SOWING SEEDS OF RECONCILIATION IN DEEPLY DIVIDED SOIL:

THE ROLE OF LOCAL CSOs IN RECONCILING POST-WAR LEBANON

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Contents

Abstract

Inspired by the "local-turn" in peacebuilding and reconciliation, this thesis responds to the knowledge gap around the role of local Lebanese civil-society organizations (CSOs) in reconciling Lebanon. It uses the framework of political reconciliation by Schaap (2005) and Little & Maddison (2017) to analyze this inherently contested concept. Following semi-structured interviews with activists complemented by secondary resources, I argue that the observed CSOs are agents of reconciliation. This is endorsed first by an interpretation of the mission and perceived roots of conflict of 8 interviewed activists, which seem to fit well within the paradigm of political reconciliation. Secondly, I use an ameliorated framework from Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) to demonstrate that the 16 observed CSOs play multiple functions in advancing a reconciliation process. By giving a detailed description of the CSOs work, it appears that they create "alternative spaces" (Gready and Robins 2017), where a new way of dealing with the past is promoted. Here, CSOs "actively resist" (Nagle 2018a) the society's ignorance towards victims and history of the civil-war. It is furthermore a space where reconciliatory values are deliberated, and where citizens from different backgrounds find common ground. Besides, I find that they contribute to violence prevention by transforming conflict in local communities.

At the same time, the findings indicate that not all programs translate into success. I introduce the "negotiated reconciliation project" to capture how activists are continuously negotiating between their desired strategy and impact, and constraining forces that demand them to reformulate their programs and goals. As such, a scarcity of resources, which appears in part the result of international donor agenda's, push CSOs towards short programs of which the relevance for reconciliation is not always straightforward. Another constraining force is the context of post-war Lebanon: elites deny CSOs access to areas, and the entrenched sectarian divisions in the minds and institutions of Lebanese reverse the work of CSOs, or spark angry responses. Giving these circumstances, the "alternative spaces" that the CSOs create are significantly limited in their scale of impact.

Despite this unfavorable environment, CSOs have at times achieved reconciliatory successes. I identify the grassroots and participatory approach of the CSOs as conducive to such achievement. These findings thus resolve a special role for local actors as capable to respond to the context dependent meaning, needs and possibilities of reconciliation, which proved helpful to win trust and maneuver around the constrains of the negotiated reconciliation project. Consequently, these findings critique the restorative reconciliation that has been promoted by liberal peacebuilding and Transitional Justice and reaffirm the need for a "local-turn". It suggests that peacebuilders could positively influence the reconciliation process in Lebanon, when working in close cooperation with local CSOs: lifting their resource-based barriers and enhancing their capacities. I make recommendations for future research, that could take-up new questions raised by this research, including on the effect and evaluation of the programs.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On the 17th of October 2019, a mass popular protest broke out in Lebanon. Starting as a popular rejection of economic austerity measures, the protestors demands quickly evolved into a symbolic stance against the corrupt and sectarian hold of the political elites on society, by demanding the resignation of the government. The uprising was recognized internationally for uniting Lebanese from all sectarian backgrounds (Yee, 23 October 2019; Azhari, 19 December 2019). A relative unique moment, since Lebanon is usually regarded as a deeply-divided sectarian country in which intergroup insecurities and competition have continued long since the end of the country's civil-war in 1990 (Ghosn & Khoury 2011). Recognizing this unique, harmonizing moment, Lebanese put-up banners and social media posts saying "Lebanese civil-war: 1975-2019" (Jean-Paul Chami, Peace Labs, to author, 20 Okt 2019; Luck, 25 October 2019).

Frankly, some local, Lebanese civil society organizations (CSOs) have been working for decades with the same mentality as the protesters in 2019. The CSOs bid for "reconciliation": replacing feelings of distrust and hatred that reinforce sectarian cleavages in society with mutual acceptance and common ground. Their efforts contrast with conventional CSOs and a "state-endorsed collective amnesia", in which the political elite prevent national reconciliation (Larkin 2010). Despite the "local-turn" in peacebuilding and reconciliation (Mac Ginty 2011), little is known about these local, Lebanese CSOs and the potential role they might have in reconciling the country. With this backdrop, this thesis sets to find out how we can understand the role of CSOs in reconciling Lebanon.

To answer this question, this research begins by designing a theoretic framework to analyze reconciliation and the functions CSOs can play in reconciliation. Secondly, the Lebanese post-war context is outlined, demonstrating how sectarianism and corruption have caused the absence of reconciliation in Lebanon. It locates this thesis within the debate on the power of "alternative", non-confessional NGOs in Lebanon vis-à-vis the persistency of elites to resist their demands. The research question is subdivided in three questions. A methodology section discusses how these can be answered using semi-structured interviews with civil society activists involved in reconciliation projects, complemented by secondary sources.

Reconciliation is a normative and contentious concept. Therefore, the first sub-question asks how the interlocutors define reconciliation. I resolve to the theory of political

reconciliation to interpret their ideas. It appears that the CSOs mission and strategy aligns with political reconciliation. The second research goal is to uncover some of the CSOs' actions, and see in what regard they contribute to a reconciliation process. I demonstrate that they play a functional role in reconciliation, directed at all levels of society. In particular, they create "alternative spaces" where a culture of pluralism, non-violence and mutual acknowledgement of rights is promoted. As well as, new ways to engage with the violent past and support of victims. Their strategy is both an "active resistance" of, and "constructive engagement" (Nagle 2018a), with, the sectarian political elites and their policies.

What remains is an analysis of the opportunities and obstacles that characterize the activist's work. I propose the "negotiated reconciliation project" as a concept to understand how the interlocutors are forced to navigate between the contentious structures of sectarianism and corruption, limited expertise, or human- and financial resources. These constrains influence the strategic choices and ambitions of the activists. In some cases, structural boundaries prevent reconciliation, in other cases some steps towards reconciliation could still be made by the CSOs. My analysis sheds light on the participatory and grassroots approach, as a strategy that can successfully advance reconciliation by taking into account local needs and contexts. Additionally, the negotiated reconciliation project suggests that addressing resource-based obstacles, particularly the relationship between donors and the local CSOs, can valuably empower CSOs to make a difference.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETIC FRAMEWORK

2.1 Understanding political reconciliation

The reconciliation paradigm emerged in response to the unstable or stalled peace-agreements across the world, such as in Northern-Ireland, Bosnia Herzegovina, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Israel-Palestine and Lebanon (Mac Ginty 2006, 3). Belonging to the conflict transformation paradigm, reconciliation intends to build the foundation of a sustainable peace by addressing the deeply rooted divisions and the violent past that continue to haunt these post-conflict states (Maddison 2015, 1014; Paffenholz & Spurk 2006, 22). According to Kelman (2008), reconciliation requires an "internalization" (20) that "changes the ways in which former enemy populations think about each other, feel about each other, and act toward one another, as they learn to live together" [1](16). Although sounding promising, reconciliation is a contentious and normative concept (Schaap 2005; Little & Madison 2017, 147; Bar-Tal 2004, 27). Consequentially, the first step of this thesis is to understand how Lebanese CSO activists view reconciliation. I do this by using the framework of "political" or "thin" reconciliation", as conceived by Schaap (2004), Little & Maddison (2017), to interpret the interlocutors' perceptions.

A framework for political reconciliation

Locating conflict as essential to democratic politics, the goal of political reconciliation is to mediate conflict (Schaap 2005, 15). They critique restorative reconciliation, that took place under the paradigm of liberal peacebuilding and Transitional Justice. This paradigm has been discussed and critiqued thoroughly elsewhere[2]. For this purpose, I forefront Maddison's

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[1] More specifically, reconciliation aims to address the roots of conflict by transforming feelings of mistrust, anxiety and insecurity between groups that characterize intergroup conflict (Kelman 2004, Tropp, 2013). Living under enduring warfare and threat, an "us" versus "them" psychology divides conflicting parties. This schism is strengthened by a culture of victimhood, heroism, excessive patriotism and self-justification is created by contrasting oneself with the outside group (Bar-Tal, 2007; Strömbom, 2010). The result is a positive bias to co-group members vis-á-vis a negative stereotyping of out-group members (Roccas & Elster 2012, 2-4). Bar-Tal (2007) shows that intergroup antagonism takes precedence in the value system and collective memory of each group. As such, it is institutionalized at schools, political parties, art and media (Bar-Tal 2007). Reconciliation attempts to alter this cognitive and institutional antagonism, positioning that as long is they continue, intergroup violence is likely to flare-up (Roccas & Elster 2012, 12).

[2] It is hard to summarize the large body of critique on liberal peacebuilding and Transitional Justice. Recommended readings are Chandler 2017, Andrieu 2010, Mac Ginty 2006/2011. Main strands of critique are directed at liberal peacebuilding's liberal universalism, top-down and technocratic solutions and dictation of local peacebuilding by the UN and Western states. They generally failed to bring justice to citizens and exacerbated divisions in already deeply divided states.

(2017) and Schaap's (2005) critiques on restorative's emphasis on unity and ending conflict, which was promoted post-apartheid South Africa. They assert that the discourse around a "Rainbow Nation", which sought to construct national harmony and belonging, in fact represses, avoids or depoliticizes issues. Conflict continues under the ground causing animosities to remain and possible turn violent in the future. Moreover, individuals can feel as if they have to abandon or silence their identity or experiences in favor of a national narrative, which has the opposite effect of only securitizing one's identity further (Parent 2011, 390).

Instead, political reconciliation positions that some differences are irreconcilable (Little & Madison 2017, 48). Identity is always constructed in relation to the outside world, making intergroup difference and conflict a natural phenomenon (Strömbom 2010, 48-47). Maddison (2017) asserts that conflict perpetuates at multiple levels. She proposes a multi-level framework of conflict transformation: the relational, institutional and constitutional level. Reconciliation should address all these levels, simultaneously bottom-up and top-down. Hence, the "political" in political reconciliation does not limit itself to governance.

Respective of the interpersonal level, political reconciliation attempts to alleviate animosities by "not transcending former enmity but transforming it into a relation of civic friendship" (Schaap 2005). To appreciate this, Verdeja's (2009) definition of reconciliation is useful:

> A condition of mutual respect among former enemies, which requires the reciprocal recognition of the moral worth and dignity of the others. It is achieved when previous, conflict-era identities no longer operate as the primary cleavages in politics, and thus citizens acquire a new, post-violence identity that cut across those earlier fault lines (3).

Thus, citizens must find a basis for a "new, post-violence identity" (ibid; Maddison 2017, 161). This basis, or common ground, is not predetermined, but under continuous construction in a "community that is not yet" (Schaap 2005, 4).

The other two levels of political reconciliation address the structural causes of war. In practice, this calls for more equitable institutional redistribution. Furthermore, constitutions and peace-settlements should be "living documents" which sustain rather than foreclose future democratic debate (Maddison, 2017). Importantly, despite the primacy of conflict in politics, not all principles are negotiable. Institutions and constitutions should protect human

rights such as the freedom of speech and the existence of different identities, cultures and interests (Wingenbach 2011, 56; Maddison 2017, 159).

However, a lesson learnt from deeply-divided post-conflict states it that a major obstacle to incorporating the "other" into one's "moral community" (Kelman 2004) are disagreements about the past (Maddison 2014a, 197). Therefore, an important aspect of reconciliation asks how to narrate the past, how it ought to be commemorated and relived. It deals with injustice inherited from the war such as victimhood, displacement, and rehabilitation. Political reconciliation's stance towards dealing with the past advocates a democratization of history. This does not mean agreeing with the other over what happened in the conflict and with what effect. They critique a single narration or "truth" of history, as was sought in South Africa (Van der Merwe 1999, 15; Madison 2015, 156). In addition, they distance themselves from restorative's moral prescriptions to forgiveness and healing, which obliges victims to forgive even though one might find it personally impossible to forgive perpetrators of mass violence (Guttman and Thompson 2002, 31; Rosoux 2017, 31). Political reconciliation argues that truth recovery and memory are essential, but they should recognize that there is no homogenous vision of the past (or future), and that there exists subjective truths and experiences (Maddison & Little 2017; Maddison 2017/2014a).

From this review, I derive a list describing what political reconciliation should aim for. As such, it functions not only as a useful summary of the concept of reconciliation used in this thesis, more so, this framework is used as a measuring stick to gauge the definition of reconciliation used by Lebanese CSOs. It follows that, political reconciliation aims to;

- find ways to channel conflict in non-violent areas for contestation.
- move away from exclusive identities towards a citizenship based upon respect and mutual acknowledgement of rights.
- advocate plural political institutions that protect the existence of different identities and individual human rights.
- contribute to a democratic deliberation of history that is appreciative of different narratives.
- address war-related injustices, such as displaced or missing persons.
- be multi-level, simultaneously bottom-up and top-down

2.3. Civil society and reconciliation

<u>The "local-turn"</u>

Lederach (1997 in Paffenholz and Spurk 2006, 22-23).) first incorporated CSOs within the discourse of peacebuilding and reconciliation. He assumes that local CSOs work at the grassroots level, which enables them to influence the majority of the population. Further, CSOs can occupy "mid-level leadership" positions, allowing them to reach top national levels

This view spurred the role of CSOs under Liberal Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice interventions (Chandler 2017, 95). However, not without critique. Within this paradigm, CSOs functions were limited to mediating liberal values and conducting fact-finding work. Secondly, local CSOs were confined to the agenda and expectations of international organizations rather than given independent agency or equal partnership (see e.g. Mac Ginty 2011; Andrieu 2010; Gready & Robinson 2017). Another problem was that their internal legitimacy was limited to a small urban elitist support base, resulting in culturally insensitive projects that lack local legitimacy (for a summary see Paffenholz and Spurk 2006, 25-26; Chandler 2017, 106-107).

Together with the overall critique on peacebuilding and Transitional Justice, scholars like Mac Ginty (2011) argue for a "local-turn", concluding that indigenously driven reconciliation could be better equipped to reconciliation. It is more relationally driven, emphasizing relationships over "deals". Moreover, it enjoys more local legitimacy as it generally engages in a bottom-up approach, connecting local figures and the public, within a framework of culturally embedded norms and expectations. In the meantime, Mac Ginty warns us of romanticizing indigenous practice, treating it as if unpolluted, with a natural goodness and justness to it (ibid, 52).

The local-turn has recently crossed academic spheres to include UN discourse (UN 2015, p.34-35). This thesis shares this prioritization of the local to achieve bottom-up, inclusionary and locally embedded reconciliation. Therefore, it continues by exploring the different ways in which CSOs can contribute to reconciliation.

<u>CSO's as actors in reconciliation</u>

I define CSOs as non-governmental non-profit organizations that operate in "civil society" as defined by Verdeja's (2009, 138):

> A space of social relations autonomous from the state where groups and movements create new alliances, further their interests and views, and engage with one another to shape public and elite opinion with the aim of influencing state policy and public discourse.

This definition reserves a central role for civil society in the public deliberation of issues, such as reconciliation. Following Habermas (1996), this debate takes place in the "public sphere"[3], where information is communicated between co-citizens and between citizens and the state. It is a place where different opinions on public issues are raised. Public deliberation, according to Verdeja, has the power to transform norms and perceptions of the past[4] (2009, 144). Yordan (2009 in Adrieu 2010, 547).) positions it can foster mutual inclusion, recognition and new understanding

How this could work in practical terms is explained by discussing the different functions CSOs can play in reconciliation. Paffenholz and Spruk (2006) review the literature on CSOs in post-conflict settings and develop a framework to understand seven functions in which CSOs can contribute to peacebuilding. I supplement their framework with literature on CSOs in the reconciliation processes, to analyze the function they can play in this topic specifically. This framework is used to answer the second sub-research question: What reconciliation projects do Lebanese CSOs have and what is their function on reconciliation?

The first function Paffenholz and Spurk cite is *protection*, such as disarmament and creating zones of peace. They note this is most salient during the conflict and in the immediate aftermath. Therefore, its yield to reconciliation, which often takes place after a cessation of violence (Kelman 2004, 122-124), might be limited.

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[3] Habermas presupposes that in a public sphere 1) no participants are excluded, 2) participants have an equal voice, 3) they are free to speak, 4) there is no coercion. Unfortunately, these features are not self-evidently present in the Lebanese setting. This is not to say that the Lebanese citizens are wholly unfree to express themselves and reach others with their opinion. Certainly, some public opinion exists in Lebanon and the Arab world (see e.g. Lynch M. 2006. *Voices of the New Arab Public Sphere. NY:* Colombia University Press), and Lebanese CSOs have demonstrated some maneuverability (see Chapter 3). A point recently made evident by the protestors on the Lebanese streets. For these reasons I deem it appropriate to apply Habermas' logic.

[4] Habermas also asserts that consensus will emerge from public debate. In the context of deeply divided groups with entrenched mistrust and historic misunderstanding, the chance that consensual truth will emerge from public debate is unlikely (see Verdeja 2009, 145). Rather, in a "communicative peace operation" different people can participate in sharing their ideals and values on reconciliation. Thereby creating a "dialogical of truth" on the causes of conflict and its consequences rather than a top-down imposed truth or national myth (Andrieu 2010, 547).

In the second function, *monitoring and accountability*, Paffenholz and Spurk refer to CSOs activities in human rights monitoring, which can safeguard political reconciliation's primacy on human rights and pluralism. To add, CSOs have contributed to reconciliation by monitoring in terms of truth-seeking and documenting historic narratives of conflict (Dudouet 2007, 24). Monitoring can result into accountability, in that its findings expose the accountability of individuals or groups.

Advocacy and Public Communication refers to the role of CSOs in agenda-setting, lobbying, campaigning and protesting to advance or oppose issues or state policies. In this way, CSOs advance reconciliation both through public deliberation and through pressuring the government into action. For instance, CSO's have advocated the rights of victims or attempted to spread nuanced understandings of victimhood, guilt and blame across society, thereby spurring reconciliation process (Verdeja 2009, 49-50).

Socialization and a Culture of Peace has to do with the transmission of new values and attitudes across society. Activities of CSOs include dialogue projects or education, which are both regarded as crucial for reconciliation (Maddison 2014, 1017; Van Ommeren 2015, 203). This function of CSOs builds strongly on the Habermasian idea that civil society can create "alternative spaces" (Gready & Robins 2017) in the public sphere, where messages of pluralism, inclusivity and civil rights are communicated. This can have a transformative effect on civilians: exposure to new narratives challenges individual's societal beliefs and understanding of the self and other (Verdeja 2009, 144). Whereas these might have effect on a small scale, scholars have been unable to detect consequent attitude changes on macro-level (Paffenholz & Spurk 2006, 29). To add, the link between CSO socializing programs and civilians is never direct, as civilians have their own mental frames to give meaning to the message of the CSO (Dudouet 2007, 27).

Conflict Sensitive Social Cohesion draws on the contact hypothesis. According to this theory, social relations that bridge different groups promote intergroup loyalties, and deflate stereotypes and prejudice about the outgroup, ultimately paving the way for trust or even friendship (Rydgren & Sofi 2011, 32). CSOs in themselves can be heterogeneous interaction spaces, or they create projects that bring civilians from different communal backgrounds together (ibid, 44).

The sixth function is *Intermediation and Facilitation*, which refers to CSOs role in negotiating between citizens, state and adversary groups to ensure aid delivery or release

prisoners. I did not find past CSO initiatives within the sphere of reconciliation. One reason for this could be that this function overlaps with Advocacy and Service Delivery functions.

The last function is *Service Delivery*. Paffenholz and Spurk note this function often has economic or social objectives, and has lesser effect on peacebuilding. Nonetheless, I follow Dudouet's (2007, 33) position that CSOs contribute to reconciliation by offering psychological aid or organizing victim's support groups. Alternatively, CSOs could take-up the traditionally state role in commemoration (Verdeja 2009, 154).

It is useful to emphasize that the functions are not mutually exclusive. In particular, it is fair to say that all reconciliatory activities from CSOs contribute to reconciliation through their function in Advocacy and Public Communication, and Socialization and a Culture of Peace. In actions such as lobbying or education, this function is implicit. However, from support groups to cross-communal football matches, each action implicitly communicates and socializes reconciliation's values.

CHAPTER 3: THE LEBANESE POST-WAR SETTING AND THE EXPERIENCES OF THE "ALTERNATIVE CSOs"

3.1 Structures of the post-war society and the policy of forgetting

<u>Institutionalized sectarian strife</u>

Lebanon hosts a mosaic of religious collectives, including Maronite, Shia, Sunni and smaller groups of Druze, Protestant, Alawite and different Orthodox. Each religious collective has "distinct religious beliefs, traditions, memories and perceptions" (Haugbolle 2010, 69). Sectarianism in Lebanon manifests itself across all aspects of social life: each sect has their own associations (Khattab 2015), educational institutions (Baytiyeh 2017; Van Ommeren 2015) media (Haddad 2008, 401) and even healthcare (Salloukh et al. 2015, 48). Different sects are often spatially segregated (Haugbolle 2010, 163). Furthermore, sectarianism negotiates intimate relationships, as sectarian personal status laws make intersect marriage extremely difficult (Aoun & Zahar 2017, 108).

Sectarianism is institutionalized in the consociational governing system. Conceived by Arent Lijphart (1977), a consociational political system is aims to find consensus and stability in a highly segmented society. Governing by grand coalition, and with veto power for each group over important choices, all sectarian collectives are accommodated in the Lebanese decision-making process (Salloukh et al. 2015, 21-22). This is further ensured by a quota system which distributes parliamentary seats and public positions on sectarian basis (ibid, 23). However, in what can be seen as a clear failure of the system to maintain consensus and stability, Lebanon descended in a civil-war between 1975-1990. In this war, sectarian militias violently sought control over territory, carving out enclaves ruled by its own militia, administrations and external financing[5] (ibid, 20).

The Ta'if peace agreement that ended the civil-war in 1990 reaffirmed consociationalism, simply adapting it to better reflect new power balances[6]. Syria became guarantor of the peace

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[5] A thesis can be written about the causes and events in the Lebanese civil-war. To learn more about the civil-war I recommend reading Hanf, T. 1993. *Coexistence in wartime Lebanon: Decline of a state and rise of a nation.* London: Taurus.

[6] Muslims and Christians were from now on given an equal share of parliamentary seats and public positions. Within the executive, the balance of power shifted towards the Council of Ministers, headed by the Sunni prime minister. The position of the Shi'a speaker of parliament was strengthened. Christian-Muslim representation and to converge power to the Council of Ministers and the speaker of the parliament. Together with the already important role of the Christian President, decision-making became dependent on the "Troika": the president, prime minister and speaker of parliament (Salloukh et al. 2015, 20/25).

agreement, which effectively invited Syria to rule over Lebanon via its security apparatus and political interference. In 2005, prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri was assassinated (Arsan, 2018). In response, a mass popular protest called the Cedar Revolution united Lebanese across sectarian backgrounds and successfully demanded the departure of Syria (Arsan 2018). However, optimism was soon replaced with fear and violence (Leenders 2012, 2). An 8th of March pro-Syrian block mobilized opposition, which widened political divides in a "crude sectarian power struggle over who rules the post-Syria Lebanese state" (Salloukh et al. 2015, 28). Since then, Lebanese politics is in near permanent dead-lock (Arsan 2018, 8-9; Leenders 2012). Violence on the streets increased, and Lebanon was dragged into war with Israel in July 2006 (Arsan 2018). Since 2011, spill-overs from the Syrian civil-war have not only burdened the Lebanese economy, but also enflamed sectarian tensions and terrorism (Arsan 2018, 10; Salloukh et al. 2015, 155).

A more complicated picture than sectarianism

The above extremely brief history demonstrates that even after the signing of a peace-agreement, Lebanon remains a deeply divided and unstable state. As a result, sectarianism can easily be regarded as an axiomatic character of Lebanese society. Not denying the pervasiveness and influence of sectarianism, I argue that sectarian explanations are powerful but insufficient. A case best demonstrated by the recent protests in Lebanon which have transcended sectarian interests and competition (Yee, 23 October 2019). Next to inter-sectarian bridging, intracommunal strife is not rare (Arsan 2018, 13-18). Besides, scholars have revealed that sectarianism is a recent construct of modern Lebanon and not an inherent feature of society (Salloukh et al. 2015). Others point towards the relationship between sectarianism and consociationalism, claiming it ameliorates sectarian differences and identification (Nagle 2017, 198; Salloukh et al. 2015, 21). Locating the sect as the main political unit, the political system assumes that the sect is best capable of protecting individual interest and prevents the mobilization of groups with other identity bases, such as gender or class (Volk 2010, 7-8).

Analyzing Lebanon, the emblematic, structural grip of clientelism and corruption over society should be accounted for. This was recognized in the recent revolution: protesters called for a technocratic government ousting the political elite (Azhari, 19 December 2019). Thus, it is important to look at how elites exploit sectarian discourses and advance their

clientelist interests in decision-making and the allocation of positions (Salloukh et al. 2015, 45-47). The highly ambiguous rules and regulations of bureaucratic institutions have enabled easy elite capture and competition over institutional resources (Leenders 2012, 223-225). Arsan writes: "It can all too easily seem as though the only thing Lebanon's politicians can agree on is their own importance" (2018, 9). Unsurprisingly, Lebanese citizen invariably look at the state with mistrust (Leenders 2012, 2) and Lebanon scores 28/100 on the corruption index (Transparency International 2018).

At the same time, other observers marvel at Lebanese ability to keep "peace" despite all. However, Aoun and Zahar (2017, 104) position that this is not a sign of social cohesion and resilience, but a calculated decision of political elites: "the tenuous peace in Lebanon is less the result of a joint decision not to fight rather than the outcome of several individual assessments that, in the current context, fighting is an option unlikely to further the interests and objectives of the various political forces".

The absence of reconciliation

The end of the civil-war in 1990 left around 144,000 Lebanese killed and 200,000 wounded (Volk 2010, 3). About 17,000 people are believed to be disappeared, and their faith remains unknown (Rowayheb & Ouaiss 2015, 1010). A third of the country was displaced or immigrated (Barak 2007, 4). The war exacerbated geographical and cognitive disparities between confessional groups (Kanafani-Zahar 2012, 46; MacGinty 2006, 3-4). One study finds that one in four Lebanese have war-related mental disorders (Karam et al. 2008). The previous section demonstrated that the end of the war did not end violence. Hence, Lebanon's post-war context can be described as a situation of "no war, no peace" (MacGinty 2006, 3) or as this thesis positions, an absent reconciliation.

Regularly, the absence of a reconciliation processes can be traced to (a neglect of) political decisions (Ghosn and Khoury 2011). This becomes apparent foremost in the "state-sponsored amnesia" (Larkin 2010) which mandated a full censure of the past. Criminal tribunals, restitution, apologies, rehabilitation, fact-finding or other reconciliation measures were deemed unnecessary. This policy of forgetting (Barak, 2007) was supported by a general amnesty law in 1991 that pardoned all war-related crimes (ibid, 6/11). This policy left loss and responsibilities ignored (ibid) and quietly compels victims to perpetrators (Maddison 2015).

Moreover, it paved the way for the political careers of former warlords (Ghosn and Khoury 2011, 391; Ouaiss & Rowayheb 2017, 452-453).

As a result, Lebanese society has not developed the tools to talk about traumatic experiences and injustices are undealt with (Volk 2010, 23; Ghosn and Khoury 2011; Ouaiss 2015; Larkin 2010). A daunting example is Lebanon's history curricula, which ends with the Lebanese independence in 1943 as no agreement exists on what to teach about what happens afterwards (Aboultaif and Tabar 2019; van Ommeren 2015). In absence of a national narrative, each sect advocates its own reading of the past and lessons learned from it. They reference a biased collective memory that reasserts sectarian boundaries and antagonist identities (Aboultaif and Tabar, 97; Van Ommeren 2015, 203; Larkin 2010, 618).

At the same time, Volk points out that political elites have built joint Muslim-Christian memorials (2010). Larkin (2010) conducts interviews with Lebanese youth from diverse backgrounds and finds them struggling to come to terms with history, and to situate themselves in the volatile and divided society. In similar vein, Haugbolle (2010) demonstrates how a wide collection of Lebanese art, film, and literary productions defy sectarian or state narrations of the war (89-129). This heterogeneity suggests that senses of belonging and memory are at individual level not as rigid as it may seem at group level. Instead, different memory discourses exist that are either antagonist or search for common ground. Further, it demonstrates that despite the policy of forgetting, segments of society are engaging with reconciliation. Both points are also reflected in Lebanese CSOs, as will be clarified below.

3.2. The experiences of CSOs in Lebanon

Cautious movement of the alternative NGO

In the aftermath of the civil-war the sectarian orientation of socializing institutions, including associations increased (Kingston 2013, 60). The limited number of CSOs demanding a desectarianization of politics and protection of human rights were largely confronted with restricted freedoms and political unwillingness (Haddad 216,1753; Kingston 2013, 75). Whereas legally protected by freedom of association, CSOs are in practice restricted by ambiguous readings of the law and political interference (Haddad 2016, 1749-1755; Khattab 2015). The working environment for CSOs changed momentarily during the Cedar Revolution, which motivated "alternative NGOs" to seek an overhaul of the sectarian political system,

Syrian withdrawal and free and fair elections (Clark & Salloukh 2013, 740). Nonetheless, alternative NGOs lost their momentum to the face of increased polarization and sectarian violence in the aftermath of the revolution (Clark & Zahar 2015, 9).

This trajectory has laid scholarly emphasis on the persistency of Lebanese sectarian identities, and scattered hope for a cross-confessional civil society (Haddad 2016; Clark & Salloukh 2013, 740-744; Kingston 2013). The post-conflict structures pose an inherent problem for alternative NGOs. They are compelled to interact with sectarian elites is they wish to have a political influence, but this risk reaffirming sectarian divisions or co-option by political elites (Clark & Salloukh 2013, 739-740; Kingston 2013, 75-76). Another issue is "the latent coercive state power by postwar political elites – designed to infiltrate, divide, intimidate and, if need be, repress opposition groups within civil and political society" (Kingston 2013, 61). In result, Aoun and Zahar (2017, 123) find that alternative NGOs avoided anything that would upset the local party, including modifying their programs and toning-down anti-sectarian narratives. CSOs defending human rights have been subjected to arrests, interrogations, and confiscation of goods (Khattab 2015, 8). Alternative NGOs were blocked entry to villages and slandered in sectarian media outlets (Clark & Zahar 2017. 10).

Alternatively, CSOs might peruse 'dishonest' reconciliation. They are created by patron's to "boost their status as "local notables"' (Beydoun in Haddad 2016, 1755). In other countries, CSOs advocated exclusionary definitions of victims and apologetic reading of their group's responsibilities (Verdeja 2009, 158; Nagle 2019, 9; Guzina & Marijan 2013, 193).

Previous reconciliation initiatives

The alternative NGO is a term used mostly to describe CSOs of such type in 2005. It is useful to be aware of the obstacles experienced by alternative NGOs. Now, I move the discussion to more recent CSOs, focusing on reconciliation. Doing so gives reasons to assume that Lebanese CSOs engaged in reconciliation exist and that they require more academic inquiry.

Nagle's (2018a) work is useful to interpret the power-play and relationship between reconciliatory CSOs and the state. He argues that LGBT movements use "constructive engagement" in which "non-sectarian movements use opportunities provided by power-sharing to achieve significant reform or policy change" (1372). He argues that power-sharing causes a dysfunctional health system, LGBT movements jump in this gap to bolster their health services and policies. If we zoom in on reconciliatory processes, Nagle (2018a/b) observed

Lebanese activists protesting against Beirut's city center reconstruction. Reconstruction threatened to erase mnemonic signifiers of war, rendering it a "space amnesiac", (Nagle 2018b, 8): a glamourous business area with no reference to the civil-war, which abandoned local citizens from a site that was traditionally a unique space of intersectarian mingling. Nagle (2018a, 1382) argues that the protesters "actively resist" collective amnesia by successfully pressuring the municipality to turn a historic building into a memory museum.

Similarly, UMAM and SOLIDE are cited by scholars (Nagle 2018a; Ghosn and Khoury, 2011). Both actively resist collective amnesia: UMAM documents and researches Lebanon's war history and SOLIDE fights for the rights of disappeared persons under Syrian occupation. The presence of reconciliatory CSOs is confirmed by a study conducted by Lebanon Support and Forum ZFD (Khaled 2018), that concluded 84 reconciliation initiatives were undertaken by local NGO between 1990 and 2017.

The problem is that academic analysis of these organizations is lacking. This thesis jumps I this gap, assuming that we can learn from in-depth research on these organizations and their experiences, with the ultimate goal to better advance reconciliation processes. The Committee of the Parent the Missing, is the only Lebanese reconciliatory CSO that has been analyzed with this purpose. The Committee's demand for truth about the faith of the missing has been an ongoing struggle since 1982. A study from Kovras (2017) shows how societal fear for retribution deters witnesses from sharing important information about the past. Together with the absence of independent judiciary, and the disinterest of international actors, it has proven extremely difficult for the Committee to make progress. At the same time, Rowayheb & Ouaiss (2015) praise the organization for keeping issue of the missing alive in public and political agenda. They attribute this success to the carefully formulated strategy: calling upon the right to know instead of insisting on accountability or persecution, and emphasizing shared identity of suffering, enabled the CSO to maintain a cross-sectarian membership.

The scholarly disinterest of the Lebanese case stands in sharp contrast with the attention given to civil society induced reconciliation processes in for instance Chile, Peru, Argentina and Guatemala (Verdeja 2009 147-156). As waning reconciliation continues to fuel violence in Lebanon and deprives victims of their rights, this case deserves more attention. Therefore, this thesis sheds some light on this issue by researching the role of Lebanese CSOs in reconciliation. This chapter has demonstrated that understanding CSO actions and strategies would be impossible without framing CSOs within the sociopolitical structures of sectarianism

and corruption which impede reconciliatory efforts. Given this backdrop, this thesis adds to the interesting debate on the yield of alternative CSOs in Lebanon. More so, this knowledge is essential to address the third research question: what opportunities and obstacles characterize the CSOs' work?

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to understand the role of CSOs in reconciling post-conflict Lebanon. Qualitative semi-structured interviews are hold with interlocutors in reconciliatory CSOs. Eight interlocutors from different CSOs were interviewed, see Appendix I. They were approached based on proiri selection of CSOs according to the functions of reconciliation CSOs described in chapter 2, and through snowballing[7]. These sources were supplemented by ready-available information and publications of the CSO on the internet. Three sub questions structure the following chapters, and guide the analysis of the main research question:

1. How do CSO activists define reconciliation?
2. What projects do CSOs have and what is their function for reconciliation?
3. What opportunities and obstacles characterize the CSOs' work?

In the first sub-question, the activists meaning of reconciliation is uncovered. This is realized by using the framework of political reconciliation as a lens to interpret the information shared by the interlocutors. To answer the second sub-question, primary interview material and secondary sources from the internet are analyzed, resulting in an overview of 16 different CSOs (see Appendix II). The objective is to describe what kind of reconciliation projects have been undertaken and how they contribute to reconciliation according to Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) terminology of functions. Sub-question three discusses the opportunities and obstacles which were raised by the interlocutors. These are analyzed taking into consideration the structural environment in which a reconciliatory CSO operates. The idea of the "negotiated reconciliation project" is developed to conceptualize the interaction between CSOs and the opportunities and (structural) obstacles the face, and how this informs some of their strategic choices and capabilities.

<u>On interview-style and generalizability</u>
The semi-structured interview style allows all aspects of the research question to be covered in a flexible manner. This is useful, because questions and answers do not follow the neat categorization of the sub-research questions: the answer to a descriptive question about a

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[7] See Bryman 2012, p. 424 for an explanation of the snowballing technique.

project might simultaneously shed light on factors that were particularly advantageous for its implementation. Additionally, it allows the respondent to raise issues they deem important, making their interpretation of things the central point of departure (Bryman 2012, 471). For instance, whereas questions about the perceived obstacles were always brought up, it is up to the interlocutor to decide what it views as an obstacle (Warren & Karer 2010, 157). This proved a useful way to not restrict the research within the boundaries of its theoretical framing, leading to discussions around donor-related issues. Furthermore, this interview style ensures the comfortability of the interlocutors as they to a certain extend control the conversation (ibid). Caution was taken to protect the confidentiality of information and interlocutors. Interviews were conducted over Skype.

It is the objective of qualitative research to interpret a situation, not to formulate generalizable social 'laws' or causalities (Bryman 2012; Warren & Karner 2010). Hence, the findings should remain within their social context, namely that of a small number of Lebanese CSO and my interpretations. The interpretations in the empirical chapters are guided by citations directly taken from the interviews. This is a conscious choice not only to invite readers to actively engage with my interpretation. More so, with this methodology I hope to account for potential problems in representing the "other" as a student raised and educated in the West[8]. My intention is to represent the activists as accurately as possible and accredit them critical agency vis-à-vis their work and society.

It is unlikely that the findings of this thesis are representable for all reconciliation activists in Lebanon. First of all, the interlocutors themselves sometimes expressed very different experiences, signaling the contingency of reconciliatory CSOs and their experiences in Lebanon. Secondly, the research was limited to English speaking interlocutors, websites and reports. Thirdly, organizations of which no recent activity or updates could be found in the last three years were eliminated[9]. Moreover, given the occasionally risky operating environment of the activists, it is uncertain to what extend the interlocutors share their complete

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[8] This is a post-colonial critique. Post-colonialist have analyzed the hierarchical power relationship between the Western observer representing the non-Western other. They demonstrate that the subaltern is frequently falsely represented: it has its voice muted or transformed into a meaning that observer desires to attribute to it. See e.g. Said, E. (1978).*Orientalism.* Or Spivak, G.C. (1983). *Can the subaltern speak*.

[9] This led to the elimination of the Sustainable Democracy Center, SOLIDE, and the Partnership Center for Development and Democracy. Organizations that likely have, or are, working for reconciliatory purposes.

experiences and opinions. Undoubtedly, another research, preferably in the field and overcoming language barriers, would yield more, and possibly different, insights.

The objective of this thesis is thus not to give a complete image of reconciliatory CSOs in Lebanon. If appreciated in this way, the grounded findings can help to fill a part of the knowledge gap on Lebanese CSOs working on reconciliation. The findings have three inductive values: Firstly, they engage with the academic debate on reconciliation by interpreting the meaning of reconciliation "on the ground", by the interlocutors. Secondly, the findings help to gauge the potential of these CSOs in reconciling Lebanon. Thirdly, the findings can be used to reflect on cross-cutting or alternative CSOs working in Lebanon's deeply divided and corrupt society.

CHAPTER 5: RECONCILIATION THROUGH THE EYES OF LEBANESE CSOs

This chapter asks how CSO activists define reconciliation. The answer is not a straight forward analysis. We have seen that reconciliation is an inherently contested and normative concept (Schaap 2005), and people likely define it differently. For instance, reconciliation can be associated with conciliation, meaning two adversary parties that mediate their conflict. A subsequent analysis would then revolve around conflict settlement but not political reconciliation. Hence, asking interlocutors directly how they define reconciliation might not reap satisfactory results. Moreover, the interviewer can lead-on the interviewee asking directly about reconciliation: Not wanting to disappoint the researcher, the interviewee might make connections between their work and reconciliation, which they would otherwise not do (Bryman 2012, 257/474). To overcome these problems, I analyze the interlocutor's stated problem-analysis and objectives, and their reflections on their work. I assess this information using the definition of Schaap (2005) and Maddison and Little (2017) of reconciliation as political reconciliation.

5.1. Activists' perceptions on the roots of conflict

Talking about the problems the CSOs address, the conversation led to what the interlocutors perceive as the drivers of conflict in Lebanon. Interpreting the problem-analysis, the interlocutors share with reconciliation in a concern over intergroup animosities and the unaddressed past. Like Maddison (2017), they recognize the proliferation of this conflict at a relational, institutional and constitutional level. The analysis of Mazen Abu Hamdan, a civil activist working for various CSOs, is exemplary.

> we have issues with very little or limited public spaces: people don't really meet and talk, or media or tv stations are mostly religious affiliated, most of them. And people live in different areas … you never see the other person. You never see them; you only hear about them in the news ... once you listen to how different people perceive other groups and they have never met these groups. and they have never had a conversation, it becomes apparent that the problem is not just politics, it is also fear, distrust, lack of communication and all this adds up to a volatile situation (to author, 18 Nov 2019).

He expresses concern over intergroup mistrust and fear, which manifests itself institutionally in space, education and media, leading to a "volatile situation". Fadi Abi Allam speaks of a conflict mentality within Lebanese society, which together with the wide circulation of arms result in violent resolutions to conflict.

In another institutional and constitutional dimension of reconciliation, they point towards the politicians who asserted political power with the Ta'if agreement. Illustrative are the words of Makram Ouaiss, member and former chair of Wahdatouna Khalasouna (Our Unity Is Our Salvation) a coalition of NGOs and individuals that work together to promote peace:

> They took of their military garb and they put on their suits and all that, political suits. And that obviously was a huge problem. That meant that you suddenly had former militias, war lords, and politicians, that are running the show not wanting anyone to check what they have done, not wanting them to hold them into account. Not wanting them to strengthen the state, so the state could take decisions that might challenge their power or the judiciary for that manner, because the judiciary would mean that they would investigate certain cases, they might find them guilty. So there was an attempt, if you like, at blocking various aspects of governance by these people, including the discovery of the truth about the missing and the disappeared. (Makram Ouaiss, Wahdatouna Khalasouna, to author, 15 Nov, 2019).

As noted by Markam Oauiss, the political elite block all chances at discussing the war, or dealing with its injustices (also Mazen Abu Hamdan; Jean-Paul Chami,; Fadi Abi Allam, Permanent Peace Movement, to author, 19 Nov 2019; Yara, Fighters for Peace, to author, 9 Dec 2019). Raffi (Peace Labs, to author, 20 Okt 2019) asserts that citizens distrust politicians and the state, because they include people one was at war with once. As a consequence, citizens reaffirm sectarianism by turning to their sect for security and protection of their interests.

Therefore, the interlocutors agree with political reconciliation in that advancing their objectives requires an involvement of all levels (Fadi Abi Allam; Fadi El-Hajjar; Jean-Paul Chami; Ana Daou, Adyan Foundation, to author, 11 Nov 2019), thereby combining bottom-up with top-down processes. However, reaching the top appears difficult given the institutional arrangements. Interlocutors sketch an environment of self-interested elites, with an unclear distinction between political leaders and powerful communal figures, that extract power from polarizations in society. According to Raffi: "it is in their benefit to maintain the system that

took them to war". The political system is emblematic of this argument, because it obscures political accountability. According to Mazen Abu Hamdan: "He [a politician] happens to be the representative of that religious group in the government, and an attack on that person becomes an attack on that group. And then this group would defend him and then the whole thing would become a sectarian division. And then someone would say: okay to preserve civil peace we would not hold him accountable. And life would go on.". Fadi El-Hajjar is a longtime expert on peacebuilding, working for different Lebanese CSOs and INGOs. Political accountability is lacking in his eyes because citizens have to work through "middle men" that mediate their politics. As a result, politicians are relatively free to do as they please, while citizens depend on them for public services (to author, 7 Nov 2019).

However, they also depart from reconciliation's preoccupation with intergroup relationships. The activists view conflict caused by sectarian antagonism. Made clear by Fadi Abi Allam, head of the Permanent Peace Movement, peace cannot be realized without addressing issues of human security and justice. It is the job of peacebuilders to safeguarding the access to food, development, social rights, security, democracy and a sustainable environment. Similarly, poverty and underdevelopment are roots of conflict for Mazen Abu Hamdan, because it leaves the youth with no opportunities to develop themselves. Left bored and unhappy, they are "more likely to join a group to feel more accomplished". These groups are often violent and radical associations. This interconnectedness between intergroup conflict and socioeconomic grievances in society is also demonstrated by Wahadatouna Khalasouna. In respone to 2008 clashes between 14th of March and 8th of March supporters, it united CSOs from diverse backgrounds not limited to peacebuilding, such as tourism, women's rights, education and environment. The interlocutors also raise other drivers of conflict that reconciliation does not address. One of these is the spill-overs from the Syrian civil war (Fadi Abi Allam). Another is the interference from foreign powers, which can exacerbate strife (Makram Ouaiss; Mazen Abu Hamdan; Jean-Paul Chami).

5.2. Reconciliation through the eyes of the activists

Reconciliation as an individually constructed mindset

Interpreting the mission and strategies of the interlocutors, it appears that they advocate a mental change. Jean-Paul Chami, the founder of Peace Labs calls it the "software": "How we think about things. How we perceive things.". Yara, from Fighters For Peace, speaks of a

"process of self-change" in which ex-combatants take lessons from their past actions and look with new eyes to their former enemies. Therefore, their work is described as a long term, continuous process (Jean-Paul Chami, Ana Daou, Mazen Abu Hamdan; Fadi El-Hajjar; Makram Ouaiss). The interlocutors focus on the mindset and perception of people is in line with the findings of Maarten and Scholten (2018). Researching the meaning of "peace" for Lebanese peacebuilders, they found that the usual interpretation was "peace as a personal endeavor". Here, peace is a personal mindset or agency, to deal with others on the basis of tolerance and empathy. If shared by sufficient citizens, it provides the basis for *silim*, peace between different social groups (150-152).

The CSOs employ a value-based approach, encouraging people to embrace the same values as political reconciliation: pluralism, tolerance, non-violence and human rights. Exemplary is Adyan Foundation, whose primary objective is to educate citizens on the values of solidarity, diversity and dignity. According to Ana Daou, employee of Adyan: "So what we try to do is break the walls in the minds of kinds, and tell them that this society is for everyone and not just for a specific group of people". Fadi Abi Allam describes his aspiration to transform the culture of violence into a culture of tolerance:

> How can we address the mentality for not having violence as an acceptable means in all situations? Whatever we are facing, we should not go for violence. Violence it is in our culture, unfortunately now, it is equal to heroism. Who is the hero? The hero is the one having arms and killing. So killing is a kind of heroism and not the tolerance. Tolerance should go for the people who are weak … addressing this it was a big issue for us, and always we are trying to have tolerance at the top step of the ladder of values.

In line with this, Makram Ouaiss stated that the biggest achievement of Wadhatouna Khalasouna was to make aspects of civil society, confessional groups, and politicians acceptive to the message of civil peace. These values and rights are explicitly part of the workshops and trainings, and implicitly communicated in the other activities of CSOs (see chapter 7). Nonetheless, the values expressed by the interlocutors are not exclusively part of political reconciliation. As a matter of fact, liberal peacebuilding is embedded in human rights discourse (Chandler 2017, 48-50). The link between the interlocutors and political reconciliation is clearer elsewhere.

One of these links is the way the interlocutors seek common ground between antagonistic citizen. Contrary to restorative reconciliation's appeal for a unitary national identification, the interlocutor's do not predetermine the basis for common ground. Rather, I argue the basis for transformation is personally constructed. What they do is to create a safe space where citizens can come to a new understanding of the other and of the self. An example is the "Roadmap to Peace" launched by Peace Labs and Fighters For Peace. In this program the organizations met with residents of the Alawite neighborhood of Jabal Mohsen and with their Sunni neighbors from Bab Al-Tabbaneh, in Tripoli. Since the civil-war until now, a violent conflict pits the two neighborhoods against each other (Aoun & Zahar 2017, 104). The organizations created a testimony of the grievances and reasons for conflict. The compiled findings were then presented to both neighborhoods: "A major conclusion was that they all had an "aha moment", that 90% of what was said was similar. Both were impoverished, both felt that they were played out by politicians, both speaking the same language, they are both Muslims. This is when they started accepting the idea of meeting with one another." (Jean-Paul Chami).

In other words, the interlocutors enabled the creation of a subjective and contextually embedded 'we'. For instance, the cross-sectarian 'we' created by the Committee of the Families of the Disappeared was based on a shared identity of suffering (Rowayheb & Ouaiss 2015, 1018). This strategy is also visible in the upcoming chapters: Adyan created a 'we' between religious clergy based upon shared values in Lebanese religions; collectively experienced fun forms the 'we' between children; a shared abject to sectarianism the basis the CSOs' student-clubs. This does not mean that the interlocutors never referred to their overarching Lebanese identity (Fadi Abi Allam; Yara), the point is that the basis for co-existence arises in a complete opposite strategy compared that of liberal peacebuilders and transitional justice.

Approaches to conflict and the past

Besides their responsibility in transforming relationships, the interlocutors express a need to change perceptions on conflict. Both political reconciliation and the interlocutors dismiss conflict as an inherent problem for society: "The problem is not the conflict; conflict can be an opportunity. In some places we are making conflict, but not violence" (Fadi Abi Allam). According to Fadi El-Hajjar, the mission is "to bring parties of all levels to understand their conflict and work on their issues". This educative role is vivid in an objective by Ana Daou: "to

raise political literacy, because politics and religion is really closely related in Lebanon, so to know how to differentiate both".

Take not of Raffi's statement:

> Our approach stems from the fact that we need to transform this conflict into something that can be beneficial for us … We only see two people fighting and then we try to act on it. While the real underlying reasons are something much deeper than this. And normally, 80% or 90% of the reasons, in general, are systemic, or structural. And this is the part where you would like to have people fighting the rules of the game and questioning them. Rather than directly engaging with demonizing the other.

In this statement, Raffi seems to encourage "cognitive liberation". Which is "a process through which activists inspire individuals to formalize shared understandings of their situation as one of oppression and marginalization so that they achieve groupness" (McAdam 1982, in Nagle 2018a, 1385). Empowering citizens to understand the roots of conflict can help them to transform conflict, in the process it stimulates a reinterpretation of the assumed difference between the self and to the other.

A major part the work of the CSOs observed in this thesis revolves around the violent past. As will become apparent in the upcoming chapters, in numerous activities CSOs challenge the collective amnesia and advocate the rights of victims. Their strategy strongly overlaps with political reconciliation: the activists acknowledge the multiplicity of narratives. Commenting on an attempt to stimulate dialogue on history, Ana Daou states: "we can have different versions of one history. Because different things happen, so what happened in Eastern Beirut is different from what happened in Western Beirut, because of the difference in perspectives.". Doing so, can transform the image of the enemy and contributes to the acknowledgement and tolerance for difference. This is explained by Yara, who, as the youngest employee of Fighters For Peace, did not live through the civil-war:

> Sharing different narratives of the civil war, it makes a chance for the new generation to know that the other is not an enemy. To get to know the other who is also fighting for the same reasons that he or she is fighting on his[/her] side. They both want a better country and they are all fighting for identity … The direct and indirect messages of these narratives is that we all have different opinions … so why not keep dialogue, non-violent dialogue, or using non-violent tools to fight for our goals and defend our opinions.

To add, The Permanent Peace Movement platforms marginalized narratives on the civil war, such as peaceful initiatives and the role of women.

5.3 Conclusion

Reconciliation is a contested concept, hence a first step to understand the role local CSOs can play in the Lebanese reconciliation process is to interpret the interlocutor's definition of the term. First of all, the findings of this chapter demonstrate that the interlocutors are in fact situated within the reconciliation paradigm. They locate intergroup mistrust and animosities as causing conflict in Lebanese society. Their mission is to replace these feelings with values of tolerance, diversity, and an acknowledgement of the other's dignity and rights. This chapter also emphasizes that the ideas of the interlocutors are not limited to reconciliation. Their problematization of foreign meddling in Lebanon, and economic and social disparities, locates their work within a broader quest for peace, justice and development.

They regard reconciliation as the transformation of the mind. This means setting the "software" to the just mentioned values, and to a new outlook on conflict and the past. An outlook that better understands the reasons for conflict, takes lessons from it, as well as acknowledges that conflictual opinions and different readings of the past exist side by side. Especially with an eye on the latter two aspects, I argue that the interlocutors resemble political reconciliation, and distance themselves from restorative reconciliation's attempt to "end" conflict and uncover a single truth.

It follows that the interlocutors regard reconciliation as a highly personal affair. They aid this process by creating a condition that allows Lebanese citizens to construct their own basis for co-existence with the other. Different to restorative primacy on a top-down national identity to bridge antagonist groups, common ground is constructed in a participatory, bottom-up manner. Their strategy directs attention towards the grassroots and contextually embedded nature of the CSOs.

Nonetheless, achieving this personal change requires work that transcend the relational level. In a reference to political reconciliation, the interlocutors call to mind the Maddison's (2017) multi-level framework of conflict transformation. For example, the interlocutors identify Lebanese socializing institutions as harboring divisions. Additionally, they point towards the political system and self-interested elites, that entrench sectarianism. The role of

the CSOs in reconciliation will become evident further in the upcoming chapter, where the actions more than the words of the CSOs are analyzed in their relation to reconciliation.

CHAPTER 6: MAPPING INITIATIVES OF LEBANESE CSOs
AND THEIR FUNCTIONS IN RECONCILIATION

The objective of this chapter is to underline the diversity of actions undertaken by CSOs, and how they can contribute to the process of reconciliation. This argument is organized by reviewing each function of reconciliation separately, following the ameliorated framework of Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) constructed in chapter 2. A detailed list of the 16 researched CSOs and their programs and corresponding functions is found in Appendix II. The function Intermediation and Facilitation is omitted. It is left out because the actions referring to this category, CSOs negotiating between different actors to ensure aid delivery or prisoners releases, were not found. Moreover, probable actions can also belong to Protection or Advocacy and Public Communication. The methodology section directed attention towards the build-in limitations of this research and its sourcing. It follows that this chapter gives an impression rather than an exact and exhaustive description of reconciliatory CSOs in Lebanon.

6.1. CSOs' functions in reconciliation

1. Protection

According to Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) this function entails demilitarization and establishing safe-zone's, and occurs during conflict and its immediate aftermath. As a potential actor in demilitarization, The Permanent Peace Movement campaigns against the use of child soldiers, the wide circulation of fire-arms among the population, and lobbied for ratification of an international Arms Treaty. I want to take this opportunity to highlight the permeability of the functions, and the subjectivity of categorization: because these actions are (media) campaign and the impact is unsure, I choose to discuss it under the Advocacy and Public Communication function.

Nonetheless, I propose that if prevention is incorporated into the function of protection, it constitutes a reconciliatory function carried out by CSOs. The Permanent Peace Movement and Peace Labs strengthen conflict mitigation structures in communities that were previously engaged in fighting, or that know rising tensions. A cessation of violence conditions their work (Jean-Paul Chami), hence they prevent, rather than protect from, violence. Fadi Abi Allam explanations their strategy:

> We didn't suggest everything about that [conflict resolution] because conflict resolution and mediation is existent in every community, but here we are trying to reflect how they are doing this, and trying to improve, giving some ideas on how to make it better referring to the most known successful ways of mediation …. here we were able to solve a lot of issues on the local level. And we created a kind of competition where we were having meetings with more than one village to let them speak about their successful stories after our intervention.

This strategy directs highlights the grassroot approach through which the Permanent Peace Movement responded to increased tensions in the Beqaa Valley due to a large influx of Syrian refugees. The program motivated the communities to search for the root of their conflict. When the community pointed towards water shortages, the Permanent Peace Movement conceived an action plan to resolve this. This plan then seems to feedback into reconciliation, as Bekdache (2015) reports that the sharing of water management practices across the valley helped to strengthen the network between villages. As the previous chapter also arguments, we can see here that the CSOs' work goes further than reconciling relationships. Their approach lays importance on the interconnectedness between lagging reconciliation and socioeconomic grievances. To add, Fadi El-Hajjar expressed similar success when establishing peace committees in a community in conflict over water resources. He expresses that the newly found structures created a new "sub-culture", and were mimicked across the community as a means to resolve their disputes.

2. Monitoring and Accountability

The theoretic chapter demonstrated that monitoring as part of the reconciliation process can take the shape of human rights monitoring. The Lebanese Center for Human Rights publishes blogs and reports on human rights violations, and they stand-up for the rights of families of the missing and of detained. March Lebanon reports on censorship and curbed personal freedoms, particularly around art and media. It has a hotline for cyber censorship which can be used to give legal advice to online activists or media that promote controversial causes.

The second monitoring function is an "active resistance" (Nagle 2018a) against the state-

endorsed amnesia of the past. UMAM Documentation and Research documents memories of war and stimulates public reflection on it. UMAM eloquently expresses how such work contributes to reconciliation:

> While UMAM D&R made the conscious decision to abstain from setting lofty and idealist goals (such as peace building and achieving reconciliation), it believes that the work it does is instrumental in facilitating the achievement of such goals. After all, unless concepts such as historical and political self-analysis, understanding the formulation of national and communal identities and acknowledging and recognizing responsibility and blame (vis-à-vis Lebanon's political and sociocultural practices) are recognized and discussed, there can be no hope of surmounting the challenges of the past and present—to say nothing of the future. (UMAM, n.d.).

With similar purpose, Fighters For Peace publishes online interviews with ex-combatants sharing their recollections and lessons learned of war. Aside from creating databases, documentaries are an often used medium for communicating the past. These are aired in towns or in schools.

ACT for the Disappeared operates the online website "Fushat Amal" where information and testimonies on missing persons are documented. The organization further works on identifying and monitoring mass graves. These findings are not made public (Waddell, 22 April 2018), because in monitoring, this case, exposes accountability. An ACT activist explains that the location of mass graves automatically implies the responsibility of a militia group: "If you dig graves in the Christian part of Beirut it's a way of highlighting the responsibility of Christian militias" (in Kovras 2017, 144). The importance of the database is its potential to assist fact-finding work in the future. Similarly, a database from the International Red Cross advocates the right to the truth about the missing. After a lobby by Wahdatouna Khalasouna, the INGO started collecting DNA of exhumes and of families of the missing (Makram Ouaiss).

3. Advocacy and Public Communication

Appendix II indicates that this is an popular function of the observed CSOs. Wahdatouna Khalasouna part-took in a lobby directed at opening the memory museum in a war-torn historic house in Beirut that Nagle (2018a/b) discussed earlier. The coalition also advised on the content of the museum (Makram Ouaiss). Adyan Foundation lobbied with the government until a memorandum of understanding was signed which recognized the need of inclusive

citizenship education (Adyan Foundation, 2013). This framework became the guiding principle for the revision of the civics and philosophy curricula in high school, which the Foundation implemented in tandem with the Ministry of Education (Ana Daou). To add, the Permanent Peace Movement successfully lobbied for the ratification of the UN Arms Trade Treaty. It can help to reduce violence by creating more transparency on arms trade and controlling illicit trade to Lebanese militia.

Various CSOs have access to political decision-making at the highest level. Wahdatouna Khalasouna regularly sent envoys to talk to national politicians (Makram Ouaiss). Fadi Abi Allam is currently consultant of the prime minister on issues of human security and was consultant of the minister of Internally Displaced Persons between 2008-2010. Additionally, CSOs reach the political spheres by sending letters and inviting politicians to attend numerous events (Makram Ouaiss). The lobby actions also address the international level, such as the example of the International Red Cross. CSOs raise awareness for their causes by international donors and present their findings to them (Jean-Paul Chami). The Permanent Peace Movement receives international accreditation for its work through a their permanent-consult status at the UN.

Between the list of different lobby actions by the CSOs in Appendix II, the absence of successful lobbying actions around history is eminent. It suggests that grand issues of reconciliation, such as right to know and past injustices, are too sensitive to either make it to the political table or to materialize in success. For example, Badael Alternatives advocates the cases of children who got separated from their families. Not unregularly leading to international adoption, these separations happened mostly during war-times. The CSO drafted a bill which could regulate family segregation and unification which has had no political response until now. At the same time, government's adoption of policy proposals lobbied by CSOs is not a guarantee for change. For instance, Restart Center is founded in response to the civil-war with the goal to rebuild the lives of torture and trauma survivors. It pressured the government to adopt a law on torture and criminalization. The law passed parliament in 2017 but since, Amnesty International (2018) and the Lebanese Center for Human Rights (2019) have reported government's failure to implement the law. The National Human Rights Institute, the responsible body, is inactive due to insufficient budget and its delay in the nomination of members. The adopted law also troubles transparency on the prosecution of perpetrators (LCHR 2019, 16). This example demonstrates that political

inefficiency hampers the realization of reconciliation policies. Possibly, this inefficiency is a deliberate mechanism of elites unhappy to see this law into action. Nonetheless, the adoption of the law does mean that the issue advocated by the CSO won some of political legitimacy. Interestingly, looking the Monitoring and Accountability and Service Delivery function, the CSOs do seem to make progress on these issues outside of the political arena.

Much of the advocacy takes precedence outside of the political hallways by influencing public opinion through public deliberation. Media is an obvious medium for this goal. In the online talk-show *fin al-khadeen* (can we talk about religion), by Adyan Foundation, two people from different religious backgrounds discuss, at times controversial, issues. The fact that the one episode of the show was vehemently criticized by a Syrian Sheikh might illustrate the show's reach (Ana Daou). CSO's have embarked on social media campaigns or used billboards to advertise their values. Both venues were used by the Permanent Peace Movement to de-normalize celebratory shooting in the air at weddings and public events. The movement conceived the fake gun company "Elegun", where wedding planners could hire shooters online and were given the choice between different appearances, guns, and garb. Arriving at the Elegun's costs for hiring, web-shop visitors would read that "the only expenses are the lives of friends and family." By inciting shock and surprise, and drawing on their network of politicians and influencers, the campaign reached a large body of the Lebanese audience, (News Tactics In Human Rights, n.d.). Generating awareness through the media is further realized by involving media people in the CSO's activities, which is done by Adyan Foundation. Similarly, media people are part of the coaltion Wahdatouna Khalasouna.

Other activities that use advocacy and public communication include protesting and campaigning on the streets, which is part of the usual repertoire employed by the Committee of the Families of the Disappeared (Rowayheb and Ouaiss 2015). Art is another medium through which to spread public awareness. In the exhibition "Empty Chairs, Waiting Families" ACT for the Disappeared, together with the International Red Cross and a local NGO, displayed chairs to symbolize the space of the missing relatives that occupy the minds of Lebanese families (The Economist, 2018). Public communication is further achieved by openly publishing findings and recommendations. For example, CSOs often do field research before formulating an appropriate response program or write a report with recommendations. These publications are sometimes shared as an exchange of best practices, to raise awareness, and to mobilize support from INGOs or foreign states (Jean-Paul Chami).

4. Socialization and a Culture of Peace

All initiatives of the CSOs socialize the target group to reconciliation's values, as these values are present implicitly in the projects. For example, the Elegun campaign protested against celebratory shooting, which carries a broader message of non-violence. Here, however, I aim to platform actions that explicitly communicate a culture of reconciliation.

One strategy is to influence education. Adyan Foundation "constructively engaged" (Nagle 2018a) with the Ministry of Education, to revise the civics and philosophy curriculum in a way that stresses Lebanese religious and cultural diversity. In another initiative, the foundation brought together religious clergy from all sects to create a religious handbook for religious educators of backgrounds. Approved by the highest religious authority of each sect, it provides lesson plans to teach values of justice, diversity and respect, emphasizing how they are shared across religions. In this way, education can be an important vehicle to expose Lebanese citizens at a young age to values and discourses that lie at the heart of reconciliation. Furthermore, it is a counterforce against the majority of the Lebanese education, which often reinforces intergroup divisions and conflict (Van Ommeren 2015; Baytiyeh 2017; Mazen Abu Hamdan, Ana Daou).

Socialization also happens in the form of workshops and trainings around values of human rights, tolerance and peace. Some of these trainings also certify participants to give the same workshops in their local communities. According to Fadi El-Hajjar, trainings can have a big impact on the individual level. He and Jean-Paul Chami both reported participants expressing their newfound conviction to resort to non-violence after a training. Alternatively, they can teach specific capacities. For instance, NAHNOO's "municipalities under spotlight" campaign trains citizens on the values of good governance and on how to demand from municipalities. Restart Center gives trainings to health professionals, lawmakers, and politicians to increase awareness and adequate responses to torture.

Dialogue projects can also inspire a culture of reconciliation. Fighters For Peace gives dialogue sessions in which two ex-combatants from two different groups share their stories and their process of self-change. Yara comments on these activities:

> [it] is really controversial to be present and to tell a story of yourself during the civil war. This still has a big importance today, for them to hear stories from people who witnessed this thing. This could change a lot of the students' perspectives. But also, it creates

sometimes a lot of dialogue, more like a debate, from people especially who are committed in political parties or who belong to a community where they are very conventional or they did not go through this, process of hearing other perspectives, or let's say believing others people's stories.

Fighters For Peace is not afraid resist the policy of forgetting the civil-war. According to Yara, the deliberation of controversial issues challenges people to reassess their perceptions and world views. While changing student perspectives, she acknowledges that their approach makes other people angry who feel violated in their antagonistic self-image and narrative.

5. Conflict Sensitive Social Cohesion

Within this function, reconciliation can be achieved by fostering intergroup bonding, which helps people to let go of stereotypes and to build trust with members of another group. This function is aptly summarized by Mazen Abu Hamdan:

You can't teach peace; you just have to bring people and make them realize that they do have much in common. Not actually saying these exact words but creating the opportunities to bond and kind of connect at a deeper level, and then the religious divisions become less potent.

One way to this is to bring people from different backgrounds together. The Unite Lebanon Youth Project (ULYP) has brought Lebanese and Palestinian youth closer together in its "Frame by Frame for Peace", in which pupils produced short films together. Apart from relieving animosities between youth, they are also taught new forms of expression (Bortolazzi 2013, 21). Not only ULYP, but also Al-Jana, Adyan Foundation, Aie Serve and Chaml use capacity building programs that attire youth with new skills while they form intergroup ties. They can also be less "serious": MARCH Lebanon unites youth from Tripoli's Jabal Mohsen and Bab Al-Tabbaneh neighborhoods in football matches.

A major task of the CSO is thus to provide a safe place for interaction. In this light we can view the work of NAHNOO, they campaign for the opening and preservation of public space. NAHNOO had some considerable successes opening, for example, Horsh Beirut park, located at the "Green Line" that divided Beirut during the civil-war. In the meantime, Makram Ouaiss demonstrates that protecting public space is not always successful. As part of the redevelopment of Beirut's city center, the construction of a "garden of forgiveness" started in

2003 as a public site for reconciliation. Since 2008, military barracks have been built on the park, halting the redevelopment and opening of the park. A painstaking issue for civil activists: "So although we tried quite hard to push this issue, we were constantly hitting against this boundary of politicians not wanting to upset the army or the police force, that they relied on for whatever they wanted to do in that area" (Makram Ouaiss). Here, Makram Ouaiss points to two things. Firstly, politicians depend on army presence in down-town Beirut to control societal tensions (Fawaz, Harb & Gharbieh 2012, 180-183), which interestingly forecloses reconciliation initiatives intended to reduce some of these tensions. Besides, they depend on the army to safeguards elites' economic and political interests (ibid.), which are apparently prioritized over a garden of forgiveness. Secondly, the army has their own interest as well, and its presence gives it significant leverage over the shape and identity of the down-town Beirut, including the garden (Vloeberghs 2015, 335). It follows that a complicated web of security, political, and economic interests impede the reconciliation process here.

6. Service Delivery

CSOs participated in different public service activities that aid reconciliation. One of these is the yearly commemoration of the start of the Lebanese civil-war, organized by Wahdatouna Khalasouna. This is interesting since public commemoration events are rare and commemoration is usually of sectarian or political character (Haugbolle 2010, 197). Another service is the provision of (psychological) aid to victims. Centre Nassim is a rehabilitation center for ex-political prisoners who have been victims of torture, founded by the Lebanese Centre for Human Rights. The Committee of the Family of the Missing has support-groups for their members. These activities help victims of war to cope with their trauma and become full members of society again. Another service delivery program is undertaken by Badael Alternatives. In an attempt to re-connect families, they have a platform where families and separated individuals identify themselves. Fighters For Peace assumes responsibility over the rehabilitation of ex-combatants by supporting their "process of self-healing and self-change" (Yara). The lack of state supported rehabilitation of ex-combatants locks ex-fighters in their sectarian networks, on which they depend for self-justification and jobs (Rowayheb & Ouaiss 2017, 2014-2015). Consequentially, states De Clerck (2012, 62), ex-militias pass their romantizations and frustrations on the war to younger generations, which helps their

recruitment into militia forces. The work of Fighters For Peace contributes to reconciliation by breaking this cycle.

6.2. CSOs as innovative agents of reconciliation?

The previous chapter's exposed that the activists' goals and perceptions align with political reconciliation. This chapter makes evident that the observed CSOs can turn their ambitions into action. I argue that the CSOs play different functions that advance the reconciliation process. I want to emphasize not only the impressive diversity of actions, but also their ability to influence multiple levels: 1) at the grassroots, transforming interpersonal relationships, 2) at the middle-level, incorporating key figures across the society, such as religious leaders or media figures 3) nationally, lobbying politicians and, 4) internationally, in collaboration with INGOs and international institutions such as the UN.

This leads me to conclude that the observed CSOs are agents of reconciliation in Lebanon. At the same time, the majority of the CSOs' work revolves around Advocacy and Public Communication and Socialization and a Culture of Peace. However, the direct role of these actions in the reconciliation process is unclear. CSOs' calls often fell on politicians' deaf ears when advocating radical reconciliation measures, dealing with history or war victims. However, this did not stop CSOs from promoting these issues in "alternative spaces" outside of the political domain. In what Nagle (2018a) called an active resistance, they defy a system based upon divides and collective amnesia. Examples are the online databases documenting the civil-war, the rehabilitation of victims and ex-combatants, or building cross-sectarian relationships. On the other hand, Paffenholz and Spruk (2006, 29) and Dudouet (2007, 27) show that the transmission of values and ideas in these "alternative spaces" do not necessarily translate into effect on the receiving audience. Yara illustrated this point, explaining how dialogue projects increase mutual understanding but also spur anger and reaffirm diametrical opposition. It raises the question to what extend the role of CSOs in the reconciliation process in Lebanon is constrained, or how they have maneuvered around such obstacles. This discussion placed at the center in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7: THE NEGOTIATED RECONCILIATION PROJECT: OPPORTUNITIES AND HITTING THE BARRIERS

Appreciating that different Lebanese CSOs are contributing to reconciliation in diverse and creative manners accredits them a valuable position as local agents of peace. From the interviews with the interlocutors, a few things emerge in this chapter as particularly conducive to their success: a participatory and grassroot approach, collaboration with other CSOs and the younger generation. Secondly, I argue for a "negotiated reconciliation process" to understand better projects that failed, that are still waiting to be implemented, or in where the contribution to reconciliation is uncertain. In the negotiated reconciliation process, CSO activists are constantly balancing between their ideals of a genuine political reconciliation process and constrains on its practical feasibility. I identify three constrains that activists have to manage to materialize a reconciliation program: sectarianism, corruption, and resource-based problems.

7.1. Best practices of reconciliation projects

A participatory approach that includes all sectarian groups appears a useful strategy to achieve reconciliatory goals. The embodiment of this strategy is the coalition of NGOs and activists of Wahdatouna Khalasouna. According to Makram Ouaiss:

> The groups that were brought together were not only very diverse in terms of their area of expertise, but they were also very diverse in terms of representing different groups and different sectarian groups. That was also a very important factor because it gave this coalition the ability to reach into communities that have been walled off, and closed to other groups. So suddenly, this group of people had the ability to talk to politicians on all sides, because it included people that were from all these different communities. They were able to also gain credibility, by being able to keep people from different sides together.

In the Lebanese sectarian system, politicians are mostly promoting the interest of their own sect. Cross-communal coalitions, like Wahdatouna Khalasouna, can transcend this zero-sum nature of politics by raising issues that are important for all groups. Using the terminology of Nagle (2018), it appears that a participatory approach empowers "constructive engagement"

in which activists engage with the power-sharing system in order influence it. Secondly, CSO activists can utilize their background as an ambassador for reconciliation within their own community, also recognized by Fighters For Peace:

> We have ex-fighters who were actually key members in their communities … with one or two members at least from each community … So, these members are our key to their communities. We do not do our intervention in a harsh way to the community. We build trust with these communities through the people that we already know and these people start conducting these kinds of activities on their behalf in their community. (Yara)

Essential to this participatory approach appears to be its ability to earn trust of different stakeholders. For instance, Ana Daou comments on Adyan Foundation's successes in education reforms:

> I think the approach of Adyan is not a defensive approach, it is inclusive even in its work, and this is why government institutions don't feel like they are threatened. Because whenever Adyan does something it tries to bring to the table all the concerned parties and it doesn't just leave one party or one side behind.

As an effective strategy to find common ground on ad-hoc issues for reconciliation, it is remarkable that the religious leadership is not regularly involved in the observed reconciliation initiatives. Only Adyan Foundation seems engaged in inter-religious dialogue and its experience highlights that significant gains can be made here.

This strategy is also conducive to win trust of ordinary citizens. Undoubtedly, the grassroots nature of the CSOs helps. Yara says: "It is easy for us to speak the language of the people because we understand these communities very well … We somehow have our own people working, who are local people who understand the context. Or we do our own mapping and start this kind of partnership.". Those coming from the community are more "in tune with the local groups than with national groups. Or with groups that come from other communities which they don't really sometimes feel comfortable in seeing in their own community" (Makram Ouaiss).

In line with a pluralistic approach, CSOs were tending to accommodate women and youth. Adyan Foundation actively attempts to increase female participation, and male acceptance,

inviting women as lecturers or to participate in interreligious dialogue. Also, the role of women is central to some episodes of the Adyan's talk-show *fin al-khadeen*. The Permanent Peace Movement produced a film about the role of women during war. More than women, what stands out is the number of projects that target youth. The younger generation is reflected upon hopefully by the interlocutors, described by Raffi as a "generation of youth who do not care about sectarian divides". Their impression corresponds with Larkin's (2010) findings of Lebanese youth critically engaging with their heritage. Lebanese youth have been at the forefront of the revolution, that started in the fall of 2019 (Qiblawi & Tawfeeq, 7-11-2019; Shawn, 19-11-2019). For Ana Daou, it demonstrates that a large part of society is ready to embrace the CSOs objectives:

> We were able to see the success of Adyan and the projects it has through the involvement of people in that revolution. You could see the people finally understand there are things that go beyond sectarian divisions and that indeed the Lebanese society is diverse and that we should all be in solidarity with each other in order to get what we are aiming for.

The Lebanese youth is a pivotal generation: "The generation who was born after the civil-war actually know nothing about that period of time. So, they are capable of repeating the same mistake, especially [since] that the same leaders that were enlisted in war still are the same leaders today" (Yara). Consequentially, CSO endeavor to empower them positively in dialogue projects and cross-confessional activities. Adyan's newest project trains potential future political leaders in a youth mock-parliament, based upon a non-confessional system. The Permanent Peace Movement encourages the youth to take responsibility in solving conflict, and trains youth in peer-to-peer mediation. Raffi explains that this attitude change of the younger generation, compared to their parents, is pushed tremendously by technologies in communication and travel. It eases the opportunity to meet different and like-minded people, and simultaneously present CSOs with new repertoires of action.

In contrast to this participatory approach stands the observation made by interlocutors that CSO usually work in isolation rather than in partnership with other local CSOs. Reflecting on his projects, Jean-Paul Chami notes: "a big lesson learnt is that, sometimes we forget that there are many other people who can definitively contribute to that change. We get ourselves stuck trying to bring that change on our own.". Fadi El-Hajjar asserts that the reconciliatory

CSOs in Lebanon could win from collaboratively formulating a national strategy and planning. This is endorsed by the analysis of the Committee of the Families of the Disappeared of Rowayheb and Ouaiss (2015). The Committee did not make political or judicial progress until it collaborated with SOLIDE and ACT for the Disappeared. Regardless, even this participatory approach has proven unable to solve the cases of the missing. It seems that some issues are too sensitive to be addressed effectively by CSOs. For example, Adyan Foundation formed dialogue groups where different political parties and religious leaders were asked to develop a history narrative, without formal results. This, according to Ana Daou, "means that people are still not ready to put the past behind, or to accept that there are different points of view".

7.2. Hitting the barriers

Sectarianism and corruption

Chapter 3 analyzed the potential structural boundaries to reconciliation processes. The interlocutors identified the same structures as limiting their work. In this light, Raffi sketches gives a reality-check:

> Of course, Jean-Paul told a great story about a project [Roadmap to Peace] that lead to a very direct result. He said this was one of the most successful projects of his life. And this is really the best 10% of our work. The other 90% is we are trying and it is not happening. We are going back instead of forward. And this going back is because we are hitting the barriers of the system.

Citizens might receive trainings on tolerance, human rights, and breaking stereotypes, but as soon as they go back to their communities they are exposed to the opposite narrative, reversing the CSOs efforts. The barriers of the system "undoes what we are doing and takes them back to the idea that there is another" (Raffi). This is the first aspect of the negotiated reconciliation project: Lebanon's post-war structures mediate between the interlocutors and their target group. These structures can act as a filter, that block the effect of the CSO's program.

This mechanism was already visible in the dialogue project of Fighters For Peace described by Yara (chapter 6). For a share of the participants, it enflames anger and apathy instead of reconciliation. It is further illustrated by Mazen Abu Hamdan. He partook in a project to encourage dialogue between a Druze-Christian community in Mount Lebanon. The Christians

fled during the civil-war and never returned. In a video footage the Druze sent messages to their Christian ex-neighbors, saying some kind words and expressing their emotions of missing old neighbors. Visiting the Christians, he explains:

> Their first response was: "oh no it is all over, it is in the past and we have moved forward, there are no hard feelings" … Then we showed them the video … They became very angry, like, they would say things like: "Where was this person to protect my aunt who was killed at her doorstep. Why is he telling me this?" So it was, first it was denial, and then it was anger, kind of processing the feelings.

How, then, can CSOs reach those individuals who's mindset is deeply influenced by division and conflict?

Civil activists occasionally found ways to challenge these obstacles. I assert that in the negotiated reconciliation project, CSOs assume the role of locally grounded agents of reconciliation which enables them to create a reconciliation project sensitive to the microcosm of local needs, attitudes, and drivers of conflict. Mazen Abu Hamdan did not shoot for the moon. Rather, his project simply hoped to start some sort of dialogue, without even having two parties meet. After the Christian rejection, he continued shooting videos, and even achieved an event in which the Druze and the Christians watched the video together. He asserts that they were still angry, but "it helped to start a conversation in this way". The point is that goals need to be adjusted to the realities on the ground. So, if he was to initiate a program targeting youth in a relatively stable area, where friendships can spring relatively easy from joint-activities, his goal would be to inspire much more than first steps towards cross-communal dialogue.

This is also recognized by Peace Labs. It diverted its focus away from modules written at the office, to the locally conceived "Roadmap to Peace" initiative:

> The earliest stages of Peace Labs witnessed training … : if you train people on conflict resolution they will solve that conflict. This is farfetched and it is not that linear. Of course, building competencies on conflict resolution is important. It is not enough… Nowadays, we are becoming I think a little bit closer to listening more to the community. Rather than going to them, with you know, our modules and agenda's (Jean-Paul Chami)

In the neighborhoods of Jabal Mohsen and Bab Al-Tabbaneh, citizens were given the opportunity to be heard and were subtly made aware of commonalities without getting them into direct contact, which woke a new understanding of the self and the other. The result was that people for the first time started considering the idea of meeting the other (Jean-Paul Chami).

A second strategy to overcome the counterproductive force of entrenched sectarianism is to socialize aspects of the sectarian structure to reconciliation. Lobbying does this at the political level. Educational reforms and media campaigns aim to transform socializing institutions. Key figures in these institutions are targeted by Adyan Foundation. In the religious social responsibility project, religious leaders are motivated to take responsibility outside of their confessional base by launching community projects.

> One of our participants in one of the projects is the head of the Al-Fajar station, Al-Fajar is a Sunni Islamic radio in Lebanon ….. He shares values with Adyan, however, he also has a political-religious affiliation. So what he tries to do is develop different radio programs, that explain based on a religious explanation, that diversity is natural and should be accepted. (Ana Daou)

Importantly, this tactic increases the legitimacy of the CSOs message and reaches citizens outside of a voluntary basis. Nonetheless, in the actual effect on citizens is unsure.

Linking sectarianism to corruption, interlocutors pointed towards powerful social and political leaders on which a reconciliation project sometimes depends. Leaders can perceive reconciliatory CSOs as undermining their position. They may try to block the project or want to be in charge to boost their status and legitimacy. For instance, Fadi El-Hajjar encountered problems trying to implement a project in a Hezbollah suburb in Beirut. Suspicious of his plans, Hezbollah leaders wanted him to change the project into a developmental project, proposing a playground to be created. This is where the second aspect of the negotiated reconciliation project comes in: in this context, reconciliatory CSOs are forced to adapt their projects to appease local leaders. If a CSO has the resources, it can incorporate the funding of an infrastructural project as a carrot for local leaders (Mazen Abu Hamdan). When CSOs do not have this leverage, they need to get creative:

> It depends on how you approach them: as an angry activist, most of the time they would be against you, they would be defensive. Many times if you approach them in a way, and you know how to sell the idea, pitch things, and make it easy for them, not just pressuring them but also enabling them or helping them do the idea in a nice way that would give them some gains, some media attention, any acknowledgement, they would go along. (Mazen Abu Hamdan)

This also means accepting the system for what it is: Fadi Abi Allam strengthens the capacity of local politicians who "often come in that role through elections, but not because of their, let's say, professionalism or their capacities. Because of their families.". He involves them, because also they can become peacebuilders at the local level.

As such, in a negotiated reconciliation project, an activist needs to master the local fabric, calculating the needs and claims of local power-nodes that might impede the realization of their project, and coming-up with potential bargaining chips to appall them. In the face of these challenges, Fadi El-Hajjar argues that most CSOs move their projects to places where they expect to be welcomed. This seems to be endorsed by Yara:

> we do believe that many areas in Lebanon today are places that we cannot enter, and this is because of political and religious reasons, because these people want to keep their community the way it is. So they don't want us to speak with the people.

In these geographies, the insurmountable structural barriers pose a real limitation to the reconciliatory yield of Lebanese CSOs.

7.3. Resource-based obstacles

the CSOs and the international donor

All interlocutors mentioned resource-based problems when asked about obstacles in their work. Discussing their concerns, I suggest that the third aspect of the negotiated reconciliation project is a continuous mediation between the activist's objectives and desires, and between what is possible given the resources available.

The biggest constrain seems to be a discrepancy between the specific needs of a successful reconciliation initiative and the funding plan of international donors. The CSOs generally do not take funding from Lebanese sources on the basis that it might harm their impartiality, making them dependent on foreign funding from INGOs, UN offices and Western

governments. Whereas financial dependency on donors is a general problem for NGOs (AbouAssi 2012, 585; Wallace 2009, 209), Jean-Paul Chami asserts that funding in his field is more difficult to obtain than in the field of development or humanitarian relief. Moreover, according to Fadi El-Hajjar it leaves Lebanese CSOs often in competition funds rather than in collaboration, a trend also observed by scholars (e.g. Aoun and Zahar 2017, 122; Wallace 2009, 210).

One reason for this is that reconciliation programs require long-term donor commitment, which is hard to find (Jean-Paul Chami; Ana Daou; Fadi El-Hajjar). In Lebanon (AbouAssi 2012), as elsewhere in the world (Marijan & Dejan 2013), international donors frequently rearticulate objectives and strategies, thereby abandoning projects as they switch to a new one. The insistence on quick-fixes influences the type of programs that CSOs can run. Too often, says Fadi El-Hajjar, reconciliation projects rely on short term interventions, whereas in reconciliation just the building of trust can already take-up one year. He argues that short term programs are not "programs but rather activities" which cannot inflict durable change. He does not voice an isolated critique, as Aoun and Zahar (2017, 122) make the same argument.

Secondly, local reconciliation program may be shaped by the "vertical relationship" (Fadi El-Hajjar) between the international donors and local CSOs. International donors are target-driven, demanding countable results (Wallace 2009, 211-215; Megoran et al. 2014, 7). However, according to Jean-Paul Chami, in reconciliation "the intangibles are way more important as indicators than the tangibles, this means we need to work with donors that are able to understand this". Failure of donors to understand this concentrates the work of CSOs around "picture moments" (Fadi El-Hajjar), such as meetings and trainings that convene people from different groups. Fadi El-Hajjar has an interesting perspective as he has been working for many years on reconciliation both for grassroots Lebanese organizations and on behalf of INGOs. He is by far the most negative: "Donors have their own assumptions, mindset and projection of how things should be done. Their bureaucratic process takes over, and is very time consuming.". Indeed, the most salient reconciliation program in Appendix II are workshops and trainings. I assume that these programs are prioritized because they are low in costs, short-term interventions, that are countable in terms of participants and have a clearly articulated learning goals.

However, measuring outcomes in terms of participation rate says nothing about the whether or not the participants experienced personal change. When talking about impact, not

only the donors, but also the CSOs themselves reference the number of participants or their community outreach (Ana Daou, Yara). This thesis did not research what is needed for both donors and CSOs to be accountable for their outcome, thus it cannot make definite statements about this. Interesting is that Ana Daou states she uses social media to track if participant of a reconciliation initiative does not fall back into an antagonizing narrative. Aoun and Zahar (2017, 122) assert that Lebanese reconciliatory CSOs lack institutional capacity and competency to deliver good programs. Hence, it appears that the reconciliatory impact of Lebanese CSOs is not simply a matter of increasing CSOs budgets, but dedication from both parties is required to improve their evaluation, monitoring, and project proposals. In this light, Fadi El-Hajjar, sees a fruitful opportunity in exchanging experiences and know-how between donors and local CSOs.

Related to financial resources was the observed problem of scarce human resources, in the shape of understaffing (Ana Daou, Yara) or working on voluntary basis outside of office hours (Mazen Abu Hamdan). This in fact can also feed back into low quality evaluation, listening to Ana Daou: "we try to maximize as much impact as possible through writing projects that have a lot of activities but that do not take much money on human resources or admin costs."

Further, the vertical relationship causes donor objectives to dominate reconciliation activities. Donors reserve funding for a particular type of project and local CSOs adapt their mission and strategy accordingly, as explained:

> many international donors are investing in stability. So even their phrasing tells them what are the priorities of donors. It is not about peace or justice or rights, or non-violence, it is about stability … I think they refer to stability partly to avoid bloodshed and partially because Europe wants to avoid another round of refugees …. So, they do support projects here, but we design them and we pitch them in a way that we perceive to be useful to our community while using the terminology the donor wants. (Mazen Abu Hamdan)

Hence, the negotiated reconciliation project touches upon a broader critique on international donors. Donors often peruse development in a top-down manner, driven by their own agenda, instead of the more favorable demand-led strategy in which donors fund projects designed and prioritized by local NGOs (AbouAssi 2015, Wallace 2009, 213). Writing on peacebuilding NGOs in Bosnia Herzegovina, Guzina and Marijan note: "Accountability is lacking as local CSOs

depend on international donors and their priorities for their survival and not on the impact of projects on their local community." (199). This is a problematic tendency that prominences the mere giving of aid over a reflection on what peace and reconciliation means and needs. It risks a focus on stability as quick-fix that neglects to address structural grievances or drivers of conflict.

It is worth noting that Fadi Abi Allam was exclusively positive about his collaboration with international actors. Yet, it can hardly be a coincidence that the conflict resolution program his Permanent Peace Movement is involved in lately targets villages with high influxes of Syrian refugees. This is not to say that these programs are oblivious: spill-overs from the Syrian war have spurred identity based and resource-based tensions (Arsan 2018, 10; Salloukh et al. 2015, 155). However, as described in chapter 3, many Lebanese localities are prone to conflict, but they apparently receive lower prioritization. Another question that it raises is if aid will leave these villages once the Syrian refugees return home.

The findings do not univocally mean that the interlocutors' hands were tied by international donors. CSOs find leeway within these constraints. Under the name of stability, Mazen Abu Hamdan is currently working on a project where he can address some aspects of reconciliation under the banner of good governance. Similarly, in the neighborhoods of Bab Al-Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen, a research project was initially intended to run funded by USAID. Peace Labs declined to work with this project and found the resources to implement the "Roadmap to Peace" initiative. More so, international donor behavior can hardly be generalized and interlocutors mentioned reliable donors they worked with frequently. Departing from the argument that international programs often lack local legitimacy (Paffenholz and Spurk 2006, 25-26; Chandler 2017, 106-107), Fadi Abi Allam asserts that the support of the UNDP has increased the legitimacy and visibility of his programs. The DNA database of the missing created by the International Red Cross illustrates that the professionalism and capacity of INGOs is sometimes essential, and that genuine partnership between local and international levels can assist reconciliation processes.

CSOs are also marshalling their own efforts to overcome resource-based obstacles. For instance, a major issue is the fact that reconciliation is a relatively underdeveloped field. In the words of Jean-Paul Chami: "the body of knowledge about what can work and what doesn't work and so on, is not that present. Even in English there is very little written about it. In other languages it is even less …. Which means that the wisdom could be there, and it is there, but

it hasn't yet transformed via reflections and then later on via proper documentation". The lack of institutionalized knowledge on reconciliation and peacebuilding is also found in an analysis in Northern Ireland (Morrow, Faulkner-Byrne & Pettis 2018, 43/66). In response, some of the observed CSOs' are pioneering sites of knowledge production and sharing. An exceptional example is another Lebanese civil society initiative. In a unique mission to educate peacebuilding and reconciliation in the Middle-East, it founded the Academic University College for Non-violence & Human Rights in 2015 (AUNOHR, n.d.).

7.4. The negotiated reconciliation project

The negotiated reconciliation project sacrifices ideals to pragmatic decisions. CSO activists are trading between their ambitions for a reconciled Lebanon, and the obstacles that demand them to reformulate their goals and strategies.

Previous literature has demonstrated that the Lebanese context is not a most favorable environment for CSOs with a non-confessional or even anti-sectarian stance. Hence, a large part of the constrains that cause the negotiated reconciliation project are the outcome of Lebanon's post-war setting. I aim to demonstrate how these structures feed intergroup hostility and apathy and often stand in between the interlocutor and his or her target group. It "undoes" the activists' work or incites angry responses instead of inspiring reconciliation.

Lebanon's post-war structures also demand a continuous negotiation between reconciliation activists and social and political leaders. Elite interference of CSOs, as observed by Salloukh and Clark (2013), Aoun and Zahar (2017) and Kingston (2013), similarly complicated the work of the interlocutors. They reported moving their projects to least hostile or corrupt environments, or amending their project proposal to a better liking of social or political leaders. Since only two interlocutors described instances of adapting programs to please local stakeholders, either other interlocutors did not mention or did not have this experience. Either way, they seem to evade co-option by the system by targeting communities where they know they can operate relatively freely.

It follows that the post-war structures block reconciliation from happening in parts of Lebanon. It is worth mentioning that the CSOs are innovatively challenging parts of the system by targeting leaders and socializing institutions such as the media, education, and religious institutions. Yet, transforming these systemics is a long-term and uncertain process. Giving

these circumstances, the "alternative spaces" that the CSOs create, however innovative in their reconciliation efforts, are limited in the scale of impact they can have.

Secondly, the negotiated character of the reconciliation processes by CSOs is caused by resource-based problems. One aspect of this intersects with academic critique on international donors (AbouAssi 2013; Wallace 2009): donor priorities overshadow the needs of reconciliation, and in effect CSOs struggle to attract sufficient funding for the right causes. Another aspect mentioned is the overload of work and a lack of expertise in their field. The latter might be the result of the relatively nascent reconciliation discourse and practice. These factors influence in various ways on how interlocutors' ideals are converted into action. Together, they might explain the prevalence of trainings and workshops, which are based upon traditional knowledge of conflict resolution (Paffenholz & Spurk 2006, 20-21), and that honor the restrictions of small short-termed funding that is measurable in terms of participation rates. These findings demonstrate that there is much room for improvement, for donors, academics and the CSOs themselves. It leads me to argue that the resource-based obstacles which were raised by the interlocutors, can be transformed relatively easily into opportunities.

Another question this chapter attempted to address revolves around the "success factors" if they could be interpreted. Doors were opened when CSOs used a participatory or grassroots approach. These can be regarded as potential bargaining chips that can lower the barriers of Lebanon's post-conflict structures. It allowed for "constructive engagement" (Nagle 2018a) with the consociational system. Secondly, enabled them to earn trust from powerful figures and civilians. In other instances, it was used design reconciliation projects that is tailored to the local needs and realities in terms of objectives and strategy. The "Roadmap to Peace" initiative is an example of how this strategy achieved first steps in reconciliation in an unlikely case. Their grassroots nature and local connections raised their legitimacy when approaching communities or groups. Surely, it helps them to judge and negotiate the local political power-play that is necessary to implement projects.

These success factors indicate a special role for local CSOs as agents of reconciliation that is legitimate and contextually embedded. Little (2017, 201) writes: "discourses of reconciliation draw on different resources and bring forth a wide range of political responses depending on the context in which they are articulated and enacted.". This also characterizes the experiences of the interviewed interlocutors. Given this contextual and dynamic nature of

what reconciliation is and needs, I argue that local CSOs are well capable to respond to these requirements. occupy a special role in the reconciliation process. Hence, the findings of this chapter conform to the emerging discourse on the "local-turn". To add, conducive to their work is a new generation who is keener to the CSOs objectives then those who lived through civil-war. Internet, social media and easier travel reduce both geographic and cognitive distances and are enjoyed by CSOs.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

8.1. Discussion

The purpose of this research was to respond to the knowledge gap around the role of local CSOs in reconciling Lebanon. I understand their role as agents of reconciliation. The reason for this is that their perceptions and work fit well within the political reconciliation paradigm. Secondly, the diverse programs that they run translate into practical functions within the reconciliation process. In terms of Nagle's (2018a) "active resistance", the CSOs create "alternative spaces" where conventional approaches to victims and history are substituted by a reconciliatory approach. Here, intercommunal bonding occurs and new discourses are transmitting reconciliatory values. Further, CSOs "constructively engage" with the system to push reconciliation policies and reforms. Additionally, I identified CSOs as preventing violence and contributing to a transformation of conflict.

This research lays emphasis on the grassroots and participatory role of CSOs, which helped them to execute this role. First of all, it distanced them from the critiqued restorative reconciliation that occurred during liberal peacebuilding and Transitional Justice. At the same time, it enabled them to navigate between the obstacles of the Lebanese post-war context. These findings thus reiterate the arguments of adherents of the "local-turn" as a strategy for reconciliation. Interestingly, they achieved reconciliation successes at all levels of society, suggesting that their grassroot character does not limit them to this level.

I intend to demonstrate how the role of CSOs is constrained by introducing the negotiated reconciliation project. It illustrates how the type of project, and the impact on the target group, is mediated by sectarianism, corruption and a scarcity of resources. The concept directs attention towards two things. One is the need for academics, international donors and the CSOs to collaborate in order to overcome resource-based obstacles. Particularly, this may require an attitude change of donors. The other reveals that whereas Lebanon's structures are limiting the work of the activists, they are not conclusive. In the observed cases, the "persistence of sectarianism" (Clark & Salloukh 2013, 740-744) did not always uphold, giving the CSOs some independent agency to implement reconciliation processes.

The findings of this research are limited to the context in which they are made. They do not represent or explain the experience of CSOs other than those interviewed. Next to this inherent limitation of qualitative research, a note can be made on the extent to which the

research questions are satisfactory answered. Political reconciliation is a container concept with many, at times vaguely defined, aspects, making it is prone to conceptual overstretching in which most interpretations would fit. As a novel concept, it would benefit in the future of academic deepening and clarification. However, by contrasting the interlocutors' perceptions to restorative reconciliation, I argue that, at minimum, their work is distinct from the restorative category.

With most of reconciliation being an internal affair, centered around emotions and worldviews, it is particularly hard to estimate what the role of the CSOs is on the mindset of Lebanese. Paffenholz and Spruk (2006, 29) and Dudouet (2007, 27) explain that the messages of CSOs are not necessarily embraced by citizens, and that they are seldom converted into macro changes. The incidences of angry responses by citizens that are cited in this thesis, imply that this is also a problem for the observed CSOs. It was not the goal of this research to give clear statements on the effect. Nevertheless, it is an essential piece in the puzzle of Lebanese CSOs in the reconciliation process, and new research could interestingly take-up on this question.

Hence, it remains uncertain what the role of the CSOs' "active resistance" is on the society as a whole, and their chances for reconciliation on the institutional and constitutional level. It is fair to say that the CSOs can positively impact reconciliation at the relational level. Interpreting the interlocutors, they assume their effect on reducing interpersonal divisions and animosities. This is supported by the contract hypothesis, that suggests that the multitude of dialogue projects and joint-activities CSOs engage in foster intergroup relations (Rydgren and Sofi 2011, 32). Another contribution of the CSOs is more future oriented. The expertise that CSOs are gaining, and their documentation of history, will be of great use if reconciliation makes it to the national agenda (Verdeja 2009, 153-154).

8.2. Conclusion

This research reaffirms scholarly discourse on the need to incorporate and better listen to the local when aspiring reconciliation. This is evidenced by the agency of Lebanese CSOs to initiate aspects of a reconciliation process. Moreover, the findings direct attention to their grassroot and participatory character, which was particularly conducive to overcome barriers and achieve success. Their role does not remain in the local, as they engage with institutions and actors at all levels. Furthermore, this research suggests that using the framework of political

reconciliation can in the future be a viable methodology to understand the work of these organizations.

To better comprehend the complex and contingent role of Lebanese CSOs in reconciliation, I propose the negotiated reconciliation project. Reconciliation can be set into motion, albeit not as comprehensive as idealists might hope for. Objectives and strategies are revised by the Lebanese post-conflict structures, notably sectarianism and corruption, and resource-based constrains. Despite the negotiating forces of sectarianism and corruption, the CSOs proved capable to create "alternative spaces" where reconciliation was promoted and the politics of forgetting was actively resisted. Like Nagle (2018a) and the rise of the alternative NGOs in 2005 demonstrated earlier, it positions that the Lebanese systemics cannot fully prevent the influence of cross-confessional organizations. This research distinguishes itself from its past research by its focus on reconciliation.

Given the rigidity of the Lebanese political system, solving resource-based problems is the quickest way to yield results and up-scale reconciliation programs of CSOs. International donors could start by listening to the activists' needs, and developing their capabilities. Yet, it is unsure if CSOs could ever demand full reconciliation as long as those responsible for the atrocities of war are also the political and social leaders in Lebanon. Whereas the CSOs are putting pressure on institutional and national levels to transform, only the future can tell whether these will turn out to be successful.

This research highlighted the innovative ways through which the CSOs contribute to reconciliation, however the question remains on what scale the CSOs transform the mindsets of Lebanese. Much of reconciliation revolves around relations and feelings, making a program's impact difficult to measure (Maddison 2017, 164). Future research could interestingly take-up on these questions to relieve uncertainties on how CSOs are influencing the reconciliation accross society. For now, however, I turn to Raffi for an answer:

> imagine change as a big wall that you are trying to demolish, but you don't have the necessary resources, so you do it you know, you take one shot at the time. and this is when big changes happen, whenever, as a direct result of a combined and cumulative effect over the years of several agents of change. And I do think that whatever we were part of looks, in terms of its technology or in terms of its engineering, way more considerate to people's feelings, being and needs.

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Appendix 1: List of interviews

Interlocutor	date	CSO	Position
Jean-Paul Chami, Raffi Diego	20-10-2019	Peace Labs	founder project manager intern
Fadi El-Hajjar	7-11-2019	Independent peacebuilding consultant. Worked in the past for different Lebanese CSOs and INGOs	various positions
Ana Daou	11-11-2019	Adyan Foundation	coordinator community engagement program
Makram Ouaiss	15-11-2019	Wahdatouna Khalasouna	member and former chair
Mazen Abu Hamdan	18-11-2019	Chaml MercyCorps (INGO) Past: Lebanese Red Cross Past: Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections	various positions and civil activist for a diversity of causes
Fadi Abi Allam	19-11-2019	Permanent Peace Movement	founder
Yara	10-12-2019	Fighters For Peace	employee

Appendix 2: List of Lebanese CSOs, their actions and functions for reconciliation

Name	Objective	Action	Description	Target	In collabor-ation with	Function
ACT for the disappeared (2010)[10]	clarification on the fate of the disappeared and missing in Lebanon	Lobby	litigation	government		advocacy and public communication
		Lobby	draft bill for a national commission to investigate the faith of the missing	government		advocacy and public communication
		History collection	protect and investigate mass graves	graves	International Red Cross	monitoring and accountability
		(pschological) aid	psychological support	victims	International Red Cross	service delivery
		History collection	Oral history collection, accessible online	public-open		monitoring and accountability
		dialogue	shared story-telling	public-closed		socialization and a culture of peace
		public awareness	art	public-open	International Red Cross	advocacy and public communication
Adyan Foundation (2008)[11]	Spread the values of solidarity, diversity and dignity	research/knowledge sharing	research and knowledge production	public-closed		monitoring and accountability
		capacity building	Middle School, High School and University clubs	youth		conflict sensitive social cohesion
		education, lobby	revision of philosophy and civics curricula	government, youth	ministry of education	advocacy and public Communication socialization and a culture of peace

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[10] https://www.actforthedisappeared.com/

[11] http://adyanfoundation.org/ ; Ana Daou

		dialogue	Families Network	public-closed		conflict sensitive social cohesion
		dialogue	Forum for Religious Social Responsibility	clergy, public-closed	clergy, community leaders	Socialization and a culture of peace Conflict sensitive social cohesion
		lobby	initated national charter on inclusive citizenship eduction	government, CSOs	government, CSOs	Advocacy and public communication
		dialogue	Annual religous solidarity event	public, clergy		Conflict sensitive social cohesion
		education	Published educational book on shared values accross religions	clergy, youth	clergy	Socialization and a culture of peace
		public awareness	Media campaings	public-open		Advocacy and public commuication
Al-Jana (1989)[12]	involve youth in their community's history and culture as a means to become advocates of community development	history collection	memory production and deliberation around Ein El-Helwat	public-open		monitoring and accountability, Advocacy and public Communication
		Capacity building	conflict transformation workshops	public-closed		socialization and a culture of peace, prevention
		capacity building	summer school	youth		socialization and a culture of peace, conflict sensitive social cohesion
		dialogue	theatre as a means to communicate sensitive issues and bring different communities together	public-closed		socialization and a culture of peace, conflict sensitive social cohesion
Aie Serve (2007)[13]	spread values of respect,	capacity building	workshops on soft skills for youth empowerment	youth		socialization and a culture of peace

[12] http://al-jana.org/
[13] https://www.aieserve.org/

			acceptance and love among youth				
		capacity building	Youth clubs that spread Aie Serve's value's through activities	youth		conflict sensitive social cohesion
Badael Alternatives (2013)[14]	advocate the right of origins for those who where seperated form their parents during conflict and violence	lobby	draft bill regulating familial seperation	government		Advocacy and Public Communication
		re-connecting families	platform for reconnecting family/missing	public-open		Service delivery
		capacity building	conferances	public-closed		Advocacy and Public Communication
Chaml (2008)[15]	Promote Non-sectarianism, non-violence and human rights	Dialogue	Summer camp	youth		Conflict sensitive social cohesion
		Capacity building	Workshops	youth		Socialization and a culture of peace
Committee of the Families of the Disappeared (1982)[16]	truth on the faith of those disappeard and/or missing during the civil-war	public awareness	protest, demonstrate, campaign	public-open, government		Advocacy and Public Communication
		lobby	lobby with government and international actors	government		Advocacy and Public Communication
		(psychological) aid	rehabilitation and care for families of the disappeared	victims		Service Delivery

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[14] http://badael-alternatives.org/

[15] Mazen Abu Hamdan

[16] Rowayheb & Ouaiss 2015

		lobby	law presented to lebanese parliament	government	SOLIDE, ACT for the disappeared	Advocacy and Public Communication
		lobby	Succesfully lobbied with International Red Cross for a DNA collection campaign	victims	International Red Cross, Wadhatouna Khalasouna	Monitoring and Accountability
		lobby	Increased rights and judiciary recognition for families of the disappeared	government	SOLIDE, ACT for the disappeared	Advocacy and Public Communication
Fighters for Peace (2013)[17]	build peace, community cohesion and reconciliation	dialogue	dialogue sessions between youth and ex-combatants	youth		socialization and a culture of peace
		dialogue	playback theatre around issues of war/peace/reconciliation	youth		socialization and a culture of peace, conflict sensitive social cohesion
		education	documentaries	public-open		advocacy and public communication
		history collection	Oral history collection, accessible online	public-open		monitoring and accountability
		research/knowledge sharing, dialogue	roadmap to reconciliation tripoli	public-open, public-closed	Peace Labs, Mercy Corps	protection, monitoring and accountability, socializationd and a culture of peace
Lebanese center for human rights (2006)[18]	monitors and fights human rights abuses	(psychological)aid	torture rehabilitation and psychological help to families of the missing: center nassim	victims		service delivery
		lobby	lobbying for cases of the missing	victims, public-open		advocacy and public communication
		(psychological) aid	Legal aid	victims		Service delivery

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[17] http://fightersforpeace.org/Home/Index; Yara

[18] http://www.cldh-lebanon.org/

		Public awareness	monitors human rights abuses	public-open		monitoring and accountability
March Lebanon[19]	Promote social cohesion and personal freedoms	Capacity building	Vocational skills trainings and soft-skills workshops for youth from different backgrounds	Youth		Conflict sensitive social cohesion, socialization and a culture of peace
		Dialogue	Joint-activities e.g. football tournaments	Youth		Conflict sensitive social cohesion, socialization and a culture of peace
		Research/knowledge sharing, public awareness	Monitoring censorship and freedom of speech	Public-open		Monitoring and accountability
NAHNOO (2003)[20]	promote an inclusive society through good governance, public spaces, and cultural herritage	public space	opening and protection of public spaces, e.g. horsh beirut	public-open		advocacy and public communication, service delivery, conflict sensitive social cohesion
		public awareness	media campaing on good governance	public-open		advocacy and public communication
		capacity building	emancipate citizens to advocate for good governance	public-closed		socialization and a culture of peace
Peace Labs (2012)[21]	conflict transformation	research and knowledge sharing, dialogue	Roadmap to reconciliation tripoli	public-open, public-closed	Fighters for Peace, Mercy Corps	protection, monitoring and accountability, socializationd and a culture of peace
		conflict resolution	empower local capacities for conflict mitigation	public-closed	sth with Mercy Corps, Maharat Foundation	protection
		capacity building	trainings and workshops around conflict	public-closed		socialization and a culture of peace

[19] http://www.marchlebanon.org/

[20] http://nahnoo.org/

[21] https://peace-labs.org/en/; Jean-Paul Chami; Raffi

			transformation and peace			
		research and knowledge production	knowledge production	public-open		Monitoring and accountability
Permanent Peace Movement (1989)[22]	speading culture of peace and transforming conflict	public awareness	campaign against child soldiers and firearms through media and workshops	public-open		Advocacy and Public Communication,
		lobby	lobby for implementation of the UN convention on Right or a Child	government		Advocacy and Public Communication
		lobby	succesfully lobbied for the ratification of the UN Arms Trade Treaty	government	government	Advocacy and Public Communication
		research and knowledge production	network for collective analysis and knowledge sharing on build resilient communities through local peacebuilders	public-closed	government, CSOs, INGOs	Advocacy and Public communication, monitoring and accountability
		capacity building	workshop and training on inclusivity and conflict resolution	public-closed		socialization and a culture of peace
		education	Designed educational module on memory and reconciliation	public-open	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Displacement	socialization and a culture of peace, advocacy and public communication
		history collection	book on peacemaking during the civil war			Socialization and a culture of peace
		conflict resolution	strenthened local conflict resolution mechanisms in communities	public-closed		protection

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[22] http://www.ppm-lebanon.org/; Fadi Abi Allam

Restart Center (1996)[23]	rehabilitation of vicitms of violence and torture	lobby	Lobby for overall rights and protection of victims of torture	government	government	Advocacy and Public Communication
		(psychological) aid	rehabilitation of victims of torture	victims		Service Delivery
		capacity building	capacity building of health professionals, government officials, law enforcement personel, among others.	public-closed		Socialization and a culture of peace
Umam Documentation and Research Center (2005)[24]	promote inclusive values and reject national amnesia	capacity building	Workshops, events, conferances	public-closed	sth with NGOs, schools, municipalities	Socialization and a culture of peace
		history collection	history collection; accessible online	public-open		Monitoring and Accountability
		research and knowledge production	knowledge production	public-open		Monitoring and Accountability,
		public awareness	cultural and artistic production	public-open		Socialization and a culture of peace
Unite Lebanon Youth Project (2010)[25]	Spread culture of co-existance, respect, and dialogue of peace	capacity building	engage youth in conflict resolution	youth		socialization and culture of peace
		dialogue	Joint art projects for Lebanese and Palestinian youth	youth		Conflict sensitive social cohesion
Wahdatouna Khalasouna (2008)[26]	promote civil peace	dialogue	Dialogue between families of the disappeared and former combatants	public-closed		Conflict sensitive social cohesion

[23] http://restartcenter.com/restartcenter/index.php

[24] https://www.umam-dr.org/en/home

[25] https://www.unitelebanonyouth.org/

[26] Makram Ouaiss

		public awareness	Media campaing	public-open		Advocacy and Public communication
		public awareness	Annual civil peace award	public-open		Advocacy and Public communication
		public awareness	annual commemoration of civil-war	public-open		Service Delivery
		lobby	Lobby with government for a plethora of issues around civil peace	government		Advocacy and Public communication
		capacity building	conferences on civil peace	public-closed	government, third actors	Socialization and a culture of peace
		lobby/public space	Succesful lobby for memory museum Beit Beirut	government, public-open	government	Service Delivery, Advocacy and Public communication