknowledged that psychosocial practices are not merely treating individuals and groups in the framework of their context. Rather, such interventions can themselves shape the social context. Consequently, MHPSS interventions should be seen as part of the social context (Hamber et al., 2015). Every individual is woven into a web of relations on different levels of society, in which a worldview is constructed and reproduced; thus, it is difficult to distinguish between social dynamics and individual actions. Because of this reciprocal interaction, considering how individual members of society feel, act and interact is arguably as relevant as society's political and economic structures (Parent, 2011). This realisation necessitates a paradigm shift that recognises that there are no purely psychological solutions, but that experiences of grief and trauma have components of injustice, marginalisation or victimhood and call for political action (Bolton, 2017). A holistic application of psychosocial interventions means finding a balance "between helping people to become increasingly members of, and stakeholders in, the emerging post-conflict community whilst attending properly and effectively to their need to heal and recover is of central importance" (Bolton, 2017, p.4.). MHPSS approaches need to address the collective dimensions of trauma and de-individualise suffering. The support should not be limited to the individual working through

traumatic experiences, as “trauma work is not just a social and medical issue but a cornerstone of the peacebuilding process” (Becker & Weyermann, p. 16).

Ferguson, Burgess and Hollywood (2010) highlight two vital components that are necessary for the transition to peace in post-conflict societies: (a) lasting peace demands reconciliation; and (b) a necessary step towards reconciliation is the recovery from trauma and dealing with the legacy of the past. A common assumption is that reconciliation relates to the social and political form of making peace, which is mainly located in political institutions. A comprehensive understanding of reconciliation, however, also includes the personal healing in the aftermath of violence. Yet, healing is frequently understood to locate peace within an individual’s psychological and emotional dispositions. While a distinction between these two forms of recovery seem artificial and unproductive, the two aspects should not be confused, as if the socio-political resolution of past grievances automatically leads to an individual’s wellbeing. Instead, it is suggested that peace should be built in between the space of (individual) healing and (political) reconciliation (Parent, 2011). Many dimensions of healing and reconciliation overlap and can be realised simultaneously, e.g. the need for security and justice, the building of new relationships as well as the need to find truth and dealing with the past (Kriesberg, 2007).

Building on the commonalities of MHPSS and peacebuilding, the term Psychosocial Peacebuilding was recently introduced to begin to define an integrated approach of the two previously distinct fields. Psychosocial Peacebuilding pursues the integration of the theories and practices of MHPSS and peacebuilding to construct a strong foundation for the attainment of sustainable peace in post-conflict settings (Hart & Colo, 2014). It might neither be realistic nor desirable to fully merge the two fields. Instead, this integrated approach could be useful to identify and build on overlaps so that negative impacts between interventions can be avoided and synergies can be built to maximise efforts of reconciliation and healing.

The holistic approach integrates theories and practices of MHPSS and peacebuilding to lay a foundation for sustainable peacebuilding outcomes in post-conflict settings (Sliep et al., 2019). As mentioned above, there is only a limited amount of research that addresses this link specifically. However, several characteristics of an integrated approach of MHPSS and peacebuilding can be found. According to FELM & IJR (2018, p. 2) they often:

- are concerned with origin and effect of violence
- work towards healthy human relationships

- are interested in narratives of power
- aim to restore trust and rebuild relationships
- take health as an entry point to political transformation
- view health as a social and ecological rather than individual matter
- differentiate between individual and collective trauma
- differentiate between experience sensitive and universal language and
- are concerned with human security in overall

The integration of MHPSS and peacebuilding follows the logic that individuals and communities are more likely to be caught up in cycles of violence if collective and intergenerational trauma is not acknowledged and integrated into long-term post-conflict reconstruction and social transformation efforts. The underlying hypothesis of this approach is that integrative efforts are more likely to lead to sustainable peace than separate attempts (Tankink & Bubenzer, 2017). Psychosocial wellbeing of individuals and communities positively affects political stabilisation, violence prevention and the sustainable social and material reconstruction of communities. This underscores the importance of an integrated approach, so that both MHPSS and peacebuilding consider the needs of individuals and communities to put a halt to direct and indirect violence. Given the complex and manifold long-term implications of armed conflict, an individual approach often fails to capture the complexity of suffering. The integrated model of Psychosocial Peacebuilding makes the attempt to do justice to post-conflict populations by addressing their needs on various levels of society from a holistic perspective.

4 Reconciliation in Post-Conflict Lebanon

4.1 Historical Perspectives on the Lebanese Civil War

In its lengths and brutality, the Lebanese civil war left grave physical and emotional scars (Sfeir, 2019). Involving a multitude of state and non-state actors, intertwining domestic and regional conflicts and changing allegiances based on external manipulation or private interests, the Lebanese civil war from 1975-1990 was distinguished by its complexity (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012).

The reasons behind the outbreak of the war in Lebanon have been discussed controversially and a multitude of economic, political, social and regional factors have been put forward (Knudsen, 2005). Domestic and regional political developments in the 1960s and early 1970s, especially the resurgence of Arab Nationalism and the consequences of the Arab-Israeli conflict, have contributed to the onset of the civil war in 1975. Internally, Muslim and Christian representatives argued over an earlier power-sharing agreement (International Centre for Transitional Justice, 2014). The power-sharing model goes back to the unwritten 1943 National Pact, which allocated political and administrative functions to major confessional sects. The confessional formula distributed governmental representation to Christians and Muslims in a six-to-five ratio and communities were proportionally represented in the cabinet (Haddad, 2002). The arrangement sought to guarantee political representation and group autonomy regarding personal status, education and cultural affairs to the major constituent communities. The National Pact ruled for a grand coalition government in which a Maronite Christian must undertake the presidency, a Sunni Muslim would be prime minister and the speaker of parliament is required to be a Shi'a Muslim (Fakhoury, 2014).

At the beginning of the 1970s, Muslim representatives claimed that the agreement did not reflect the country's changed demographic majority and pushed for a reform of the power-sharing agreement (ICTJ, 2014), while the growing presence of Palestinians and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) placed Lebanon at the forefront of regional tensions with Israel. Lebanon was perceived as a "secure base" for both the armed and political Palestinian resistance (Mourad, 2014, p. 40). Local political organisations and unions became more militaristic and, intensified by a massive Palestinian military build-up in the country, Lebanon's confessional, political and social tensions ultimately exploded in a protracted civil war (ICTJ, 2014).

In the early morning on April 13, 1975, a dispute between militiamen of the PLO and the Christian Phalangist Party's Kataeb Regulatory Forces (KRP) near a Maronite Christian Church resulted in the death of one PLO member. Later that morning, a congregation outside the Maronite church was attacked by unidentified gunmen, leaving four people dead who all belong to the personal entourage of politician Pierre Gemayel, founder and leader of the Phalangist Party. The two civilian cars of the attackers displayed bumper stickers of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a PLO faction. Thus, the Phalangist KRP milia assumed that Palestinian guerrillas were responsible for the killings (Donnelly, 2015). An immediate call for revenge was carried out the same day. A bus transporting a group of Palestinians through the Ain el-Rammaneh suburb of Beirut, was attacked by members of the KRP. The incident, in which 27 Palestinian passengers were killed, is also referred to as "bus massacre" and sparked heavy fighting throughout the country. Retaliatory attacks were carried out with the Lebanese government unable to restore order. Even though armed clashes had already been taking place before that day, the attack on the bus became a symbol for many Lebanese as the start of the war (Mourad, 2014).

The war was fought over the balance of power in government, the role of armed Palestinian groups, the redistribution of wealth and Lebanon's foreign policy orientation regarding regional relations and alliances and against the backdrop of the geopolitical dynamics of the Cold War (Haddad, 2002). Violence was executed by many state and non-state actors. Moreover, it was characterized by a high number of casualties from the civil society, which was exposed to snipers, car bombs, rocket attacks and scattered fighting that erupted spontaneously in different places (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012). According to estimations, 145,000 people had died in the course of the war, of which 90% were civilians. 185,000 people were wounded and more than 800,000 displaced (Sriram, 2010).

For 15 years, the life in Lebanon was shaped by armed conflict and widespread political violence, including car bombs, air bombardments, tank battles, sniper attacks, urban street fighting as well as enforced disappearances and targeted assassinations. Violence was carried out on both the inter- and intra-sectarian level, while militias systematically divided the country into confessional zones (ICTJ, 2014). No area in the country was spared from aggression; all traditional battlegrounds were ablaze, while the conflict spread its horror through diffuse and random violence. Hostilities were not confined to a limited number of combatants and groups, but marked by multiple and shifting targets (Khalaf, 2002). By spring of 1984, "there were no fewer than 186 warring factions - splinter groups with

different backgrounds, ideologies, sponsors, grievances, visions, and justifications as to why they had resorted to armed struggle" (Khalaf, 2002, p. 240). There was also direct foreign interference from Palestinian factions, Israel and Syria as well as interventions sponsored or supported by France, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia and the United States (ICTJ, 2014). Given its complexity, Nagle (2019) argues that the Lebanese civil war can more readily be defined as a succession of multiple conflicts with different phases. In 1976, the Arab League authorised the deployment of a peacekeepers force to Lebanon, which was almost entirely composed of Syrian troops. While this invasion was later construed as an Arab peacekeeping effort, the Arab Deterrent Force, it was the beginning of a Syrian occupation of Lebanon (Knudsen, 2005).

Nevertheless, Syria was not the only foreign actor in over 15 years of Lebanese civil conflict. Israel invaded Lebanon in 1978 and 1982 and occupied a stretch of Sothern Lebanon (Bennett, 2013). In response to the Israeli invasion in 1978, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFL) peacekeeping force was established by the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 425 and 426 on March 19, 1978 in order to monitor the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory and support the authority of the Lebanese government (Sriram, 2010). However, Lebanon remained under partial Israeli military occupation until 2000 and Syrian occupation until 2005 (Sriram, 2010). The UNIFL mandate is renewed annually by the Security Council and its peacekeeping force remains in Lebanon to this day. It has been extended with the Resolution 1701 of 11 August 2006, in order to support the Lebanese armed forces in assuring humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons (UNIFL, 2019).

By the end of 1989, the conflict factions were exhausted. Different confessional and ethnic groups had consolidated military and political power in regional parts of the country, and it seemed that no side could win the war militarily. The civil society was burned out and tired after many years of violence and supported a quick settlement of the conflict based on a unified Lebanese state and a central political system (Bennett, 2013).

4.1.1 Bringing about Peace – The Lebanese Peace Process

In late 1989 the end of the Lebanese Civil War was marked by the ratification of the "Charter of National Reconciliation" in the town of Taif, Saudi Arabia, therefore, known as the Taif Agreement. The agreement was discussed and concluded by surviving members of Lebanon's pre-war 1972-76 parliament under the patronage of Riyadh and the Arab League

(Bennett, 2013). Aiming to inaugurate a process that put an end to the civil war and set the country on a path to peace, the agreement demanded the demobilisation of all militias, the building of a non-sectarian national army and set the provisions for parliamentary elections and mutual recognition of the rights of all confessional and ethnic groups (Knudsen, 2005). To regulate the conflict of interests between different sects, the document revised the pre-war power-sharing principle (Sriram, 2010). While the character of sectarian proportionality remained, the Christian-Muslim ratio of parliamentary seats were modified to an even 50:50 to take account of a new power balance among communities. The system of appointing the top three positions in the ruling “troika” – president, prime mister and speaker of parliament – based on confessional belongings remained unchanged (Comaty, 2019).

In March 1991, most militias were dissolved and disarmed, with the notable exception of the Shia-led Hezbollah that evolved in 1985 in resistance to Israeli occupation and was still involved in the conflict with Israel and its proxy militia in South Lebanon (Sriram, 2010). In August of the same year, the parliament passed the General Amnesty Law No. 84/91, which pardonedcrimes committed prior to March 28, 1991 on a selective basis. Complete amnesty was granted for crimes perpetrated by militias and armed groups, including crimes against humanity, torture and kidnappings (Haugbolle, 2010). However, Article 3 of the amnesty law exempted crimes against religious and political leaders and foreign diplomats.

When looking at the post-conflict period in Lebanon, one must acknowledge, that there was renewed violence between former war factions, both domestically and regionally. In the post-war period, fierce battles with Israel erupted on multiple occasions in 1993 ,1996 and 2006, leaving many people dead and displaced. In addition to these large-scale fights, there were many smaller incidents involving Hezbollah and Israeli fighter (Knudsen, 2005). Lebanon also experienced repeated assassinations of political leaders, journalists and activists following inter- and intra-sectarian conflicts (Khalaf, 2002). One incident that had massive impact on the post-conflict process of Lebanon was the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri on February 14, 2005 (Sriram, 2010).

Following the assassination, the Lebanese government and the UN Security Council established a Special Tribunal for Lebanon to prosecute the perpetrators responsible for the car bomb attack on Hariri and related killings. The tribunal was viewed controversial because it was only designed to address such a limited amount of crimes against elites, while crimes against the larger population remain unpunished (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012). The

tribunal failed to break the silence about the past and to promote accountability in the light of crimes.

4.1.2 Shortcomings of Reconciliation in Lebanon

At the time of its ratification, the Taif Agreement was heralded for including far-reaching political reforms and for the inclusive nature of its negotiations. The full name of the agreement, “Charter of National Reconciliation” stresses that it aimed at facilitating post-war reconciliation and heal war-time divisions of society (Knudsen, 2005). However, over time it became clear that many of the ambitious promises could not be fulfilled. Even though it helped to end violence between fighting factions, it can be argued that the Taif Agreement perpetuated political confessionalism, strengthening internal links of communities and their differentiation from other groups and failed to promote a national identity (Haddad, 2002). In this sense, it offered no solution to several of the disputes that fuelled the civil war and produced a weak State by reconfirming principles of political confessionalism. The ruling troika arrangement created unstable power relations, which led to another system of discord in the country and often resulted in political deadlocks in the post-war period (Traboulsi, 2007). Another massive shortcoming of the Taef Agreement was its failure to address the victims of the war or any mechanism for dealing with the legacy of the war. Shaped by the resumption of power sharing, the motto of the agreement *la ghalib la maghlub* (“no victor, no vanquished”) meant that none of the violent groups of the conflict would be held accountable, favouring amnesia over truth seeking (Haugbolle, 2010, p. 70). All were perpetrators, all were victims and, thus equally guilty and should forgive another and move on with their lives. This formula became the official justification for a lack of transitional justice on the route from war to peace. There was no post-war reconciliation process in Lebanon, no truth commissions, official apologies or other forms of public conciliation (Knudsen, 2005). In such an understanding of post-conflict resolution, the costs of a process of truth and reconciliation are believed to exceed its benefits (Haugbolle, 2010).

When the General Amnesty Law was implemented, its proponents argued that amnesty was a necessity for the new political system to function and the integration of the largest possible number of people required excusing or ignoring their crimes, assuming that reconciliation would come with time (Haugbolle, 2010). However, it’s undeniable that the discriminatory nature of the amnesty weighted large-scale war crime and crimes against humanity less than targeted political attacks and assassinations. Just like the Taif Agreement,

the General Amnesty Law did not take account of the numerous civil victims of the war and never mentioned them (Jaquement, 2009). Despite the long list of gross human-rights violations during the civil war, there were neither criminal investigations nor were any of those responsible brought to trial. The amnesty law stopped legal actions and paved the way for militia leaders to take on minister posts and transform their militias into political parties. Many of the post-war political elites were leading sectarian warlords during the conflict, responsible for atrocities, mass disappearances and human rights violations. Recognizing they would be the first to be prosecuted, they had a vested interest in promoting forgetting (ICTJ, 2014).

The Taif Agreement and the General Amnesty Law enabled political elites to enforce collective amnesia and strengthen their hold on political and economic positions and institutions (Jaquemet, 2009). And while the ruling political leaders that were produced by the war were occupied whitewashing their crimes, the civil population feared renewed violence. After 15 years of suffering and wishing for the fighting to stop, the Lebanese population did not try to challenge the settlement. Thus, the civil peace was "imposed on the ruins of justice" under the guardianship of a system that did not respect justice or human rights (Abou Jaoude, 2017). By being more concerned about forgetting rather than remembering, the peace process in Lebanon prevented the country from confronting its war-time past, punishing human-rights violence and prosecuting those responsible (Knudsen, 2005). Due to this creation of a "culture of impunity" (Abou Jaoude, 2017, p. 6), there was no enabling environment in post-war Lebanon, neither physically nor psychologically, for collective and individual reconciliation (Bennett, 2013).

Many of the reasons for the precarious peacebuilding process in Lebanon can be found internally in the country's inability to confront its war-time past. However, there are also regional and international dimensions that need to be considered. The 15 years of civil war were followed by 15 years of Syrian tutelage. The Syrian regime had little interest in the reconciliation of the Lebanese factions, seeking instead to influence and manipulate political and social processes to maintain control over Lebanon. It suppressed truth-finding initiatives, fearing that such results might reveal atrocities that had taken place in Lebanon under the implication of Syrian forces (Knudsen, 2005). Additionally, Israel ignored all calls for withdrawal, while Hezbollah refused to disarm, arguing the need for its resistance against the Israeli occupation (Knudsen, 2005).

4.2 Legacies of the War

The fragmentation of the Lebanese society is deeply rooted in ethnic and religious divisions. These issues remain highly volatile in the current post-war context as sectarianism, distrust and suspicion between various Lebanese groups continue to influence social cohesion and the process of sustainable peace. The war still affects the present through incendiary rhetoric, sectarian confrontations and localized battles. Nagle (2019) describes how the key belligerents manipulated and constructed ethno-religious identities and rivalries to pursue strategic self-interests leaving deep cleavages along communal lines in the Lebanese society. The country was unable to undertake comprehensive social, economic and political reforms in its post-conflict period; thus, issues were rather downplayed, disguised or deflected (Knudsen, 2005). Imposed amnesia accompanied with a lack of justice, reconciliation and institutional reform resulted in a setting of "negative peace" (see 2.2), as the Lebanese post-war setting was relying on the mere non-occurrence of violence, while dealing with the past was never fully addressed (Bou Khaled, 2018).

What hinders a free, public debate about the war is the circumstance that large parts of the Lebanese society continue to live within sectarian confines. "Sectarian divisions and patterns of sociability, as well as the physical division of the country into neighbourhoods, areas and villages along sectarian lines, has in effect reproduced skewed historiographies of the war" (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012, p.15). The legacy of the Lebanese civil war reinforced confessional cleavages and simultaneously failed to acknowledge victims and hold perpetrators of atrocities accountable, resulting in injustice, unspoken suffering and deviating sectarian narratives about the war.

The lack of justice and responsibility not only referred to the political elites, but also to communal and individual levels. Categories of victims and perpetrators were fluid as former neighbours became enemies during the twists and turns of the war. "Everyone knew that the war, at least in part, was a sectarian war with an unjust outcome, in the sense that unconvicted war criminals still walked the streets of Beirut as well as the corridors of parliament" (Haugbolle, 2010, p. 72). At the same time, it was also widely understood that this settlement was the precondition for the end of large-scale violence. This contradiction made it even more challenging to address the violent past and make sense of the war. The difficulty to construct a narrative about the civil war is reflected in the dimensions of memory in Lebanon. A study by Aboultaif and Tabar (2019) concluded that in the absence of national

narratives, Lebanese communal groups have produced their versions of collective memory. A weak and fragile collective-national memory that is understood to be shared between Lebanese is opposed by strong communal remembrance in the form of narrow sectarian memory.

One aspect that is closely related to a lack of shared national memory is that there is relatively little public discussion of the past and no shared narrative regarding the civil war. In 2001 an attempt to initiate a history textbook that would be acceptable to all confessional groups failed due to a missing consensus over a common narrative about the civil war (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012). The result was not endorsed, which meant that the different groups continued to teach and learn from different narrations that each include their own particular bias (Sriram, 2010). State-sponsored amnesia coexists with highly politicised narratives of the war that are at the centre of sectarian identities. Due to the intricacy of the Lebanese civil war, it is understandable that its heritage is so complex and agreeing on a common official version seems hardly possible. There is no consensus on how the war started, some arguing that it was imposed by external actors, while others claim the growing imbalanced in representation of minority and majority groups had sparked the violence (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012).

For the ruling political elites that emerged from the war, disclosing the truth about their own crimes in history books or commemorations was out of the question. The Lebanese State continues to censor films, documentaries and other artistic interpretations that address the legacy of the war under the pretext of maintaining civil peace and preventing sectarian tensions (Abou Jaoude, 2017). The tale that "digging up the past will reignite the civil war" is still being repeated and spread (Jaquement, 2009, p. 75). Thus, the challenge of dealing with the past is not only to dissolve amnesia, but to "find a way to accommodate existing peace, reconciliation and memory initiatives – in art, culture and civil society – with the political and social powerbrokers in the country" (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012, p.15).

5 Psychosocial Peacebuilding – The Issue of the Disappeared in Lebanon

This chapter contain the results of applying the theories on psychosocial wellbeing and peacebuilding, which were described above, to a case study. The case study focuses on the disappeared persons, who have vanished during the war or in the post-conflict period of Lebanon.

Based on literature review, this case study will start with an introduction on the case, including background information and a brief historical overview one how the issues of disappearances was dealt with by the Lebanese government in the post-conflict area after 1990. It will provide a summary on non-governmental and civil society movements that address the missing and disappeared, will be given, including the organisations' aims and achievements. This first introductory part of the case study aims at helping to understand and interpret the findings of the subsequent content analysis with regard to the particular context in Lebanon.

In a second step, the case study will zoom in on the efforts of the families of the missing and disappeared, as well as their participation in and collaboration with civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These findings are based on primary and secondary data, which were selected based on a mapping exercise and analysed following the steps of qualitative content analysis, as outlined in detail in the methodology chapter of this thesis (see 1.2.2).

5.1 Who are the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared in Lebanon?

There are several thousand people who are missing and forcibly disappeared in Lebanon. Most of them were civilians and went missing during the civil war, while disappearances continued to occur after 1975 under Syrian and Israeli occupation, but on a smaller scale. The practice of enforced disappearance was systematically used during the war by numerous Lebanese and Palestinian militias as well as Syrian, Lebanese and Israeli troops (Lebanese Centre for Human Rights [CLDH], 2008). Apart from kidnappings, other people are thought to have disappeared as the result of mass killings, immediate executions and successive rounds of violence.

The Lebanese government issued a report in March 1992, declaring that in the course of the war, 17,415 people went missing, "among whom 13,968 were kidnapped and presumed dead" (Human Rights Watch, 2003, p. 1). Other estimates put the number between

2,000 and 10,000 arguing that the database contains duplications and does not account for people who have returned (van Ommering & el-Soussi, 2017). While others argue that it might be higher, because families were often afraid to report disappearances to the police. However high the exact number, the widespread phenomenon of missing persons undoubtedly left scars on the Lebanese society and continues to shape the lives of friends and families.

The three main reasons behind the abductions were to hold the kidnapped persons as bargaining chips, who could be exchanged for other hostages from the opposing side, for financial gain through ransom money and for strategies of revenge and terror to “create pure religious areas” (CLDH, 2008, p. 11). Forcible disappearances mainly targeted Lebanese and Palestinian civilians and took place along political or sectarian lines. Among them were recognised political, public, academic and religious figures, but the majority were regular citizens from all levels of society. Typically, they were abducted from their homes or at checkpoints (Comaty, 2019).

It is likely that the majority of victims were executed inside Lebanon and buried in mass graves across the country or vanished in the Mediterranean Sea. Others were handed over to Syrian or Israeli authorities and being killed or transferred to prisons of the two countries (van Ommering & el Soussi, 2017). Throughout the war, both the Israeli and Syrian army and intelligence services secretly detained people, denying their imprisonment and withholding information from the families about the fate of their missing relatives (ICTJ, 2013). It remained difficult to pursue information about, or justice for the disappeared after the end of the war, as the subsequent Syrian occupation fought any attempts at shedding light on the fate of the missing persons (Sriram, 2010).

5.2 The Governments’ Failure to address the Issue of the Disappeared

The General Amnesty Law No. 84/91, as well as the Taif Agreement, did not speak of the victim of the war. Consequently, they did not take positions regarding the forcibly disappeared and their families. Blocking the prosecution of perpetrators, the amnesty law put a hold on efforts of the families and relatives to seek justice and accountability (CLDH, 2008). The grievances of the families have not only been muted by the amnesty law, but by a general political and legal refusal to investigate and recognise the legacy of the past. Furthermore, the government actively tried to close the file of the missing in 1991 by

announcing in there were no more people held captive by former militias (van Ommering & el Soussi, 2017).

The first official attempt to address the issues of disappearances was in 1995, when the government issued a law to shorten the time period required to legally declare a missing person as dead. This Law 434 did not include any procedures for installing investigations to determine the fate of the missing persons, thus the vast majority of relatives considered this an attempt to buy off their silence (CLDH, 2008). It was interpreted as pressuring the families into pronouncing their missing members dead themselves, which was a necessary legal precondition to gain access to inheritances or retirement pensions and the ability for re-marriage. The law ignored that the most fundamental claim of the families was the right to know (Haugbolle, 2010).

Under the pressure of the families, a commission of inquiry was set up in 2000 with a mandate to uncover the fate of the missing persons. The design of the commission itself raised questions about the credibility of the investigations. The mandate was given for a timeframe of only three months and the commission was comprised of members of the security forces (CLDH, 2008). The commission looked into approximately 2000 cases and concluded by presuming all of the missing to be dead. The report stated that taking and killing hostages was a crime committed by all conflict parties and disposing of the bodies in the sea was common practice (Jaquement, 2009). The commission's report was only one-and-a-half pages long and identified many mass graves across the country with remains of the missing. However, neither follow-up investigations were conducted to identify the remains, nor did the Lebanese government provide clarification on how they came to their conclusions (Kovras, 2017). In response to the vocal reaction by the families of the missing to the failures of the first commission, a second was commission was established in 2001. The mandate of the second commission focussed on investigating the fate of those cases where information suggested that they were still alive. This commission failed to publish a report at all and was unable to trace the whereabouts of any disappeared person (Sriram, 2010). After the withdrawal of the Syrian troops in 2005, a third commission was established. It was a Syrian-Lebanese bilateral commission with the aim to examine the fate of detainees and forcibly disappeared persons in Syria. However, these efforts were ineffective and did not bring forward any information on the missing person in Syria (Kovras, 2017).

Instead of addressing the rights and needs of the families of disappeared persons, the government shielded political elites from public debates that would put them in connection with their previous acts of violence (ICTJ, 2014). The narrative that revealing the truth could revive old hostilities and lead to the outbreak of new violence was repeated and distributed by successive governments. This process of systematically undermining attempts to deal with the past and address the issue of missing persons was described by Kovras (2017, p. 131) as "institutionalized silence" in post-conflict Lebanon.

5.3 The Struggles of the Families of the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared

In the face of lacking responsiveness from the side of the Lebanese government, three committees of the families of missing persons have been founded: The Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon (the Committee henceforth), Support of Lebanese in Detention and Exile (SOLIDE), and the Follow-up Committee of the Lebanese Detainees in Israeli Prisons (CLDH, 2008).

The Committee was established in 1982, as hundreds of families followed a radio call of Wadad Halwani, whose husband went missing, in which she addressed other relatives of abducted persons to join her in a march to demand government support. From her work grew the Committee, which marked one of the first instances of women actively taking to the streets in protest of the war (Sfeir, 2019). While many of the relatives presume that their missing loved ones are dead, their main interest is the exhumation, identification and return or repatriation of the remains. Since its inception, the Committee has been constantly protesting and campaigning to pressure Lebanese governments, ex-militia leaders, political elites and the international community to reveal or help in addressing the fate of the missing people. While the Committee is politically independent, it is generally perceived as close to leftist and Palestinian groups, whose relatives were abducted by Israeli forces and their Lebanese proxies (Jaquement, 2009).

In 1990, the association SOLIDE was founded, which addresses the cause of victims of enforced disappearances primarily at the hands of Syrian intelligence. This group was created when the practice of disappearances by Syrian forces and their proxies in Lebanon intensified during the period of Syrian occupation. The group mobilised around returning their missing relatives from prisons and detention camps in Syria (Kovras, 2017). While SOLIDE deals with arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and torture committed by all actors of the war, including Lebanese militia and foreign actors, the group focuses on

human rights violations of the Syrian army in particular. The Follow-up Committee for the Support of the Lebanese Detained in Israeli Prisons was established in 1999 and later on shifted to become the Khiam Rehabilitation Center, which offers support to former detainees of the Khiam detention centre in which Israel imprisoned opponents in occupied south Lebanon (Comaty, 2019).

The committees of the families, between which there has historically been a political divide, have continued to vocally demand information, despite bearing harassments and threats. During the decades, there has been a fragmentation of the movements of the families of the disappeared, due to political and confessional legacies of the civil war. In some cases, the disappeared persons from one association were presumed to be responsible for the disappearances from the other (Jaquement, 2009). However, since the late 2000s, the two main groups, the Committee and SOLIDE, have gradually managed to overcome internal divisions and have designed common strategies and objectives, with the support of other NGOs and human rights organisations (Kovras, 2017). Despite historical differences, the main aims of the committees of the families of the disappeared are to know the truth about the fate and the whereabouts of their relatives. If they are alive and detained inside or outside of Lebanon, they demand their release. If they are dead, the families claim their remains in order to bury and mourn their loved ones.

5.4 The Role of Civil Society in addressing the Case of the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared

5.4.1 Needs and Demands of the Families

Even though the demands and needs of the families and civil society organisations have evolved since the end of the war, some fundamental aspects can be observed.

5.4.1.1 Socio-political Demands

When looking into the goals and demands that the relatives of the missing and their collaborating partner organisations express, it becomes clear that they have slightly shifted throughout the years. The families, which started mobilising during the civil war, initially demanded the immediate and unconditional release of all persons held by militias and troops. Throughout and after the war, they organised sit-ins, press conferences and protests to demand the return of their loved ones and the end of the practice of kidnapping. Obviously,

these requests are still essential to date, however, additional objectives were raised after the war. These objectives differ depending on whether the relatives assume their loved ones are still alive or have deceased and whether the abducted person remained in Lebanon or was transferred to Syria or Israel. SOLIDE, as well as other families that believe their missing relatives were kidnapped and imprisoned in Syria, demand that the Syrian authorities publicly acknowledge the detention of Lebanese citizens and to release a list of all Lebanese detainees that were arrested during or after the civil war. Furthermore, they request the immediate release of all arbitrarily held persons and the repatriation of the remains of those who were executed or have died in Syria. Under the supervision of the ICRC, Israel has handed over almost 200 remains of Lebanese citizens in recent years. However, there are still persons who have not been accounted for and are believed to be imprisoned or buried on Israeli territory. Their relatives continue to call for information, release and the repatriation of the human remains of their loved ones.

Despite the differences in the circumstances and the consequences of the disappearances, the demands of families, friends and civil society organisations are converging regarding "the right to know". The essence of this request is captured in the short documentary *Neither Dead Nor Alive* published by Lebanese NGO Act for the Disappeared (ACT). In the movie, Wadad Halwani, initiator and leader of the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon insists on the right to know.

> *If they are still alive, tell us where they are and when you will return them to us. If they are dead, tell us where they died and bring us back their bones, their remains, what is left of their clothes so that we can bury them properly.* (ACT, 2014).

Since the Lebanese authorities either rejected, delayed or manipulated concrete and meaningful measures to fulfil the families' right to know, the committees and organisations continue their efforts to pressure the authorities. One goal of these efforts is the adoption of a law that meets international standards and best practices allowing the establishment of an independent body with the mandate to investigate and clarify the fate of the missing persons in Lebanon. Moreover, they want to take the state into its duty to implement measures of reparation, including compensation, rehabilitation and satisfaction through the expression of apologies to repair the harm suffered by the families.

Highlighting the state's responsibility of identification and exhumation, the families and organisations demand that the authorities investigate mass graves on Lebanese soil in

order to identify the remains of missing persons. In this regard, the examples of other countries are put forward, such as Chile, Morocco, Bosnia, Argentina and Cyprus, to argue that the forensic investigations of identification and exhumations are still feasible after years. Additionally, several organisations stress that the Lebanese government already holds a lot of information regarding the location of mass graves. The commission of inquiry of 2000 identified many sites around the country, even naming three mass graves in particular. The families and organisations call for the authorities to establish a database including DNA samples of family members in order to identify human remains to uncover the fate of the disappeared.

5.4.1.2 Needs of Individuals and Families

The overarching need of the families and friends of the disappeared in Lebanon, which was stressed by all organisations and highlighted by all three interview respondents, was the need for truth and the right to know. This need is mirrored in slogans and titles of campaigns and petitions that demand the right to know for the families. The wish to hear the truth about the fate of the missing loved ones has been expressed and mentioned by families as a priority over other interests, such as compensation or punishment of perpetrators. The primary need for truth was also underscored in two needs assessments, conducted by CLDH in 2008 and ICRC in 2013. The testimony of Maguy, a mother who had been searching for her son for decades, reveals the suffering of losing a loved one in circumstances of complete uncertainty.

> *And till now I ask about my son, but I don't know if he is dead or alive. They say the mothers of the dead sleeps, but the mother of the lost doesn't.* (ACT, 2012a).

People are deeply impacted, both emotionally and psychologically by the disappearances, which affects their wellbeing and their relations to others. This highlights the need for psychosocial support of the concerned individuals and families. Moreover, families might experience hostilities and intimidation by those responsible for the disappearance or emotional isolation within their communities. For some, the families of the disappeared are unwelcomed reminders of the unresolved past.

In addition to trauma and psychosocial distress, families endure financial distress, as well as legal and administrative issues. In many cases, the disappeared person also meant a loss of income, particularly if the person used to be the primary breadwinner of the family

or when families had to bear multiple disappearances. At the same time, many families incurred considerable costs for the search of the missing person. The testimonies and stories of the families show that some became subjected to false information, blackmail and extortion. Exploiting the vulnerability of the families, some people claimed to be informants or middlemen and received large sums for supposedly being able to trace and return the missing person, while leaving the families in debt. Moreover, a lack of recognition of the legal status of a disappeared person, complicated legal and administrative procedures and further reinforced financial hardship. These included the access to bank accounts, property and pensions of the missing person. The situation was even more precarious for women whose husbands were abducted and were confronted with highly patriarchal structures of the state and confessional systems. They experienced discrimination in employment, social protection, family and property rights. In many cases, women could not obtain identity documents for their children or child custody and were subordinated to the authority of a male family member after their husbands had disappeared. The need for financial and administrative support is still acute today for many families and requires acknowledgement by considering gender-based discrimination and demands.

Other important components are justice and the acknowledgment of suffering, which are closely aligned with the needs that have been described above. To deal with the suffering in the context of disappearances, the families expressed the importance of receiving acknowledgement on both the government and societal level.

> *It is like the persons and their families are being repeatedly abandoned and forgotten, you know. Not only the act of abduction is painful, but also everything that happens afterwards. The government that was partly responsible for the kidnappings closed their eyes as if the missing person has never even existed.* (Respondent 2, 2020).

With regard to authorities, the families need financial and legal support to learn the truth about the fate and the whereabouts of their missing person and to be able to cope with economic and administrative hardships. At the same time, the issue needs to be addressed and discussed in the national discourse. To overcome isolation and marginalisation of the families of the disappeared, their suffering needs to be acknowledged within communal and societal structures.

5.4.2 Addressing Governmental Shortcomings

The reports, documentaries and testimonies of the committees and organisations include numerous critical perspectives on how the government has dealt with the case of the missing, particularly in the post-war period.

5.4.2.1 Imposed Post-War Amnesia

When the committees of families already started mobilising during the war, they were confronted with threats, bombings and fighting militias around them. However, there struggle continued in post-war Lebanon.

> *So during peace, we faced different challenges, we were ignored, threatened. It is not that people didn't care about us, they didn't want us, didn't want to see us, didn't want anything that reminded them of the war.* (Lebanon Support & Civil Society Knowledge Centre, 2017).

Both the General Amnesty Law and the Taif Agreement were repeatedly mentioned by the family committees and NGOs when referring to the way in which Lebanese authorities dealt with the case of the missing persons. There is a general consensus that these post-war agreements paved the way for the impunity of political elites and for the closure of the file of the missing. Neither the agreement nor the law had a word for the victims and families of enforced disappearance. They also did not oblige militias to provide information regarding violations and kidnappings they committed during the war or to release any prisoners they were possibly holding. The amnesty law applies to crimes committed by all militias and armed groups during the years of the war and includes kidnapping and hostage-taking. Due to this law, many of the former militia leaders, who were also responsible for abductions, were able to hold public offices in the post-war period and at the present time. Therefore, the amnesty law was often described by the NGOs as "state sponsored amnesia."

> *I think the case [of the disappeared] is somehow symbolic. A society of oblivion forgetting about their disappeared? (Respondent 2, 2020).*

The denial of enforced disappearances perfectly aligned with the ignorance regarding other human rights violations committed during the war. The various measures that the government adopted after the war were described by the families and organisations as aiming at closing, but not resolving the issue of the missing. One example that was repeatedly

mentioned was the Law of 1995, also described as the "law of silence." The law as well as the conclusions of the 2000 inquiry commission attempted to trade the truth about the fate of the relatives for measures facilitating the material aspects of disappearance. Such facilities were only granted under the condition that the families officially declared the missing person deceased. Thus, the vast majority of relatives considered this an attempt to buy of their silence. It was interpreted as pressuring the families into pronouncing their missing members dead themselves, which was a necessary legal precondition to gain access to inheritances or retirement pensions and the ability for re-marriage. This ignored that the most fundamental claim of the families was the need to learn about the fate of their loved ones.

Under the pressure of the mobilising families, the first commission of inquiry was established, which raised hopes among the families that their demands were finally acknowledged. However, neither the timespan nor the composition of the commission did justice to the thousands of disappeared persons. The commission declared all missing persons dead and urged the families to come to terms with the truth and accept the loss of their loved ones. The whole inquiry process was called into question a few months later when 54 of the presumed dead were released from Syrian prisons. The two following commissions also failed to uncover the fate of the missing persons. The inefficiency of the commissions raised serious doubts about whether the authorities' intentions really were to uncover the truth about the disappeared. In multiple reports of NGOs, it was concluded, that these attempts, and especially the second and third commissions, were merely excuses for the government to prevent further investigation and to cover the fate of the under the haze of amnesia.

5.4.2.2 Top-Down Peacebuilding

When turning to the case of the missing in Lebanon, the conclusion can be drawn that the peacebuilding efforts in the post-war period have failed to address the needs and demands of those who were left behind by disappearances. The myth that has been promoted by the government – everyone is both victim and perpetrator – has not solved the issue, but rather established a status quo that obstructs the search for truth. This silence is preventing closure for the families of the disappeared and hinders the society from dealing with the past.

> *In Lebanon, the saving closure that one reaches after having labored to overcome a trauma has not taken place (...) By sealing ourselves inside silence, we have trapped ourselves in the trauma of the past. In Lebanon, we have "forgotten" without forgetting.* (CLDH, 2008).

The taboo of addressing the past of the civil war, as well as the fate of the disappeared, was described in the documentary *Neither Dead Nor Alive* by ACT in 2014. The movie explains that the misconception that bringing up the topic would revive tensions between communities was fuelled by political leaders, who granted themselves amnesty for their crimes during the war. This narrative made it difficult to achieve constructive dialogue about the past. After reaching the Taif Agreement, the government claimed that forgetting would enable the country to leave behind its violent past and reach reconciliation. On the contrary, the peacebuilding process was established without considering what was needed at the societal and communal level, so that political elites and former warlords reconciled only among themselves.

5.4.3 Impact of Large-Scale Disappearances on the Social Fabric

When looking into the effects that resulted from thousands of disappearances, the implications are not only described on the individual or family level, but also put into the context of long-term effects on the larger societal level.

5.4.3.1 Fragile Peace

> *The thing is that at the end of the war they wanted us to forget about what happened and they gave maybe more importance to the idea of civic peace. And that if you want stability, just forget about justice. Forget about truth. And then we realized that this wasn't helpful. So today we didn't reach peace. Neither justice.* (Abou Jaoude, 2020).

The notion that it feels "as if the war has never ended" has both been mentioned in testimonies of families of the disappeared as well as in reports by NGOs that were trying to describe the long-term effects of large-scale disappearances on the society. Former militia leaders that had found their way into the government never issued a public apology to the victims of enforced disappearance and their relatives. The lack of acknowledgment also meant that the Lebanese state never fulfilled its responsibility towards them. This silence and lack of recognition is an obstacle that prevents the society from overcoming the atrocities

of the war. After the war had officially ended, many families had hoped that they would be able to obtain the truth about their missing loved ones. However, the post-war efforts failed to reconcile with the past and to establish a new social contract resulting in a fragile state of peace.

> *There is no doubt that we are victims in, both, times of war and peace. In war, because it was war and people were still being kidnapped, but in peacetime, we remained victims because* we never had peace. (Lebanon Support & Civil Society Knowledge Centre, 201).

Even decades after the war, many wounds are not healed, preventing the country from facing the future. The truth on the fate of the missing and disappeared has not been found, even though the truth is not only a moral necessity for the affected families, but it is a precondition for any peace initiative. On the contrary, each community in Lebanon constructed its own narrative of the war - and the disappearances - leading to opposing standpoints and a further deepening of the divisions within society. The post-war authorities have failed to meet their responsibilities to adopt a common past and to proceed with the obligation to remember. In this regard, the uncertainty about the case of the forcibly disappeared should be understood as an indicator for failing to deal with the past on a larger scale. Lebanon's post-war model "gave birth to a fragile coexistence and precarious civil peace that continuously gets disrupted by new rounds of violence" (ACT, n.d.).

5.4.3.2 Social Cohesion

When recalling the testimonies of Lebanese that have lived through the war, it becomes evident that the fact that perpetrators were never held accountable, had impacted the fabric of society. This impact is not limited to political elites but is also felt on the communal level in where former enemies, victims and perpetrators continued to live in close proximity and interdependence. Sometimes, the kidnappers lived in the same village as the family of the person whom they abducted. In a report of 2014, the international NGO Impunity Watch portrayed the testimonies of families that had to endure disappearances, while sometimes even knowing who was behind their suffering.

> *...most of us know who kidnapped our children and relatives. We know who controlled the neighbourhoods and who intimidated us. My husband was kidnapped from under the house in 1986.* (Impunity Watch, 2014).

Consequently, large-scale disappearances throughout the country have fostered mistrust and divisions between and among communities that existed during the war. Imposed silence and forced reconciliation left little room for individual or collective healing. In this way, even the younger generations, that have not been living through the war, carry the divisions that continued to exist after the war. The historical myths about the civil war are transmitted across generations and are regularly activated by political figures, which provides a fertile ground for mistrust and conflict.

5.4.4 Peacebuilding Efforts of the Families and Civil Society Organisations

The shortcomings of the governmental measures that were highlighted by the families and NGOs, found entrance into their efforts of building peace and foster reconciliation at the grassroots level. There has been a variety of protests, mobilisation, campaigns, publications and assessments regarding the fate of the disappeared and the demands and needs of their relatives. They were able to attract journalists, academics and artists to support their cause. Many of the civil society's efforts lasted over several years, were carried out by a consortium of civil society organizations and addressed a multitude of needs. With a specific focus on peacebuilding efforts, the sample of initiatives that were viewed in this case study, can be summed up in the categories that are described below.

5.4.4.1 Dealing with the Past and Collective Memorialisation

A variety of initiatives can be grouped under the framework of dealing with the past and reconciliation. These efforts are also mirrored in the slogan of the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon *tenzaker la ma ten'ad'* ("to remember so that is does not repeat itself"). Many of the initiatives aim at creating spaces and possibilities for dialogue and reconciliation between different communities and confessions. These encounters allow the participants to share their experiences and views on the civil war. Different perspectives on historical conflicts are discussed in order to work towards an increased understanding of the other. An example of such efforts are intercommunity dialogues that focus on raising awareness about aspects of a joint history to encourage a mutual acknowledgement of suffering and needs and to achieve common understandings of a peaceful future. One of the interview respondents stressed that this undertaking is not always easy. While it is necessary to push for a change of attitudes and approaches, that are still largely shaped along sectarian lines, one must be aware that

members of such communities might react defensive. Otherwise, these efforts might further drive the division within civil society or harm the cause of the families of the disappeared by stirring up defensive or hostile reactions.

> *Some people do not know anything other than their sectarian identity. It is important to address sectarian divisions in Lebanon. But you need to be careful. You can't simply strip people from something and don't offer anything in return. People need something they can identify with. So here you can really see why there is a need for a shared national identity.* (Respondent 1, 2020).

This quote of one of the interview partners, who works with an international NGO, stresses the importance of being aware of sectarian sensitivities when aiming at dealing with the past. Other efforts from the civil society seek to preserve memories and testimonies of past events of the civil war in general and on the fate of the missing and disappeared in particular. Those forms of memorialisation come in different kinds of cultural programmes and events, such as theatrical productions, movies, TV spots, songs, books and artistic installations that aim at encouraging debate on the war. An example of an artistic form of engaging with the subject of disappearance, is the work *Waynoun?* ("Where Are They?") by Nada Sehnaoui. In 2006, the Lebanese artists cooperated with the Committee and produced an art installation in which she incorporated 3000 names and 400 photographs of disappeared persons in Downtown Beirut.

Another form of initiatives is comprised of online archival collections and documentation. In 2008, UMAM Documentation and Research established *Missing*, a virtual platform on which the organisation collected and displayed names, pictures as well as the dates of birth and disappearance of missing persons. The collection which was both published online and exhibited in multiple locations across the country, included information on hundreds of women and men from diverse confessional, geographical and political backgrounds, all of whom disappeared during the civil war. The project sought to foster public awareness and visibility of the fate of the missing persons and the impact of enforced disappearance on the Lebanese society.

Fushat Amal ("Space for Hope"), an interactive digital space, was initiated by ACT in 2015 to spread individual stories of the thousands of persons who went missing during and after the war. In the public sphere, these individuals have often been reduced to their status of victimhood or the mere "number 17,000." The initiative collected information about

the missing persons and dedicated a space for each of them in the form of a digital memorial to reclaim their identity as part of the Lebanese society. The Space for Hope seeks to collectively recognise and honour the lives of the missing. It reaffirms the right to know their fate and whereabouts, while building bridges between the families of the disappeared and the society. Additionally, the organisation created two booklets in which the stories of the missing persons were published. Apart from providing data on the circumstances of their disappearances, the texts were written in the first-person narrative and included personal information about their lives and their families. All the stories finished with the sentence "Do not let my story end here," which aimed at giving a voice to the disappeared and breaking the silence that was imposed on their fate.

5.4.4.2 The Right to Know – Challenging Amnesia

Moreover, the families and organisations turned to legal processes and argumentations that could oblige the Lebanese authorities to reveal the truth about the missing and challenge post-war amnesia. One strategy was to pressure the government to disclose the fate of the disappeared by invoking Article 2.3 of the General Amnesty Law, which stated exceptions to the amnesty. Among these are continuous crimes, which refer to crimes that are replicated or ongoing or committed after the law went into effect. Civil society groups argue that the Lebanese state must acknowledge enforced disappearance as a continuous crime as defined in the ICPPED. Even though Lebanon has signed this international convention in 2007, it has not yet ratified it.

On the 4th March of 2014, the *Shura Council*, one of the highest judicial authorities in Lebanon, annulled a previous decision by the Cabinet's Secretariat that denied the families of the disappeared full access to the results of the investigations of the government's commissions of inquiry. This landmark decision was a result of years of strenuous efforts by the committees of the families, including petitions and campaigns. According to the council, its ruling stemmed from acknowledging the right to know as a natural right derived from other rights, such as the right to life, the prohibition of torture, the right to an appropriate burial as well as the right to family reunion.

> *I think the biggest difference we made was in 2014, the historical decision that was taken by the Constitutional Council, this was a big achievement, when the judiciary stood against the political power, giving us the right to know.* (Lebanon Support & Civil Society Knowledge Centre, 2017).

The families and NGOs largely perceived this decision as a breakthrough for the cause of the disappeared, as it was the first time in Lebanese law that the right to know was acknowledged, and thus established as a legal principle.

5.4.4.3 Remedy and Justice – The Law 105

In 2010, the Committee and SOLIDE began to work on a law outlining an independent commission to investigate the fate of the missing and the process of exhumation of mass graves. A consortium of Lebanese and international NGOs, as well as Lebanese legal and political actors, contributed to the draft law, which was presented to the Lebanese Parliament for the creation of a national commission in 2012.

While the efforts of establishing a National Commission were still ongoing, the ICRC launched the Ante Disappearance Data Collection Program to collect information and biological reference samples from the families of the missing since 2012. The program aims at developing a databank to be able to identify human remains during future exhumation and identification processes. ICRC declared to store the data until it can be handed over to an independent body with the mandate to clarify the fate of the missing persons in Lebanon.

After several rounds of advocacy efforts and lobbying, the decision on the draft law was long-awaited and finally, on November 12, 2018, the *Law 105 Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons* was ratified. The Articles 37-40 of the law mention punitive provisions, that criminalise instigator, perpetrator, accomplice, or accessory in cases of enforced disappearance. The articles were discussed controversially during the parliamentary voting session on the law. Their inclusion in the law came as a surprise for the families and NGOs, as criminal prosecution was not mentioned in the draft law that they previously designed. While many NGOs welcomed this decision, others feared a political instrumentalization. Some of the families assumed that the criminal penalties could thwart the right to know, as the risk of prosecution could negatively impact the willingness of perpetrators and accomplices to reveal the truth on the fate of the missing.

The key feature of the law is Chapter III, which stipulates the establishment of an impartial and independent National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared in Lebanon. The ratification of the law was an important step towards fulfilling the right to know of the families along the lines of the State Council's decision from 2014. These milestones were a result of the steadfast commitment of national and international civil

society actors and constituted a major step towards confronting the issue of Lebanon's missing on social, legal and economic dimensions. However, the implementation of the law has only been achieved gradually. I took the Ministry of Justice until 2019 to nominate 10 candidates to serve on the National Commission, which was then only recently approved by the Council of Ministers. In June 2020, almost a year and a half after passing the Law 105, a diverse group of experts were appointed. As stipulated in Article 10 of the law, the National Commissions is comprised of legal and academic human rights experts, forensic doctors, activists from the civil society and representatives of the families of the disappeared. The appointment of the Commission in June 2020 came as a surprise to some of the members of the civil society, as the country is struggling with a deep and worsening economic crisis and with the Covid-19 health pandemic that had spread around the globe since early that year.

> *I really didn't believe that there is a political will to address it. Then suddenly, this decision and of course, we need to test it because we don't know so far if it's, you know, something they did just to satisfy the international community or there's a genuine willingness to address the issue and really start the investigation and giving the resources to the Commission, because without resources, they cannot start their work.* (Abou Jaoude, 2020).

This statement of one of the interview respondents, which was given shortly after the Commission was appointed, reveals the genuine scepticism towards the will of the state to implement the law, which results from the numerous occasions of the past in which the government did not deliver what it had promised.

> *However, this commission is a purely humanitarian body meant to give answers to thousands of families who have been waiting for decades. The commission must move forward, regardless of the current crisis; we cannot wait any longer to heal their wounds.* (ICTJ, 2020).

It is the government's responsibility to provide the necessary resources and independence to the Commission as a precondition to fulfil its mandate and investigate the fate of the disappeared, impartially and free of political interference.

5.4.5 Impact of Disappearances on the Wellbeing of Relatives

The testimonies and reports that were published by civil society actors portray multiple dimensions of human suffering that the relatives of the disappeared experience as individuals and within their relations to family and community members. While the issue of the missing in Lebanon has been stressed in its connection to political and social processes of the post-war period, it also had a strong emotional and psychological impact on the well-being of those affected.

5.4.5.1 Prolonged Trauma

Unresolved enforced disappearance bears two forms of suffering. First, the victims of abduction are deprived of their rights and may be subjected to torture, execution or arbitrary detention. Second, their families are left behind in a state between hope and despair, wondering and waiting for news about their loved one that may never come.

This suffering is continuous and can only end when the fate of the missing person has been uncovered, which is why this state of uncertainty has been described as one of a prolonged trauma. One mother of a disappeared person describes this with the feeling of "holding a burning coal in my hand. It's been hurting me for 15 years, but I cannot let go of it" (CLDH, 2008, p. 6). So contrary to what political elites in Lebanon have claimed, the issue does not belong to the past.

> *What people from the outside don't get is that these families can't just simply let go. They can't. Even after years or decades. It is not as if the person had died. So the families continue to suffer, it's really something like torture. It is even mentioned as a form of torture.* (Respondent 1, 2020).

This understanding of prolonged trauma as a form of torture refers to multiple recognitions, that expressed the right to truth as a protection guarantee to the relatives of the missing persons from psychological torture, for example, the UN Human Rights Committee in 1992 and the Commission on Human Rights of the UN Economic and Social Council in 2006. The notion of continuous suffering as a form of torture can be found in multiple of the viewed documents, in which the families and their supporters refer to "mental torture", "moral torture", "psychological torture" and "slow mental anguish."

5.4.5.2 Ambiguous Loss

In all the documents that addressed the psychosocial distress of the families, their suffering was described with reference to a state of uncertainty and ambiguity. In some of the reports and informational campaigns, the psychological concept of ambiguous loss was directly cited. For example, in the needs assessment of ICRC in 2013, it becomes evident that for a majority of the families, it remains impossible to reach emotional closure. They need to know what happened to their loved ones and the truth about the fate and the whereabouts of their relatives, even if their relatives had disappeared in the early 1970s or 1980s.

> *No matter how long a person has disappeared, time does not lessen the pain of a disappearance. How to cope? How can they grieve when there is no body to bury? How can these people move on if there if there is even a remote possibility that the missing person could be alive? (ACT, 2014).*

The ICRC concluded in its study that many of the families still believed that their missing relative could be alive or they were at least unsure about what happened. At the same time, a number of interview respondents stated that they realized that there was a high probability that their loved ones are dead. This illustrates, how the families have been wavering in a state of hope and despair for years and decades, which affected their wellbeing. Without information about their loved one, they cannot make sense of their situation to even begin to cope and are prevented from properly mourning.

Ambiguous loss is a struggle for all families, who have lost someone due to unclear circumstances across all countries. However, the Lebanese and international NGOs have stated that the way in which the case of the disappeared was handled in Lebanon, had contributed to a deepening of the emotional wounds of the families. The insufficient governmental efforts have added another layer of pain for the families. The token commissions of inquiry have hardly produced meaningful outcomes, if any, they raised and shattered the hopes of the families, time and again, leaving them with mental distress and anguish. The situation was further complicated by the role that foreign actors had played in the case of the disappeared during and after the war. Unwillingness from both Syrian and Israeli authorities to cooperate in uncovering the fate of the forcibly disappeared had contributed to decades of uncertainty.

5.4.5.3 Disturbed Grieving Process

The ambiguous loss of Lebanese families who are unaware of the fate of their loved ones finds its manifestation in the process of grieving. The relatives and members of Lebanese and international NGOs have illustrated this suffering by comparing it with the process of grieving over the death of a relative. Throughout the documents that have been viewed for this case study, it was repeatedly mentioned that the relatives of the missing do not have a place or possibility to mourn, unlike persons who were sure their loved ones have passed away.

> *Of course, everyone in Lebanon had paid a price in the war. So many people were killed by snipers, bombs and militias. I am not saying that this was not hard. But at least these families know what happened. They buried them and can visit the grave when they miss them.* (Respondent 2, 2020).

Without being sure what had happened, the relatives of the missing persons are unable to move forward with rebuilding their lives. The unresolved disappearances cause emotional and psychological distress for the families and lead to difficulties within their social environment. Headaches, sleep problems, nervousness, excessive worry, depressive modes, general fatigue and unhappiness were frequent issues that were mentioned by concerned persons. The many practical and administrative consequences of the disappearance, as well as the alternating hope, fear and disappointments, were stated as heavy burdens. Civil society organisations described effects on their relationship within their family and with social circles, such as neighbours and colleagues. At times, the search for the missing persons completely preoccupied the lives of parents, spouses and siblings, so that other relationships were neglected. The struggle of this balancing was captured in an interview with Miriam Al-Saeedi, whose son went missing in 1982 when he was 15 years old.

> *Al-Saeedi admits that Kassir "took with him some of his siblings' needs" and asks for their forgiveness for the times she had left them alone to go look for their brother. Today, she spends every possible moment with them and her grandchildren to make up for the lost time.* (ACT, 2012b).

While not all families reported that their social relations were negatively affected, some described feelings of guilt, shame, regret, social withdrawal and mistrust towards

others. These feelings were largely impacted by the way the community reacted to circumstances of the disappearances. Sometimes the families were shunned by other members of their community who did not understand their plight. In this context, it is striking that one example is mentioned several times within the organisations' reports and during the key informants’ interviews; wives of missing men faced particular difficulties and suspicion regarding their status of neither being wife nor widow. This behaviour was explained by the fact that Lebanese communities did not know how to deal with these women, whose status was largely pinned to a male guardian. This stigma can cause tensions within the community but also with the husband’s family. Moreover, some of the wives and other relatives reported social rejection, disrespect, stigmatisation and sometimes even harassment from members of their own or other communities.

5.4.6 Psychosocial Efforts of the Families and Civil Society Organisations

Impacts of unresolved trauma of losing a loved one due to unresolved circumstances are deep and longstanding. In the following, a summary of initiatives will be outlined, that were implemented by civil society organisations and aimed at providing relief and empowerment for the families of the disappeared.

5.4.6.1 Addressing Uncertainty and Ambiguity

The feeling of being trapped in an ambiguous state of not knowing, which was highlighted as an essential burden by the families, is reflected symbolically and practically in the civil society’s mobilisation and cultural programmes. Many titles and slogans of campaigns or artistic interpretations reference the notions of the in-between and the empty spaces that disappearances have left behind in families and communities. For example, the titles of the two initiatives *Neither Dead Nor Alive* and *Empty Chairs, Waiting Families* by ACT and ICRC exemplify the ambiguity of the families’ suffering. In the latter of the projects, the families expressed their suffering by painting memories of their loved ones on symbolic chairs.

Through measures of such kind, two different effects are achieved; acknowledging the empty spaces within the families, while at the same time portraying this suffering to people from the outside, who might have a hard time comprehending the particular suffering of unresolved disappearance. These efforts recognise and represent the neither-nor-status of family members of missing persons. Furthermore, the initiatives constitute a form of

memorialisation for the families by creating spaces and opportunities for remembering. In the absence of graveyards, these spaces, whether online or in the form of physical monuments, are important to honour members of society that have been missing. They can contribute to the visibility of the missing and to bridge the gaps between society and concerned families in order to reduce isolation and stigmatisation.

Moreover, consequences of ambiguous loss are considered to understand the families' needs and to conceptualise and implement initiatives in a trauma-sensitive way. This is illustrated, for instance, by the fact that both respondent 1 and 3 emphasized to act and communicate carefully with the families when addressing memorials.

> *We're very careful when we talk about memorial, because we don't know. So we don't talk about grief. We can't talk about mourning at this stage because you don't have evidence of their death.* (Abou Jaoude, 2020).

Online memorials and other places of remembrance can indeed be used as opportunities for mourning by the families of the forcibly disappeared. Others who are still hopeful that their loved ones are alive, can use these platforms to share their cause with the wider community.

5.4.6.2 Empowerment – Countering Victimisation

The civil society's mobilisation had an empowering energy for the families, as they could observe that their own actions have led to the milestones of the past year. Moreover, a growing number of international and Lebanese NGOs advocated for the cause of the missing and disappeared. All of the small steps that have been gradually taken over the years of struggle and mobilisation have contributed to countering victimisation and helplessness of the families of the disappeared. So, showing compassion and the mere recognition of the suffering by numerous groups and activists from different societal sectors, were empowering to the families as they could see they were not alone.

> *I think that the efforts of the families, their patience, their energy, is like the ant that digs in the rock, every couple of years, you only make one step ahead, because there are so many obstacles and rules, politically, confessionally, in the war, during peace, from the media, from society and politics.* (Lebanon Support & Civil Society Knowledge Centre, 2017).

Numerous initiatives from Lebanese and international NGOs aimed at empowerment through a variety of MHPSS mechanisms. Among those mechanisms are the initiation of support groups, in which concerned persons can share and exchange their experiences, and the facilitation of therapy sessions by mental health specialists. In 2015, for example, the national NGO ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality carried out art therapy sessions with families of the missing, with a focus on the gendered impact of the disappearances on women. Over a timespan of one year, sessions were carried out across five different areas in the country, in which participants discussed, planned and implemented a piece of art to commemorate their missing. Since 2015, *The Accompaniment Project*, a collaboration between ACT and ICRC, has been providing a psychosocial support network and holistic, wide-range assistance to families of the missing. The project includes home visits, information meetings, psychosocial sessions as well as memorialisation activities.

5.4.6.3 Challenging Transgenerational Trauma and Violence

Another aspect of healing, which the committees of families and NGOs have addressed, are measures that aim at encouraging the youth to engage in the issues of the disappeared. These efforts serve two main purposes. Firstly, by shedding light on this taboo topic, transgenerational and collective forms of trauma and unspoken suffering between family members are addressed to prevent transgenerational violence. Secondly, the active participation of younger generations counters the culture of silence and oblivion, which was cultivated through post-war agreements and societal structures. One of the key informants, who had worked intensively with youth groups, described a widespread lack of knowledge on issues of the civil war and the fate of the disappeared.

> *I discovered that some of the young people had missing persons in their close family but were completely clueless. Others knew that something happened in the past, but said their parents prefer not to talk about it. Or saying that this is an issue you can't do anything about. They are curious to know more, but this is a sensitive topic.* (Respondent 1, 2020).

Many NGO initiatives incorporate components of transgenerational trauma within their broader project designs. However, there are also efforts that directly target young people. An example is the oral history project *Badna Naaref* ("We Want to Know") initiated in 2012 by ICTJ in collaboration with the Lebanese NGO UMAM Documentation and Research and with Saint Joseph University's Modern Arab World Research Center. In the

course of the project, students from different schools were trained and supervised to record interviews with people who had experienced the war and shared their testimonies on their daily life during, their survival and suffering. With the integration of younger generations into such processes of dealing with the past, the prospect for reconciliation can be positively impacted.

5.5 Discussing the Connection between Healing and Reconciliation in the Context of Disappearances

In the following two sections, the results of the case study analysis will be discussed within the broader contextual framework of peacebuilding process in Lebanon. Further, the fate of the missing persons in Lebanon will be viewed from an angle of Psychosocial Peacebuilding by elaborating on how reconciliation and healing are connected.

5.5.1 Shortcomings of isolated Approaches

When looking at ways in which the Lebanese government and civil society actors react and interact regarding the fate of the disappeared, it seems as if the growing number of Lebanese and international NGOs in cooperation with concerned families and individual initiatives attempted to fill the exposed gap in responsibility left by the state. The civil society's efforts are strongly linked to the needs and demands of the families, as the mobilisation emerged from those families over the years and they continue to show significant representation. Bearing that in mind, it can be argued that reports and testimonies of the civil society display a realistic overview of the demands and needs of the family

The initiatives and campaigns of the civil society, which were presented above, refer to a multitude of needs and demands of the families of the disappeared. They include socio-political, legal, financial and psychological dimensions. The approaches of the organisations can be summed up into the following categories: Documentation and memorialisation, educational strategies and materials, cultural production, awareness raising, dialogue and reconciliation, empowerment and psychosocial support. The overarching theme that connects all these efforts, is the acknowledgment and the exercise of the right to know.

When analysing the needs of the families, it becomes evident that truth has a central significance. The need for truth is strongly linked to other needs, as it is both a precondition for fulfilling such needs and simultaneously a hampering factor when not established. Without knowing, it is impossible for the families to move on and recover. They have been

waiting since the day their loved ones disappeared, which causes major psychosocial distress. While some cannot get themselves to accept the idea of their loved ones' death and still hope for their return, others want their bodies to return to them. In both cases, the need for knowing interacts with the need for closure. In this sense, the wellbeing of the relatives highly depends on the acknowledgment and the actions of their environment.

This connection is also mirrored in significant overlaps of the civil society's approaches to addressing socio-political legacies from the past and individual suffering. When trying to disaggregate the data between initiatives that aim at fostering reconciliation and initiatives that promote individual healing, a convergence in goals and methods can be observed. The connection can be exemplified by looking at the role of online memorials as a form of memorialisation. The efforts of memorialisation aim at fostering public awareness and educating on the legacy of the past with the goal to challenge amnesia. Simultaneously, they constitute a symbolic space for the families to remember or mourn their loved ones to relieve the suffering of ambiguous loss. Spaces of memorialisation build a bridge between the families of the disappeared with other societal groups. By preserving the memories of people and honouring those who suffered from atrocities during the war, these initiatives contribute to memorialisation that is an integral part of transitional justice but has not been comprehensively established in Lebanon.

This example illustrates that civil society actors aim at covering both the need of political and social reconciliation in order to improve social cohesion, as well as the individual healing and psychosocial wellbeing of those affected by unresolved cases of disappearances. In doing so, they recognise the connection between reconciliation on larger societal levels and individual healing and psychosocial wellbeing. It is this particular connection, which has been disregarded in the peacebuilding process in Lebanon. As highlighted above, reconciliation was imposed as a form of top-down peacebuilding, which neglected the needs and demands of communities that had suffered from the war, including the families of the missing and disappeared. This process, which was facilitated among elites without the participation of the civil society, had failed to heal wounds of individuals and families and to close the division in society, that resulted from the war. The multifaceted needs of the families of the disappeared cannot be met with an isolated approach, but rather requires a holistic perspective that integrates socio-political with psychological dimensions.

5.5.2 The Reciprocal Relation between Individual Healing and Socio-Political Reconciliation

The concept of Psychosocial Peacebuilding suggests that sustainable peace should be built in between the space of healing and reconciliation, as many of their dimensions can be realised simultaneously. The case of the relatives of the forcibly disappeared and missing persons functions as an illustrative example of how psychosocial and political dimensions of post-conflict grievances are mutually reinforcing. The initiatives that have been summarised above, aim at dealing with the past, fostering reconciliation and psychosocial wellbeing. It is the intersections of these three perspectives, that constitutes the framework of Psychosocial Peacebuilding.

The families and the organisations interpreted the right to know the truth as a crucial part of dealing with the past and a precondition to reconcile with it. Therefore, the right to know is an essential component and precondition in both the process of reconciliation and healing. It is assumed that individuals and families who have lost a loved one under unresolved circumstances suffer from high levels of psychosocial distress. Their individual healing is closely linked to the society's acknowledgment of their suffering as the negation and suppression of such experiences constitute a source of victimisation and marginalisation. Purely psychosocial support will not be enough to meet the needs of relatives, because a political willingness is a precondition to exercising the right to know what has happened to their loved ones that have disappeared. Similarly, the psychosocial wellbeing of individuals and communities positively affects social cohesion, which is necessary to deal with painful memories and incidents of the past.

> *But I think when there is truth, I mean when there is access to information, you are in the process of a democratic transformation and then building, consolidating peace as well. We cannot separate dealing with the past from democratic transformations like state-building, nation-building. And this is going to be helpful in terms of bringing the Lebanese together to build a nation that actually will make sure that the war and the violations would not be repeated. This is why I really think the issue of the missing is central.* (Abou Jaoude, 2020).

The reciprocal relation between healing and reconciliation in addressing the fate of the missing and their families, emerges from this statement by one of the key informants who was interviewed for this case study. It highlights the impact of the case of the missing

on the social cohesion of the country and the process of sustainable peace. This chapter illustrates how the fate of the disappeared touches the basic questions of how society deals with its conflictual past and how it acknowledges the suffering of individuals as an integral part of its system. It can be concluded that the struggle of the families of the missing and disappeared in cooperation with Lebanese and international NGOs is embedded in the national process of reconciliation and the route to sustainable peace.

The efforts of the international and Lebanese NGOs address grievances and sufferings of individuals and families. At the same time, they strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities to deal with the past and overcome institutionalised silencing. By this, the civil society actors incorporate psychosocial needs into the process of reconciliation and contribute to Psychosocial Peacebuilding.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to explore Psychosocial Peacebuilding in the context of the missing and forcibly disappeared in Lebanon by analysing the connection between healing and reconciliation. The research process was designed to obtain the views of stakeholders that address the issue of the disappeared and provide support for their families. This was approached by mapping and identifying Lebanese and international organisations that directly address the cause of the disappeared and their relatives. These organisations formed the unit of analysis in a case study, which incorporated secondary data published by said organisations and primary data, which was collected through interviews with stakeholders. In this chapter, the research questions, that were raised in the beginning of the thesis, will be answered by summarising and discussing the findings of the case study analysis with reference to theoretical and contextual considerations.

The results of the case study research highlight the connection between healing and reconciliation in cases of unresolved disappearances in Lebanon. The process of recovering the truth contributes to healing and reconciliation with the past. From a psychological perspective, past traumas do not simply pass or disappear over time. Instead, they can have long-term emotional consequences for an individual and the society. Working through traumatic experiences is a subjective process and there is no universal prescription on how to resolve trauma in post-conflict settings. Healing cannot be generalised or imposed. However, it is widely understood that healing can only occur when the suffering has been heard and acknowledged and the truth uncovered. The truth about the past must be made available for everyone who believes their personal recovery will benefit from such transparency. Therefore, the answer to deep psychological and emotional needs due to unresolved disappearances, is closely connected with justice and truth. It is crucial to deal with losses and the disappeared and to provide possibilities for grieving to take place; this is not only at the core of individual coping, but societal reconstruction and peacebuilding. Thus, solutions to address experiences of trauma and ambiguous loss in Lebanon require political action.

Trauma and psychosocial distress will inevitably continue to affect persons in post-conflict societies and requires truth and acknowledgment. Based on the findings of the case study, it can be stated that the civil societies organisations, that were part of the case study, promote such acknowledgment of missing and forcibly disappeared cases. The NGOs stress

the ongoing nature of unresolved disappearances and how this leads to a prolonged trauma and slow mental torture for the concerned families. The initiatives, reports and testimonies provide vital examples of how the civil society addresses the needs of the families by promoting healing and the right to know. At the same time, the Lebanese and international NGOs enable reconciliation by addressing the legacy of the past. The civil society initiatives thus filled the gap created by the lack of state approaches to dealing with the past. In doing so, they recognise the importance of a larger societal peace process in its connection to an individual peace of mind and vice versa. Through their efforts and activities, they contribute to Psychosocial Peacebuilding. The civil society highlighted that in case of the missing and forcibly disappeared, the individual and family needs are closely interwoven with socio-political conditions and processes. Accordingly, they advocate for the establishment of legal and political measures to investigate, acknowledge and compensate the fate of the disappeared and their families.

Moreover, the civil society actors seek to educate the younger generations on the conflicted past of the country. Sectarian divisions and narratives of the war are more easily passed on to new generations when there is a lack of open conversations about human rights violations and injustices that occurred in the past. By engaging young generations, the NGOs address transgenerational and collective forms of trauma to relieve individual suffering.At the same time they promote guarantees of non-recurrence of politically motivated violence. Thus, in developing peacebuilding and psychosocial support interventions, the civil society organisations address past traumatic events and narratives. This way, they are sensitive as to how these affect the second and third generations in securing the long-term wellbeing and peace of the community in which they exist.

Furthermore, the efforts of civil society have not only promoted the case of the missing but have led to social and political awareness of the violent past in general. Through activities that aim at dealing with the past and memorialisation, they counter Lebanon's amnesia. These efforts touch on the basic subject of how the country will deal with its violent past, war crimes and the process of mourning and remembrance. The civil society challenges the claim that addressing the past would only resurrect new violence. This historical myth about the civil war is transmitted across generations and regularly activated by political figures, which provides a fertile ground for mistrust and conflict between communities. In tireless efforts, the families and collaborating NGOs have advocated that the legacies of the war must be dealt with in order to overcome the country's past. Political elites that claim

that forgetting is the only way of maintaining civil peace, are exposing the fragile nature of the peace that they have imposed. In their efforts to address the issue of the disappeared, civil society actors reclaim strategies of reconciliation by offering alternatives to the state-sponsored amnesia. Therefore, it can be argued that the resolving of the issue of the disappeared and their families is embedded in the national process of reconciliation. In this sense, the case of the disappeared can serve as an indicator of the willingness and state of reconciliation in Lebanon. The initiatives that have been analysed in the case study illustrate a holistic approach to peacebuilding, which integrates theories and practices of mental health and psychosocial support with reconciliation efforts to lay a foundation for sustainable peace.

6.1 Limitations of the Findings

One of the principal criticisms of qualitative research is that it is difficult to distinguish in how far the findings are biased by the researcher's own opinions and views. This also refers to case study research, which has been criticised for bearing the risk of influence as the "case" is socially constructed and co-constructed between the researcher and the respondents. Therefore, the findings of case study research are incapable of providing a generalising conclusion. However, the qualitative research of this thesis aims at understanding the experiences, needs and demands of a particular group of people within a particular context. Hence, this study does not aim at generating generalised conclusions, but to explore an individual's perspective of their experiences and perceptions in a specific context.

In order to limit the influence of the researcher's assessment, this study was conducted by following a ruled-based approach. All steps and decisions regarding the construction of the case, as well as the choice of organisations and data were outlined in the beginning of this thesis to provide transparency on the research process. Moreover, detailed information regarding the different steps of the case study is displayed in the annex to assure comprehensibility.

Another factor that must be considered when discussing the conclusion of this study is that it only referred to resources that are available in English. During the search for secondary data from civil society actors, it turned out that many documents and reports were available in Arabic and French. Due to the researcher's language limitations to documents in English, the references that were included in the case study only show an excerpt of the

available material. In order to achieve a comprehensive assessment on the issue of the missing and disappeared in Lebanon, it is recommendable to include multiple languages in further considerations.

The research for this thesis was conducted during a global health pandemic, which largely impacted the means of collecting data. Due to restrictions in the mobility and social distancing measures, it was not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews for this study. The researcher addressed this issue by turning to online communication and video tools. However, it must be considered that e-interviews differ from in-person interviews, for example, connection issues or visual restrictions undermine nonverbal communication or impact the flow of conversation. Additionally, this study only conducted a small number of three interviews. Therefore, the significance of the interviews is exemplary and does not allow general conclusions or statements.

Another limitation that should be noted was the author's non-Lebanese background. Historical and culture-related summaries and interpretations in this study were therefore based on an outsider position, which poses the risk that cultural idioms or constructions may have been misinterpreted or not been understood to the full extent. Bearing all the above described limitations in mind, it must be recognised that the research provided in this thesis only begins to scratch the surface of a complicated and multifaced issue, which suggests the need for further research.

6.2 Outlook and Further Considerations

After the Lebanese civil war came to an end, there were multiple motivations for amnesia. For the perpetrators, because they feared vengeance; for the victims, because they would like to leave the horrors of the past behind them; and for those who were afraid to be drawn into a new conflict, when opening the wounds of the war. The saying that "time will heal all wounds" is an illusion in the context of enforced disappearances and other human rights violations of the past. Examining the past is essential for consolidating peace. Successful reconciliation depends on the ways in which societies manage to deal with events of war, so they become part of history. If the process of dealing with the past fails, unresolved traumas and memories become a threat to peaceful coexistence in the present and future.

Given the high fragmentation of the Lebanese society, restoring the social fabric that binds and supports people within their own communities is essential for those who have

experienced violent events, and recreating the feeling of connectedness to other people is vital for building sustainable peace. Thus, conflicting cultural identities, communal rivalries, incendiary rhetoric, sectarian and political battles need to be addressed in order to contribute to preventing recurrence of violence and crises. The peacebuilding process in Lebanon lacks the participation of communities and has largely failed to promote social reconciliation. The Lebanese must be empowered to examine the truth about their history as a foundation to establish trust between communities and build lasting peace and justice. Therefore, the concept of Psychosocial Peacebuilding could offer a holistic understanding of addressing past and ongoing grievances in Lebanon. This approach holds the potential to reduce the gap between the reconciliation among elites and communal and societal reconciliation.

The fate of the missing and forcibly disappeared would have been forgotten without the efforts of their families and supporting NGOs. The struggle of the civil society ultimately led to the achievement of important milestones in recent years. The latest breakthrough was the appointment of the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared in Lebanon in June 2020. The establishment of this independent body is a step closer to uncovering the fate of the missing and forcibly disappeared in Lebanon. However, the appointment of the commissioners will be meaningless, unless the government demonstrates commitment by allocating necessary resources and access. Hence, the latest measures of the government to meet the demands of the families must be closely observed and tested. It can, therefore, be assumed that the struggle and mobilisations of the civil society has not come to an end and will continue until the families’ right to know has been realised.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Mapping of Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organisations

	Name of Organisation	Type of Organisation
1	ABAAD Resource Centre for Gender Equality	LNGO
2	ACT for the Disappeared	LNGO
3	Al-JANA Resource Center (JRC)	LNGO
4	Amel Association	LNGO
5	American Community School Beirut (ACS)	Collective
6	Adyan Foundation	LNGO
7	Berghof Foundation	INGO
8	Catholic Academic Exchange Service (KAAD)	Research Institution
9	Centre for Lebanese Studies	Research Institution
10	Centre for the Study of the Modern Arab World (CEMAM), University of Saint Joseph	Research Institution
11	Dialogue for Life and Reconciliation (DLR)	LNGO
12	Fighters for Peace	LNGO
13	forumZFD	INGO
14	Impunity Watch	INGO
15	Institute Francais du Proche-Orient	Research Institution
16	International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ)	INGO
17	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	LNGO
18	Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs	Research Institution
19	Lebanese Association For Civil Rights (LACR)	LNGO
20	Lebanese Centre for Civic Education	LNGO
21	Lebanese Centre for Human Rights (CLDH)	LNGO
22	Lebanese Centre for Political Studies (LCPS)	Research Institution
23	Lebanese Foundation of Permanent Civil Peace (LFPCP)	LNGO
24	Lebanon Support	Research Institution
25	Legal Agenda	LNGO
26	March Lebanon	LNGO

	Name of Organisation	Type of Organisation
27	Nada Sehnaoui	Individual initiative
28	Offre Joie	LNGO
29	Omar Al-Issawi	Individual initiative
30	Palestinian Human Rights Organisation (PHRO)	LNGO
31	Permanent Peace Movement (PPM)	LNGO
32	Souad Slim	Individual initiative
33	Support of Lebanese in Detention and Exile (SOLIDE)	LNGO
34	Sustainable Democracy Centre (SDC)	LNGO
35	The Commitee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon	LNGO
36	UMAM Documentation and Research	LNGO
37	University of Balamand (UOB)	Research Institution
38	Wahdatouna Khalasouna Gathering (WKG)	Collective
39	Walid Raad	Individual initiative
40	Zoukak Theatre Company & Cultural Association	LNGO

8.2 Case Study Sample

	Name of Organisation	Type of Organisation
1	ABAAD Resource Centre for Gender Equality	LNGO
2	ACT for the Disappeared	LNGO
3	forumZFD	INGO
4	Impunity Watch	INGO
5	International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ)	INGO
6	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	LNGO
7	Lebanese Centre for Human Rights (CLDH)	LNGO
8	Lebanon Support	Research Institution
9	Legal Agenda	LNGO
10	Nada Sehnaoui	Individual initiative
11	Support of Lebanese in Detention and Exile (SOLIDE)	LNGO
12	The Commitee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon	LNGO
13	UMAM Documentation and Research	LNGO

8.3 Case Study Interview Respondents

Number	Name/ Type of Organisation	Position	Professional Background	Gender	Date of Interview	Duration
Respondent 1	LNGO	Project Coordinator	Social Work, Religious Studies	w	15.06.2020	47:30:00
Respondent 2	INGO	Program Manager	Law	m	15.06.2020	35:00:00
Carmen Abou Jaoude	Act for the Disappeared/ LNGO	Advisory Board	Political Science	w	24.06.2020	65:40:00

8.4 Interview Guidelines

Interview Guiding Questions
1. What are the most urgent needs that the families of the disappeared express?
2. How does the disappearance of a loved one impact the wellbeing of individuals and of families?
3. How do large-scale disappearances affect the fabric of society?
4. How is unresolved individual trauma (due to disappearances) impacting the process of peacebuilding in societies/communities?
5. In what way do societal and political reactions to disappearances influence the experience of trauma and grief?
6. How are the processes of reconciliation and healing connected?
7. Do you think that interventions aimed at building sustainable peace would benefit from an approach which connects peacebuilding with psychosocial support and wellbeing?