

**'The Lebanese Way': Hybridization and Cultural Peacebuilding Through
'Interfaces and Interchanges' Across the Peacekeeper-Local Divide**

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Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctorate in Philosophy

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Abstract

United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations are regularly evaluated and critiqued by both scholars and policy-makers, however this scrutiny is commonly restricted to program- and project-level effects. This neglects the unique impacts that emerge from the individuals who populate interventions and those they encounter in conflict-affected communities. The objective of this research is to place these individuals, and their actions and relationships, at the centre of analysis and investigate their impacts independent of, or distinct from, program-level effects. Through the case study of south Lebanon and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), this dissertation explores the social and physical spaces that connect peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals in the course of their everyday lives and actions. Through the theoretical lenses of cultural peacebuilding and hybridity, I conceptualize the meaning of these relationships to the individuals involved, to the UNIFIL mission, and to peace at a broader level. This political ethnography undertakes a complex, relational approach to understanding intervention impacts and effectiveness, thereby ‘peopling’ a UN peacekeeping operation.

Based on original empirical data consisting of 82 ethno-biographical interviews with Lebanese individuals and UNIFIL veterans, alongside 14 months of participant and field observation, I argue that Lebanese people agentially transform superficial, formal encounters with peacekeepers into substantial, impactful relationships through the Lebanese culture of hospitality. In informal, private and local spaces and contexts, ‘thick’ identities are enacted and cultural exchange occurs, which transforms and hybridizes the knowledges and identities of both peacekeepers and Lebanese people. Through this process of hybridization, interlocutors emerge who facilitate the connections of others in their social networks and function as bridges across the international-local divide. This hybridization augments UNIFIL’s access to local knowledge,

which improves local support and operational effectiveness. Further, the relationships and connections between peacekeepers and Lebanese people contribute to the restoration or amelioration of Lebanese human identity needs, which are threatened by the conflict with Israel and the ways in which it intersects with intrastate tensions. This constitutes incremental change productive to complex pathways toward peace in south Lebanon.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of numerous individuals. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Benjamin Zyla, who has consistently been a valued advisor, provided me with countless opportunities, and challenged me since the beginning to be a better scholar. His guidance has set the foundations for my career, and I am eternally grateful.

I would also like to thank my advisory committee, Drs. Stephen Baranyi and Vern Redekop, who have been steadfast in their support of this project and were there to assist me when fieldwork became challenging, offering contacts and valuable advice. Special thanks to Drs. Cedric de Coning and Peter Jones for their willingness to lend their time to reviewing this dissertation and their thoughtful comments.

I was fortunate to receive financial support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Ontario Graduate Scholarship program, and the University of Ottawa, which made this research and my fieldwork in Lebanon possible. The value of this support far exceeds money, as its true worth is in providing students such as myself with the space and time for thought and reflection, without which a project such as this would not be possible.

I would like to acknowledge the American University of Beirut, Centre for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies for their support during fieldwork, the Lebanese Armed Forces and particularly the Directorate of Orientation for their responsiveness and willingness to issue me travel and research permits, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for meeting with me to discuss this project. In particular, I owe thanks to the School of International Development and Global Studies at the University of Ottawa, and all of its incredible administrators, for always answering emails, offering guidance, and supporting doctoral students as they navigate this complex process.

This doctoral thesis would not have been possible without the individuals who agreed to participate, took time out of their busy schedules, welcomed me into their homes and businesses, and offered openness and honesty in their thoughts and reflections. I am in awe of their generosity and will forever remember the conversations we had. I would like to express my profound appreciation to Moro, with whom I spent many hours traversing the Lebanese countryside discussing this project. With him by my side, I gained confidence to conduct this fieldwork, perspective into the context I was trying to understand, and the means by which to make this project a reality.

Special thanks go out to some dear friends in Lebanon who each played unique and invaluable roles in this project and in my life. Claude, Louise, Souzana, Bachir, Maurice, Salim, Michel, Kellie, Femke, Sara, Silvia, Felicia, Brux, Zuzu, Sola, George, and Gerard – I value each and every one of you and thank you so much for your friendship and support; you made my time in Lebanon all that was.

The PhD process is often fraught, challenging, isolating and doubt-inducing. In this context, the value of a community with which to navigate these difficult, stressful and exhilarating years is incomparable. In my ‘ant raft’, I had many exceptional friends and scholars to rely on, without whom I surely would not have made it to this point. Namely, Drs. Emma Swan, Midori Kaga, Laura Beckwith and Shingirai Taodzera were the best support network I could have hoped for. Special thanks to fellow PhD student, Dr. Jessica Cadesky for her valuable advice and contacts.

I am fortunate to be surrounded by incredible friends who have supported me through this process and many other adventures and experiences in my life. To my dearest friends, Marushka, Maryann, David, Peter and Michelle, with whom I discovered who I am and want to be, thank you for making me smarter and for always being in my corner. Special thanks to the caring, supportive and delightful friends who have made Ottawa home, namely Clare, Mads, Erika, Rukiya, Emily, and Ana.

Finally, to Ora and Dan Cassin, my incredible parents, who have supported me unconditionally and whole-heartedly in everything I have ever done or set my mind to, I would be nothing without you and your love. Thank you for pushing me to always do my best and dream big, teaching me the value of hard work and perseverance, and creating a comfortable and loving home for me to always retreat to.

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Acronyms

AL	UNIFIL alumni/veterans
AO	area of operations
AU	African Union
AUB	American University of Beirut
CA	UNIFIL Civil Affairs
CIMIC	civil-military cooperation
CNN	Cable News Network
CS	civil society
DFS	Department of Field Support
EU	European Union
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
HQ	headquarters
LAF	Lebanese Armed Forces
LBP	Lebanese pounds
LC	Lebanese local community members
LNM	Lebanese National Movement
MM	Lebanese municipality representatives
MPs	members of parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PA	UNIFIL Political Affairs
PhD	Philosophical Doctorate
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
QIPs	quick impact projects
SLA	South Lebanese Army
SSR	security sector reform
TCCs	Troop Contributing Countries
UN	United Nations
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UN PKO	United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
USD	United States Dollars
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The objective of this research is ‘peopling’ a UN peacekeeping intervention, wherein individual identities, practices, beliefs and actions are placed at the centre of analysis, and investigated for their unrealized and potentially significant impacts on the networks, identity norms and social systems in a conflict-affected setting. While interventions as abstract, programmatic organizations are subject to monitoring and evaluation, the individuals who carry out interventions and encounter them also have impacts and outcomes independent of, or distinct from, the program- or project-level effects. This research aims to conceptualize these individual impacts.

This requires increasingly complex perspectives on intervention impacts and effectiveness, based on the lived, situated, relational experiences of individuals in peacekeeping environments. What are the social and physical spaces that connect UN peacekeepers and local individuals on the ground?¹ What do the relationships between international interveners and locals mean to the individuals involved? How do micro-level relationships impact macro-level social, political and peace dynamics? These questions are addressed in this doctoral dissertation through a political ethnography of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and

¹ Hirblinger & Simon (2015) observe that in their various and conflicting representations of “the local,” the scholarly and international practice communities make value-judgements on who the “true, the good, and the bad” locals are, thereby empowering some and disempowering others (p. 422). This externally imposed production of the local obscures the “complex and relational social realities” that exist in various peace operational contexts (p.422-423). This is in line with post-colonial scholars who protest the use of binaries, such as “international” and “local,” as essentializing constructs that obscure variations within these categories, or serve to either demonize or romanticize one category over others (Nadarajah & Rampton, 2015). This dissertation functionally distinguishes between “internationals” (UNIFIL peacekeepers) and “locals” (Lebanese people) not as essentialized categories, but rather as social groups that are distinct due to certain social and physical barriers between them. Where possible, the dualistic language of “internationals” and “locals” has been avoided in favour of more specific labels, such as “UNIFIL personnel” and “Lebanese individuals.”

the peacekeeping environment of south Lebanon. These questions are explored using the theoretical framework of cultural peacebuilding to conceptualize original empirical data from semi-structured ethno-biographical interviews with Lebanese individuals and UNIFIL veterans, alongside participant and field observation in south Lebanon from October 2017 to December 2018.

This project responds to three key gaps in the peacebuilding literature, which will be contextualized in sections 1. 1 and 1. 2 of this chapter. Firstly, though well-theorized, there is a lack of empirical data on hybridization processes and their pathways of impact in peacekeeping contexts. In the dissertation that follows, I present empirical evidence that UN peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals experience knowledge and identity hybridization through their interactions and the inter-cultural exchange that occurs in informal, localized spaces.

Secondly, while some scholars have focused attention on the everyday lives of interveners in peacekeeping contexts, the relationship between micro-level and macro-level effects remains under researched and under theorized. In Chapter 6 of this dissertation, I conceptualize the macro effects of micro-level hybridization emerging from relationships between UN peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals, drawing on both incremental conflict resolution and complexity theories.

Thirdly, despite generating insights on peacebuilding and diplomatic capacity within military institutions (such as the Canadian Armed Forces), insights from the religious peacebuilding literature on religious leader engagement have yet to be applied to the context of UN peacekeeping interventions or to the relational activities of regular forces personnel (see section 1. 2). This dissertation explores the role of religion in the relational peacekeeping environment of south Lebanon and the limitations to its relevance.

In this introductory chapter, I begin by surveying the peacebuilding and peacekeeping literature, tracing major trends and situating the first two gaps to which this research responds (1. 1). I subsequently discuss religious peacebuilding in order to foreground my key research questions, the theoretical approach of this project and the third gap to which this study responds (1. 2). In the third section (1. 3), I overview the research and its objectives, then discuss the selection of Lebanon as the case study for this project (1. 4). Finally, I introduce the key findings and contributions of this research (1. 5), before outlining the structure of the dissertation to follow (1. 6).

1. 1 The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping in Global Conflict Response

1. 1. 1 The Advent of UN Peacekeeping

Following the conclusion of the Second World War, the United Nations was founded in 1945, “with the purpose of ‘maintain[ing] international peace and security’” (Feldman, 2010, p. 418). The origins of UN peacekeeping date to the early aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the creation of the State of Israel. First deploying a small group of observers, the UN later launched the UN Emergency Force (UNEF), an ad hoc peacekeeping deployment, into Gaza and the Sinai to ensure the withdrawal of Israeli troops and prevent further violence (Feldman, 2010). This first deployment, and nearly all subsequent ones until 1988, were based on classical peacekeeping principles, including impartiality, “the non-use of force except in self-defense,” and consent of the parties (United Nations Peacekeeping Operations [UN PKO], 2008, p. 34; Bellamy et al., 2015; Cassin & Zyla, 2021; Feldman, 2010). Though the UN Charter set out certain limited provisions for the use of force in Chapter VII, UN peacekeeping in its original form was not intended to be an enforcement tool and lacked such parameters (Feldman, 2010; UN PKO, 2008). This model of peace interventions was common until the 1990s and the end of

the Cold War, after which the predominant form of conflict shifted, as did the model of conflict response.

Based on liberal, universalist principles, early UN peacekeeping emphasized “membership in the international community [...] and the obligations that members in that community have to one another” (Feldman, 2010, p. 417). This “first generation” of UN peacekeeping has been called “the ‘buffer’ model,” in which conflict deterrence through observation and presence was the primary objective and the scope of operations (Feldman, 2010, p. 418; see also Rubinstein, 2008).

1. 1. 2 The Expansion of UN Peacekeeping into Peacebuilding

The early 1990s mark the emergence of a comprehensive international system devoted not just to peacekeeping, but also to peacebuilding,² and a significant expansion of resources³ to these operations by the United Nations (Barnett, 2006; Fetherston & Nordstrom, 1995). This reflects the global security climate in the aftermath of the Cold War, in which the frequency of intrastate conflict surpassed interstate conflict, necessitating a reconceptualization of security and

² Fetherston & Nordstrom (1995) introduce a typology of peace activities: “Peacemaking is a conflict settlement activity that attempts 'to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through peaceful means' and is normally carried out at the state-to-state level (or macro level). Preconflict peace building is aimed at generating stable and positive economic, social, and political conditions that will prevent violent conflict. Postconflict peace building is activity aimed at reconstruction (economic, social, political) to ensure that conflicts do not recur. This activity is normally planned at the macro level (either within the UN system or through international non-governmental organizations [NGOs]) and it is carried out at both the macro and micro levels ('micro' meaning the local/community level). Enforcement is defined as the use of military force to maintain international peace and security, carried out with the authorization of the Security Council, based on measures set out in Chapter VII of the UN Charter. United Nations peacekeeping is a peaceful third party activity that evolved on an ad hoc basis through the establishment of precedents. [...] (1) consent of the parties in dispute to the peacekeeping mission, (2) impartiality, and (3) the non-use of force except in self-defense” (p. 99-100).

³ From 1990 to 1993, the budget for peacekeeping increased from US\$400,000 to US\$3.7 billion (Fetherston & Nordstrom, 1995).

its connection with underdevelopment (Held, 2009; Picciotto, 2004; Uvin, 2002, Fanthrope, 2005, Kaldor, 1999).⁴

Reacting to this changing context and the challenges faced by Cold War era peace operations, the United Nations issued *An Agenda for Peace* (1992). In this document, the UN expanded its peace operational purview through a liberal peacebuilding lens, anticipating a future of increasingly complex security needs, generating demand for more expansive interventions. This document introduced the terminology of “peacebuilding” and “peace enforcement” to the vocabulary of international politics, reflecting the increased freedom to engage in interventions with a Security Council liberated from the deadlock of the Cold War (UN, 1992, p. 1 and 3, respectively; see also Berdal & Ucko, 2015). The *Agenda for Peace* issued a call for expanding military capabilities and enhancing financing mechanisms; it introduced discourses challenging notions of absolute sovereignty and the need for preventative action through diplomacy and deployment (UN, 1992; Berdal & Ucko, 2015). This ushered in the “second generation” of UN peacekeeping, with the objective of concluding conflicts through peacebuilding (Feldman, 2010).

During this period, a “shared conviction that political and economic liberalism” was the road to peace emerged, yet produced only limited successes and often failures in practice (Paris, 2010, p. 340-341; see also von der Schulenburg, 2014; Berdal & Ucko, 2015; Anderson & Olson, 2003). While traditional UN peacekeeping does not include development-related activities, the mainstream approach to peacebuilding since 1992 has been characterized by democratic and market-oriented approaches to societal reform, consistent with the assumptions and tenets of the neoliberal development model. This approach has been termed “liberal peacebuilding” (Paris, 1997, 2001; MacGinty, 2007; Suhrke & Chaudry, 2012).

⁴ Notably, some scholars contest the assertion that “contemporary” forms of conflict are distinct from earlier forms of conflict (Newman, 2004).

Liberal peacebuilding prioritizes the individual, particularly their capacity to seek representation through democratic participation and their capacity to seek self-improvement and prosperity through the market. Social change is thought to stem from these processes (Mac Ginty 2007, 2010; Roberts, 2011) as the effectiveness of the state is located in its accountability to the populace. The origins of “liberal peace” as a solution to state fragility are located in the writings of Immanuel Kant,⁵ who argued that to achieve “perpetual peace,” several constraints were needed on a state’s incentives and abilities to wage war (Kant, 1795). Liberal peace holds “individual freedoms” as its conceptual fulcrum, manifest in “representative government,” and preserved through “constitutional limits on arbitrary power” (Paris, 2010, p. 360). Liberal peace ultimately relies on the creation of effective and legitimate institutions to support political freedoms and governmental efficacy, as stipulated in the statebuilding literature (Paris, 2010; North, 1990).

Several scholars have conducted studies advancing evidence and arguments that interventionist, liberal peace-based approaches to conflict are effective and beneficial to the attainment of peace (Fortna, 2004; Goodman, 2006, Helman & Ratner, 1992-1993; von der Schulenburg, 2014).⁶ However, an equally substantial body of scholarship presents arguments

⁵ Kant argued that a civil state, based on a republican constitution, was the optimal way to combat the “natural state [...] of war” (Kant, 1795). Kant’s thesis inspired another approach to peace, which varies in means but shares the same ultimate goal as liberal peace – republican peace. Barnett (2006) similarly argues for the potential advantage of a republican peace, emphasizing the principles of “deliberation, constitutionalism, and representation,” as a pragmatic “stepping-stone” on the road to liberal peace (p. 89-90). Its advantages lie in being representative, while also distributing political power, and in emphasizing the public, civic good, over the rights of the individual (Barnett, 2006).

⁶ Fortna finds that peacekeeping after civil war “does tend to make peace more likely to last, and to last longer” (2004, p. 288). Goodman argues in favour of humanitarian intervention, advancing the thesis that “encouraging aggressively minded states to justify force as an exercise of humanitarian intervention can facilitate conditions for peace,” specifically by placing constraints on their subsequent action (2006, p. 116). Both Helman and Ratner, as well as von der Schulenburg (2014) call for more intrusive and comprehensive interventions. Helman and Ratner present a case for “conservatorship” or trusteeship (1992-1993, p. 12), while von der Schulenburg presents an argument for a “comprehensive peacebuilding approach” that leaves behind the three principles of peacekeeping (consent, impartiality and non-violence except in self-defense), in favour of a more “pro-active value-based” approach to peacebuilding (2014, p. 2, 8).

and evidence to the contrary (Regan, 2002; Grieg & Diehl, 2005; Chandler, 2004).⁷ These arguments are bolstered by the empirical reality that peacebuilding has not generated the results it aimed to achieve.

The operations in Bosnia and Rwanda in the early 1990s, both based on liberal peacebuilding principles, distilled several lessons, one of which has come to define the trajectory of policy in international peace operations – “UN peacekeepers would henceforth need to prepare for, and be ready to engage in, more ‘robust’ or ‘muscular’ peacekeeping” (Berdal & Ucko, 2015, p. 7; see also UN 1998, 2000). As such, by the end of the 1990s, both theory and policy emphasized the need for longer term, comprehensive approaches to peace (Paris, 2010; UN, 1992).

The logic of positive, comprehensive peace is well articulated by the human security agenda, institutionalized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994, which constitutes a key paradigmatic shift of the post-Cold War period (UNDP, 1994; Sen, 1999; Newman, 2011). This reflected movement away from traditional approaches to the security of states, moving toward a people-centred approach, acknowledging the multidimensional experiences of insecurity. Human security underpins the expansion of both peace engagements and diplomatic efforts, impacting as well, how effectiveness is understood in building and sustaining peace and security.⁸

⁷ Regan’s study demonstrates that “third-party [unilateral] interventions tend to extend expected durations rather than shorten them,” which is particularly the case in neutral interventions (2002, p. 55). Greig and Diehl’s study finds that peacekeeping activities are detrimental to peacemaking (Grieg & Diehl, 2005, p. 621). Chandler argues that the interventionism encapsulated in the *Responsibility to Protect*, which effectively enshrines humanitarian intervention in international institutional norms, is a product of Realpolitik, affording moral legitimacy to those with military and economic power (2004, p. 59, 76).

⁸ Though human security is conceptually foundational to peacebuilding and peacekeeping interventions, it has been critiqued as too vague to be actionable at the policy level (Paris, 2001). Such critics argue that its utility is in placing people at the centre of foreign policy, asserting the prominence of non-military threats to security, and encouraging both research and policy-making in accordance with holistic efforts toward human wellbeing (Paris, 2001, p. 96, 101).

The expansion of diplomacy into unofficial and interactive problem-solving spheres reflects lessons arising in the post-Cold War period regarding the social and psychological aspects of intrastate conflict (Kaldor, 1999). Rouhana and Kelman (1994) argue that traditional conflict resolution approaches at official levels rested on the assumption that “disputed resources, interests, or goals are negotiable and that a compromise is achievable within the existing balance of power between the parties” (p. 157-158). While this assumption holds for some conflicts, for others, such as “protracted ethnic conflict,” it does not (Rouhana & Kelman, 1994, p. 158). Such disputes are over “non-negotiable human needs – for identity, security, recognition, [and] political participation,” where the needs of all parties must be met, rather than victory achieved for one party over all others (Rouhana & Kelman, 1994, p. 158).

Numerous scholars and policy makers have internalized these complex understandings of conflict and instability, generating a growing consensus that security and development are co-dependent and co-constitutive (Piciotto, 2004; Hettne, 2010). It is in this context that calls for “whole-of-government” approaches (UN, 2012, p. 55), “comprehensive approaches” (UN 1988-1989), “integrated missions” (UN, 2008) and partnerships with non-governmental organizations as well as national and local actors (UN PKO/Department of Field Support [DFS], 2016; World Bank, 2011; UNDP, 2012) have emerged, all articulating the broader concept of a security-development nexus⁹ demanding greater coherence in international approaches to fragile and conflict affected states (Held, 2009; Picciotto, 2004).¹⁰

⁹ This nexus has been contested by many, who hold that conflating these two components of foreign policy can produce incoherence, ad hocism, veritable “bullying” of recipient governments, and further exacerbate the gap between policy and practice (Chandler, 2007; Tschirgi, 2002; Uvin, 2002).

¹⁰ The creation of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund in 2005 (UN, 2005) reflects efforts to institutionalize and distinguish these expanded activities from more traditional peacekeeping interventions.

The 2000s, particularly in the wake of September 11, 2001, extended this causal relationship between underdevelopment and human insecurity to the global level, as weak states have been increasingly envisioned as threats to international security (Baranyi, 2008¹¹; Barnett, 2006; Held, 2012; Picciotto, 2004). This shift has re-prioritized realist¹² international policy, challenging the more cosmopolitan principles that underpin the United Nations and other multilateral organizations. These cosmopolitan principles privilege “rightful authority,” which is contingent on moral worth through preserving human rights, and legitimacy through encouraging democratic agency, self-determination, deliberation and consent (Held, 2012; Picciotto, 2004; Chandler, 2004; Jacoby, 2007).

In this international security context, the UN has continued to extend its purview and alter the parameters of its peace operations. In the 1990s, of the 37 new missions created, eight¹³ were afforded provisions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, allowing for the use of force beyond self-defense (Cassin & Zyla, 2021; Sloan, 2014). Since 2000, 13 of the 18 new missions¹⁴ were given such parameters and capabilities (*ibid.*). Operations have expanded to

¹¹ Baranyi identifies a shift in peacebuilding operations from “second-generation peacebuilding efforts, based on negotiations and overseen by multilateral verification” in the early 1990s, “to more robust third-generation efforts,” which follow multilaterally mandated military “peace enforcement” operations in the late 1990s, “to the emergence of more unilateral stabilization operations post-9/11,” which enjoy less multilateral support and often combine “war-fighting and ‘peacebuilding’” (Baranyi, 2008, p. 295-296; see also Donais, 2004).

¹² Realism, as articulated in international relations theory, broadly posits that international relations are ultimately about the conflict between rationally acting states in the interest of acquiring and maintaining power (Crawford, 2000). While multiple subdivisions exist within this theory, for the purposes of the point made in this paper, realism denotes the prioritization of acquiring power and assuring the security of the state in an anarchic world system, supplanting the cosmopolitanism or “universal constitutional order” that is evoked by multilateral associations such as the United Nations and the European Union (Held, 2012, p. 28; Crawford, 2000).

¹³ “UN Interim Administration in Kosovo; UN Transitional Administration in East Timor; UN Protection Force; UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; UN Operation in Somalia II; UN Angola Verification Mission II; UN Mission in Sierra Leone; UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda” (Cassin & Zyla, 2021, p. 464).

¹⁴ “UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan; UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali; UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo; African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur; UN Interim Security Force for Abyei; UN Mission in Liberia; UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti; UN Mission in Sudan; UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad; UN Operation in Burundi; UN Operations in Cote d’Ivoire; UN Mission of Support in East Timor” (Cassin & Zyla, 2021, p. 464).

include the protection of civilians, as exemplified in the UN engagement in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2010, and extending the authority of the state in society, as exemplified in the 2014 mission to the Central African Republic (Berdal & Ucko, 2015). Today, three missions operate under the title of “multi-dimensional stabilization,” designating these operations as responding to “complex emergencies” with expansive operational capabilities under Chapter VII (Gilder 2019; Karlsrud, 2017; Tull, 2018). These constitute the “third generation” of UN peacekeeping (Feldman, 2010).

1. 1. 3 The Fourth Generation of UN Peacekeeping

Emerging from criticisms of the underperforming liberal peacebuilding system and the salience of the human security framework (Donais, 2009; Owen, 2004, ICISS, 2001; Imboden, 2012), the past 15 years have seen a shift away from the technocratic, liberal approaches of the 1990s toward a prioritization of locally-owned, bottom-up, micro peacebuilding, in line with broader trends in development policy (OECD DAC 2007, 2012; UN, 2011; UNDP, 2012).

These myriad criticisms of the liberal peace model are counterbalanced, however, by evidence that suggests an important, if limited, role for the international community to contribute to security, stability, and reform (Donais, 2009; Autesserre, 2014b; Barnett et al., 2014). This has generated a strand of critical theory that calls for post-liberal or “fourth generation” approaches to peace, which advocate for the importance of local ownership, hybridity and the contextualization of interventions.

Local ownership has become the favoured “buzzword” of both peace and development policy since the mid-2000s (OECD, 2007, 2012; UN, 2011; UNDP, 2012; IDPS, 2011).

“Buzzwords” are “terms that combine general agreement on the abstract notion that they represent with endless disagreement about what they might mean in practice” (Cornwall, 2007,

p. 472). This description fits well with the concept of local ownership and the myriad ways in which efforts to attain or achieve local ownership have materialized in practice. One of the more substantive examples in the peacebuilding field is the 2011 *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States* (IDPS, 2011), which established a concrete plan for international action on peace and statebuilding according to fragility assessments, plans and visions, created by and led by fragile states.

In the academy, one of the more salient theories of attaining or achieving local ownership has been hybrid peacebuilding. As such, in an effort to foster improved local ownership without abandoning established modes of peace intervention, the UN and other liberal actors have begun to accept, encourage and attempt to cultivate hybridity in their interventions. Proposals for hybrid approaches to peacebuilding call for engaging simultaneously and coherently in bottom-up and top-down efforts to bring sustainable resolution and security to conflict-affected societies (Donais, 2009; Richmond, 2010; Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012; Roberts, 2011). This conceptualization and approach to building peace retains the main goals and values of the liberal peace project, however its emphasis on legitimacy manifests itself in both the means as well as the ends of peacebuilding (Fetherston & Nordstrom, 1995). As such, this methodological approach enables and requires greater local participation,¹⁵ context-specific solutions, “micro-level perspectives” and the inclusion of local institutions conducive to the overall aims of the intervention (Fetherston & Nordstrom, 1995; Lemay-Hébert, 2009; Barnett, 2006; Richmond, 2014).

Contextualization, as articulated by Richmond, is the connection of the technical aspects of the liberal peace project, namely institution building and state building, with the “really

¹⁵ Local participation must include engagement with those manifestations of the local that constitute resistance to the international project (Richmond, 2011).

existing social contract [...] or, more importantly, to open [peacebuilding] up to the cultural, customary dynamics of the local environment concerned” (Richmond, 2010, p. 31). This demands moving beyond the superficial engagement with the “local,” which effectively functions as a form of “social engineering and transformation” in line with regional and international scripts, in favour of engaging with “the local context on its own terms,” making peace legitimate contextually and internationally (Richmond, 2012; p. 369). While local ownership and engagement have become central features of UN peace operations and peacebuilding more generally, the myriad ways in which locals experience and interact with interventions remains under explored in the literature. Where included, local voices are frequently limited to the relatively powerful, including civil society actors and local-level leadership. This research presents empirical data to fill this gap from locals in all walks of life, highlighting experiences and perceptions that are rarely captured in either academic or policy discourse.

Richmond argues that hybridity presents a “plausible approach”¹⁶ in contrast to those who would argue for “dismantling [...] the liberal peacebuilding system” (2010, p. 31). The implications of such an approach to peacebuilding is abandoning technocratic solutions in favour of contextual and historical specificity (Mac Ginty, 2010). This constitutes a move away from a liberal democratic, top-down statebuilding-as-peacebuilding model, which can “further alienate local societies by rendering them passive” (Boege et al., 2009, p. 11), and restrict the institutional forms that can be established in building peace (Brown et al., 2010; Mac Ginty, 2010).¹⁷ While

¹⁶ Barnett et al. demonstrate that not only is a hybrid conception of peacebuilding more plausible, but it is the “most likely outcome to be observed empirically” from the liberal peacebuilding project, as it is currently executed (2014, p. 609). Their analysis shows that “compromised peacebuilding, defined as an outcome that is a mixture of liberal and illiberal elements,” is a reflection of the greater likelihood that peacebuilding will “reproduce important elements of the status quo” rather than bringing about “massive liberal transformation” (Barnett et al., 2014, p. 616).

¹⁷ Hybrid peacebuilding affords a greater degree of agency to the “recipients” of intervention than liberal peacebuilding. Mac Ginty acknowledges this agency in his description of the four ways in which the liberal and the

well-theorized in the literature, there remains a dearth of empirical evidence on how hybridity manifests in practice, particularly in the context of UN peacekeeping interventions. This is a gap this research intends to fill.

Further development of the focus on micro, local, bottom-up peacebuilding has been pioneered by Séverine Autesserre who investigates the ways in which the everyday lives and realities of foreign interveners impact both the methods employed by these workers and their effectiveness (Autesserre, 2014a, 2014b). This approach can also be termed “applied peacebuilding,” which asserts that “once people are operating within conflict-affected communities” they “become part of the fabric of communities even if they are only there for two or three weeks” and even if they operate within “institutions with particular mandates” (Neufeldt, 2014, p. 428).

Autesserre builds on the work of Fetherston and Nordstrom two decades prior, who use Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, which asserts that an individual’s identity, disposition, and way of behaving in the world are all socially constructed, to examine conflict management and peacekeeping (1995; Bourdieu, 1977). This logic demands the study of the individuals involved in conflict resolution and peace, because it places the reality that “a peacekeeper ultimately comes to the field with his or her own set of cultures, prejudices, loves and hates, friends and enemies, and business alliances and political obligations [...] their own *habitus*” into the centre of abstract policies, approaches and processes of peace and conflict (Fetherston & Nordstrom, 1995, p. 106; see also Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012; Neufeldt, 2014). These realities impact the

local interact in this approach – “the compliance powers of the liberal peace; the incentive powers of the liberal peace; the ability of local actors to resist, ignore or subvert the liberal peace; and the ability of local actors to formulate and maintain alternatives to the liberal peace” (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 398).

way in which peacekeepers build relationships and interact with the social and cultural fabric of local communities (Forester, 2007).

Autesserre builds on these earlier studies and complicates the spectrum of *habitus*, arguing that people's actions are significantly influenced not only by their unique socialization "back home," but also by their socialization as part of a community of peace workers with its own norms, discourses and shared experiences – what Autesserre calls "Peaceland." This produces a degree of homogenization that perpetuates prescriptive approaches to peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2014b). Peaceland is also characterized by spatial and bureaucratic barriers¹⁸ that impede international-local interactions in fragile contexts. They function as "obstacles to the very outcomes [projects and programs] aspire to achieve," in that they inhibit both the "creation and mobilization of local knowledge for the benefit of designing local action" (Miller & Rudnick, 2010, p. 63).

Where interactions do occur, they are often commercially-oriented, and studies indicate that host community perceptions of peacekeepers and peace operations do not align with the dominant narratives of purpose and motivation emanating from the United Nations (Jennings, 2015). Jennings (2015) observes that "'locals' experience of the mission is more akin to peacekeeping-as-enterprise" than it is to the dominant narratives advanced by the United Nations, which are "peacekeeping-as-protection" and "peacekeeping-as-development" (p. 298).

¹⁸ Such barriers are manifest in the following practices, habits and narratives: placing internationals in management positions thus subordinating local actors; frequent staff turnover; the privileging of thematic expertise over country-specific knowledge; the lack of local language capabilities among international staff; "compartmentalizing the international system"; "bunkerization"; constant report writing; short-term programming and the emphasis on quantification; narrow information collection protocols that often rely on international networks and elites rather than local community-level informants; simplifying narratives of conflict-dynamics; accountability to donors rather than "intended beneficiaries"; "socializing primarily with other expatriates"; and narratives that "host populations need help" and "local elites lack knowledge and capacity" (Autesserre, 2014b, p. 36-37).

The result of the incongruence between the experienced reality and the constructed self-image of peacekeeping is “local disenchantment with the missions” (Jennings, 2015, p. 298).

In addition to the impact of *habitus* on the ability of international and local actors to connect and interact, the “everyday lives” of individuals in host communities are also relevant. In the context of peace operations, individuals’ daily resistance, adaptation, and subversion of environments and norms in the interest of securing personal wellbeing can manifest in strategies and methods of gaining access and contact in an otherwise divided social and physical landscape (Roberts, 2011). While some scholars have integrated the everyday into their ethnographic and narrative accounts of peace workers, these studies remain innovative (Higate & Henry, 2009; Rubinstein, 2008; Pouligny, 1999).¹⁹ Further, the literature has yet to thoroughly interrogate the ways in which micro-level processes and efforts impact the macro-level peacebuilding landscape (Autesserre, 2014a), which is a gap that this project addresses.

1. 2 Religious Peacebuilding

This study was inspired by two conversations I had during my Master’s research, one with a Muslim-Canadian military chaplain, and another with a Muslim Regular Forces member of the Canadian Armed Forces. The chaplain shared a story of his faith being instrumental to diffusing tensions during peace negotiations in Afghanistan. The soldier recounted how his faith led him to converse meaningfully with local Muslims, bringing him an additional, spiritual, sense of purpose in his work. These conversations fostered my interest in exceptional individuals with identities, practices and beliefs that generate unique actions, interactions and effects, which

¹⁹ Such ethnographies privilege the diversity of different contexts and focus on isolated case studies, which has produced a dearth of comparative, qualitative analyses in this field (Autesserre, 2014b).

bridge the divides between international military actors and local individuals in the context of conflict.

This interest initially led me to the religious peacebuilding literature, which offers a wealth of empirical and theoretical insights into how religion can bridge divides and transform identity-based conflict drivers. This literature can be roughly divided into two categories, one that focuses on the religious peacebuilding work of international and local civilians through social and non-governmental organizations (Abbleby, 2000; Lewis, 2011; Lederach, 1997; Redekop, 2002, 2012, 2014), and another that explores the diplomatic function of religious leaders, both local and international (typically military chaplains), in conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Moore, 2013; Stoeckl & Roy, 2015).

Writing in the late 1990s, R. Scott Appleby noted that “two thirds of contemporary wars turn on issues of religious, ethnic, or national identity” (2000, p. 17; see also Lewis, 2011). Former president of the World Bank James D. Wolfensohn similarly articulated the importance of “faith institutions, especially at the local level” in *Voices of the Poor* (2005). These institutions “inspire greater trust and confidence than governments, donors, or secular non-governmental groups,” particularly in conflict-affected settings where “they are often the only source of social services” (Wolfensohn, 2005, p. 163). Particularly in the post-9/11 context, global understanding of the importance of religion and its salience in the political sphere have informed policy-making around international conflict intervention and peacekeeping.

This understanding of religion as essential to both conflict and peace has driven scholarly and practitioner interest in the potential of religion and religious leaders to influence

peacebuilding and diplomacy (Moore, 2013; Lederach, 1997; Gopin, 2009; Kakar, 2014²⁰). The use of “shared ritual events and collaborative activities” by religious leaders, such as military chaplains, have been linked to “engendering trust and renewing cooperation across ruptured ethnic divides” (Moore, 2013, p. 40; see also Stoeckl & Roy, 2015). Drawing on faith traditions in peacebuilding efforts has contributed to building relations, engaging in dialogue and “re-humanizing the other” (Moore, 2013, p. 103). The value of engaging with religious communities, and particularly local religious leaders, is rooted in the understanding that such individuals have wide networks (Gopin, 2009), are good communicators, and “often have established ties with their counterparts across the lines of conflict” (Moore, 2013, p. 101-102). Despite its acknowledged value, the role of religious peacebuilding in the context of UN peacekeeping interventions has yet to be explored, as does the capacity of regular forces military personnel to engage in such peacebuilding and diplomatic activity. This is a gap that this project addresses.

According to the religious peacebuilding literature, religion shapes the patterns or strategies of action that some peacebuilders can leverage to attain positive movement toward peace (Moore, 2013; Redekop, 2014). It provides actors, such as chaplains, with skills, practices, concepts and scripts with which to engage others in constructive dialogue and collaborative action. In this understanding, religion is a type of culture, where culture is understood as a “‘tool kit’ or repertoire (Hannerz, 1969, p. 186-88) from which actors select differing pieces for constructing lines of action” (Swidler, 1986, p. 277). This tool kit includes “habits, moods, sensibilities, and views of the world” (Swidler, 1986, p. 277; see also Geertz, 1973). This is distinct from the conception of culture as determinant of the “values toward which action is

²⁰ Kakar (2014) discusses the importance of engaging Afghan religious leaders for projects regarding women’s rights, as they have credibility, moral authority and are “traditional ‘gatekeepers’” for local politics and decision-making (p.1).

directed,” meaning “culture shapes action by defining what people want” (Swidler, 1986, p. 273 and 274, respectively). In this conception, culture and religion do not define what people want, but rather the ways in which they can work to attain what they want.²¹ This conception of culture and religion is agential, rather than passive, wherein individuals can wield or utilize culture or religion in observable ways to achieve their interests or ends (Swidler, 1986; Rogers, 2020). It is from this point that culture and religion can be linked to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, through an investigation of the ways in which cultural or religious “tools” or practices can be leveraged in pursuit of peace. The conception of change embedded within both religious and cultural peacebuilding is the same – through interactions and relations the involved parties are transformed and their knowledges co-evolve (Distler, 2016; Moore, 2013). This is fundamentally a social constructivist perspective, wherein an individual is the production of their social environment and social relations, meaning that the self does not exist independent of its socialization (Bousquet & Curtis, 2011). From this constructivist, interactionist perspective, peacebuilding is a “relational exercise” (Boege, 2019, p.1; Wang, 2014²²) rather than a structural or institutional one (see Chapter 2 for further details).

1. 3 Rationale, Research Overview and Objectives

Several scholars argue that enabling more frequent and substantial personal contact between outsider and insider actors positively impacts peace operations (Autesserre, 2014b;

²¹ Importantly, it is not within the scope of this inquiry develop a comprehensive representation of culture(s) or take concrete stances on the central debates of cultural studies (unified entity vs. process; “symbolic schemata” vs. “system of activity”) (Jepperson & Swidler, 1994, p. 361).

²² Wang (2014) identifies three strategies of peacebuilding that must be pursued simultaneously and coherently in order to achieve conflict transformation: “Cultural peacebuilding is interested in the social relationships within a given society. Structural peacebuilding is interested in changing the structures – or institutions – in a conflict area which legitimate the conflict. Elite peacebuilding is mainly conducted by the decision-makers or political authorities” (p. 74).

Curran, 2013; Last, 1995). These connections can benefit accountability, monitoring, host community perceptions, and dialogue between partners, all through building trust and understanding (Autesserre, 2014b; Mawdsley et al., 2005; UN, 2012; Curran, 2013). Such a thesis parallels that advanced by proponents of hybrid peacebuilding.

[If] successful peacebuilding requires both international and domestic resources to be mobilized behind the common goal of sustainable peace, an ongoing conversation across the international-local cultural divide is a prerequisite to achieving a basic consensus on the shape of the peace to be built (Donais, 2009, p. 19; see also Curran, 2013; Anderson & Olson, 2003).²³

The United Nations has taken this approach through Integrated Mission Task Forces, which facilitate improved communications, and thus coordination, between involved departments as well as “country teams” (UN, 2012, p. 3). The introduction of Community Liaison Assistants to UN peacekeeping missions also indicates a clear recognition within the UN bureaucracy that local understandings and interactions are key to efforts toward peace and conflict prevention (Kullenberg, 2016). Training materials have also been updated to reflect greater alignment with conflict resolution, communication and civil-military coordination (Curran, 2013; Hayman, 2010; UNDP, 2012).

Curran argues that negotiation and conflict resolution skills training are fundamental to the transition between peacekeeping, or negative peace, and peacebuilding, or positive peace.²⁴

²³ Anderson and Olson also argue for the significance of relationships and interactions at the personal level in their conceptualization of the micro-macro connection. For a peace program to be effective, it must engage with “More People” and “Key People” at both a personal level, as well as a socio-political level (2003, p. 55). Key people include those who may provide “important entry points” into communities or those with “leverage beyond themselves,” or it may include interacting with people who are directly party to efforts to attain a peace agreement (ibid., p. 49). Notably, their articulation of effective peace operations aligns with much of the tracks of diplomacy literature.

²⁴ Johan Galtung (1996) distinguishes between “negative peace,” or the “absence of violence,” and “positive peace,” which is the absence of “structural and cultural violence” (p. 14). The distinction aligns with that between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, as defined by Fetherston & Nordstrom (1995).

Further, he argues that military peacekeepers stand at the interface of these two efforts (Curran, 2013). He writes that

encouraging negotiation is a key requirement to facilitate wider processes of conflict resolution. Fetherston likened negotiation to 'conciliation', encouraging parties to make conciliatory gestures that would lead to further conflict management [... 'that] aims to restore severed communication'. This is critically important when attempting to move from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. Peacekeeping can thus be visualised as a 'two-tiered approach'. On one tier is the macro-level, where peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts are made; on the other is the micro-level, where peacekeepers work to facilitate settlement or a more positive atmosphere. Ideally, both levels are interlinked to create positive conditions for transformative peacebuilding (Curran, 2013, p. 83-84).

In a similar vein, Last (1995) puts forward an argument that the diplomatic and mediatory skills of rank-and-file officers of peacekeeping missions are akin to the need for military forces to be equipped for both offensive and defensive action in war.²⁵ Their impact in a post-conflict setting can alter norms of behaviour, facilitate communication, build ties between opposing parties, and contribute to efforts to erode negative stereotypes and foster conciliation (Last, 1995, p. 197-198). It is from this rationale that I initiated this research project.

To summarize, this study responds to three gaps in the peacekeeping and peacebuilding literature: the lack of empirical evidence on how hybridity occurs in practice, the limited understanding of the linkages between micro- and macro-level impacts emerging from everyday practice and relations in peacekeeping environments, and the absence of religious peacebuilding analysis in the context of UN peacekeeping interventions.

From this orientation in the literature, I investigate two central questions:

- 1) Does religion foster or mediate interactions and relationships between UN peacekeepers and individuals in host communities? If so, how? And if not, do other types or elements of culture mediate relationships?;

²⁵ A similar argument is made by Dorn & Libben (2016) regarding the need for peacekeeping training to produce "soldier-diplomats" (p. 35).

- 2) What are the impacts²⁶ of such connections and relationships to the individuals involved? Do they contribute to peace at a macro-level?

There are three purposes to this study. First, it is exploratory insofar as it asks if individual identities, discourses, practices or beliefs have a role in motivating or mediating interactions that traverse the social and spatial divides between internationals and locals in conflict-affected and fragile environments (Autesserre 2014b). It subsequently interprets interpersonal relationships and connections through the lenses of cultural peacebuilding and hybridity theories to conceptualize their impacts at both individual- and societal-levels (see Chapter 2).

Second, it advances theory by presenting an empirically-supported argument establishing a link between the impacts of micro-level intercultural exchanges between peacekeepers and local individuals, and macro-level interstate conflict resolution and peace, through incremental conflict resolution and complexity theories (see Chapter 6).

Third, it employs a development-based tool for program monitoring and effectiveness (see Chapter 3), to the actions and behaviours of the individuals who carry out peacekeeping interventions, effectively ‘peopling’ the understanding of intervention outcomes.²⁷ Interviews were designed to map the motivations, strategies and impacts of individual-to-individual

²⁶ The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines outcomes as “short- and medium-term changes,” and impacts as “longer term changes” (Belcher & Palenberg, 2018, p. 478-479; OECD DAC, 2002). The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) (2011) defines impacts as “changes in people’s lives. This might include changes in knowledge, skill, behaviour, health or living conditions [...]. Such changes are positive or negative long-term effects” (p. 7). Belcher & Palenberg (2018) critique these definitions, and those predominant within the international development community, as having an “intervention perspective” that attributes outcomes and impacts only to the intervention (p. 479). This generates “unrealistic expectations and reduce[s] the effectiveness of programs” (Belcher & Palenberg, 2010, p. 479). While the use of “outcomes” and “impacts” in this research is informed by these definitions, I use the term “impact” as a general referent for lasting influence and affective change, as experienced by the individuals involved in the relationships and connections under study, with a complex and multi-directional perspective, not confined to measurability or mandate alignment.

²⁷ “Outcomes are defined as changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a program works directly” (Earl et al., 2001, p. 1).

interactions to better understand how the everyday, relational presence of peacekeeping impacts the objectives and effectiveness of the intervention.

Through a fourteen-month fieldwork period, I conducted 82 semi-structured, narrative, ethno-biographical interviews with local community members, municipalities and civil society organizations in south Lebanon, as well as United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) civilian staff and peacekeeping veterans. This diversity of participants allowed me to triangulate findings for this political ethnography of peacekeeping, explore differences over time and between locales, and acknowledge power imbalances. I analyzed my data with NVivo software using both open coding and codes derived from relevant theory and literature (for a detailed description, refer to Chapter 3).

1. 4 Case Study Selection: Lebanon

1. 4. 1 Case Study Rationale

Lebanon, and particularly the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), have been chosen as the case study for this research. As Simons (2009) writes, “case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a ‘real life’ context” (p. 21). This research focuses on the complex impacts of a single institution (UNIFIL) in the relational system of the peacekeeping environment in the south of Lebanon (for more on the case study methodology, see Chapter 3). Lebanon was selected for a variety of reasons, namely the religious diversity of the country²⁸ (given the subject of study), the size of the UN peacekeeping mission (providing many

²⁸ While a census has not been completed in Lebanon since 1932 (Faour, 2007), as of 2022, the World Bank (n.d.) evaluated Lebanon’s population to be 6,825,442. In a 2019 United States State Department report, the religious composition of Lebanon was estimated to be 67.6 percent Muslim (31.9 percent Sunni and 31 percent Shia, the remainder Alawites and Ismailis), 32.4 percent Christian, (the predominant group being Maronite Catholics), and 4.53 percent Druze (Office of International Religious Freedom, 2019).

points of contact and potential participants), the interwovenness of intra and interstate dynamics, and the relative safety and feasibility of the country for fieldwork.

Lebanon constitutes a unique case in that it is a peacekeeping context that is both interstate and intrastate. It is interstate insofar as the UN mission was originally deployed to quell tensions between Lebanon and Israel in 1978. It remains operational to continue this mission in light of more recent conflict periods (2006) and the unresolved border disputes with both Israel and Syria (Muralidharan, 2005; Murphy, 2008; United Nations Security Council [UNSC], 12 March 2012; UNSC, 4 November 2016; UNSC, 11 August 2006). It is intrastate as it also operates in a context of intrastate tensions between Lebanese Muslim, Druze and Christian factions, which resulted in the Lebanese civil war that began in April 1975 (Murphy, 2008). Sectarian groups within Lebanon have been implicated in the interstate conflict for decades (Murphy, 2008; Fisk 2002), which inherently blurs the distinction between interstate and intrastate conflict dynamics (see section 1. 4. 2 below for further detail).

Lebanon is also unique as it is simultaneously post-conflict – in that there is a political settlement between Lebanon and Israel despite certain remaining contested points – and vulnerable to future conflict and instability deriving from regional spillover effects, extremism and the resulting pressures to institutional, political and social systems as a result of such factors (World Bank, 2013; UNSC, 10 July 2013; Hackett, 2014). Today, Lebanon is met with new internal challenges as host to approximately 1.4 million refugees (second highest per capita globally) (Amnesty International, 2022), most recently from Syria, but also from Iraq and Palestine. Reports suggest that refugees are increasingly perceived as burdensome and to blame for the deteriorating quality of life experienced by the Lebanese people (Chatty & Mansour, 2011; Chatty, 2016; UNHCR, 2015; World Bank, 2013; UNSC, 4 November 2016). In a country

with sectarian tensions that pre-date the Syrian crisis, Lebanon's stability is increasingly precarious (UNHCR, 2015; Le Borgne, 2013; UNSC, 18 December 2015; World Bank, 2013; UNSC, 4 November 2016). Particularly, regions with "ongoing security issues and sectarian diversity appear to be most prone to such social instability" (World Bank, 2013, p. 101; see also Murphy, 2008).

Within this fragile context, the primary subject of this study is interactions between UNIFIL peacekeepers and individuals within the mission's operational environment. UNIFIL has been operational since March 1978, currently at force strength totaling 10,638 (as of November 2021), of which 9,622 are military troops and 809 are civilian personnel (UN PKO, 30 June 2022). The substantial size of this operation,²⁹ which is populated by 46 contributing countries (UNIFIL, 2022), makes it a suitable mission for this study. The diversity of the UNIFIL force is advantageous as it introduces cultural, religious, and social variety into daily life, interactions and practices by UNIFIL personnel. Each troop contributing country has unique policies and protocols with respect to engaging with the Lebanese community. The size of the force also enables an abundance of operational activities, and thus many potential points of contact between personnel and local individuals. In 2020, UNIFIL reported an average of over 14,400 operational activities per month (UNSC, 10 March 2020), including patrols, or "market walks" (UNSC, 4 November 2016, p. 5), checkpoints and observation tasks (UNSC, 9 March 2017). Of particular interest for this research are the "market walks," which provide "opportunities for regular direct contact between peacekeepers and the local population" (UNSC, 4 November 2016, p. 5).

²⁹ UNIFIL's area of operations currently has "the world's densest concentration of peacekeepers per kilometer" (Schenker & Orion, 2021).

Additionally, UNIFIL's mission in Lebanon is one of the longest running UN deployments in history (44 years). UNIFIL remains an older form of UN peacekeeping that is less common in the post-Cold War period with the evolution of UN peace operations toward increasing robustness and mandate expansion (Sloan, 2014; Cassin & Zyla, 2021). Despite this trend, UNIFIL remains a classical peacekeeping mission (Fetherston & Nordstrom, 1995).³⁰ This makes it an ideal case in which to study forms of micro-diplomacy enacted through engagement between UN peacekeepers and local individuals, which may not be possible in the context of highly militarized, stabilization deployments in active conflict zones. The limited mandate, taken alongside the relative permissiveness of the environment, generates a context in which interesting informal and ad hoc dynamics have emerged. The duration of the mission also lends itself to an examination of UNIFIL policy changes over time.

1. 4. 2 Conflict in Lebanon: Blurring the Intrastate and Interstate

As one part of the broader Arab-Israeli conflict, conceptualizing or theorizing the interstate conflict between Lebanon and Israel is complex, contentious and fundamentally political. Beyond debate, the conflict between Lebanon and Israel is “asymmetric,” insofar as there is “an imbalance of power and resources” between involved actors (Jones, 2009, p. 1), with one side represented by a well-developed, professional, technologically-advanced, state-supported military and the other represented by a varied assemblage of armed actors with divergent social and political loyalties and support structures.

A major conflict between the Maronites and Druze of Mount Lebanon erupted in 1860, triggering the intervention of Europeans to “establish a political arrangement” to bring peace,

³⁰ In 2006 following the 34 day war between Israel and Hezbollah, UNIFIL's mandate was expanded to include some parameters for use of force, not only in self-defense, but also in defense of the mandate (UNSC, 11 August 2006).

while preserving the unique identities of these groups (Entelis, 1985, p. 48). This arrangement became the precursor to a political system of “confessionalism,” later enshrined in the 1943 National Pact³¹ and revised in the 1989 Taif Agreement,³² which distributes power to the major religious groups in Lebanon based on a 1932 census³³ conducted by the French (Entelis, 1985, p. 48; Faour, 2007). During the French colonial period (1920-1943), geographic borders for a Republic of Lebanon were constructed, encompassing the Mount Lebanon area (primarily Maronite and Druze), and attaching the Bekaa Valley and the areas of Tripoli and Saida (primarily Muslim, both Sunni and Shia) in order to make an “economically viable” state (Entelis, 1985, p. 48). These borders were also strategic, according to a “divide and rule” philosophy, motivated by a French desire to maximize their own power and undermine potential opposition (Entelis, 1985; Fisk, 2002).

The internal diversity and arbitrary geographic configuration of Lebanon fostered a precarious political system in which nationhood was never well-defined or developed. Several scholars have noted that Lebanon has only been conceptualized based on what parties did not want it to become, rather than a collective understanding of what it should become (Entelis, 1985, Faour, 2007). The confessional-based political system ensured for Muslims that “Lebanon would not become a fully Western state,” while for Christians, it ensured that “Lebanon would

³¹ The 1932 census established a “six-to-five ratio” of Christian to Muslim seats in government (Entelis, 1985, p. 49). The 1943 National Pact institutionalized that the Presidency of Lebanon would be held by a Maronite, the position of Prime Minister would be reserved for a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of the House would be a Shia Muslim (Entelis, 1985).

³² The Taif Agreement, signed in the Saudi city of Taif in 1989, “reinforced and legitimized” the 1943 National Pact, though with revisions in favour of Muslims. Though still a Maronite position, the authorities of the Presidency were “muted while the roles of the Sunni prime minister and the Shiite speaker of Parliament gained more significance and power” (Faour, 2007, p. 912). The distribution of seats in the government also shifted to a 1:1 ratio, Christians to Muslims (Faour, 2007), in an effort to align the governmental configuration with the “ethnic configuration” in Lebanon (Geukjian, 2008, p. 137).

³³ No census has been done in Lebanon since 1932 for fear that the demographics have shifted so significantly as to upset the delicate confessional political balance (Faour, 2007).

not become a totally Arab state” (Entelis, 1985, p. 49). Though productive for establishing a fragile peace in the aftermath of the civil war (1975-1990) (Faour, 2007), the reinstitutionalization of the confessional political system in the Taif Agreement has all but ensured a limited capacity for Lebanon to undergo internal political change and development. Historic families and sectarian political parties continue to define Lebanese politics, limiting the development of supra-sectarian or national identity constructs (Fisk, 2002).

To this fragile system of co-existing sectarian identities, further threats to Lebanese identity constructs have emerged as a result of the Arab-Israeli war. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 brought hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon, settling primarily in the south and the Western suburbs of Beirut (Entelis, 1985). Most relevant to the conflict between Lebanon and Israel was the wave of refugees that arrived in the late 1960s and early 1970s, following the 1967 war and their expulsion from Jordan (Entelis, 1985). From 1970 onward, south Lebanon hosted the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) offensive against Israel, which eventually launched Lebanon into interstate war (Entelis, 1985; Guerrero, 2016). These refugees, mostly Muslim, threatened the delicate balance of Lebanon’s major religious identity groups and became implicated in Lebanese politics (Guerrero, 2016).

The PLO aligned themselves with the main Druze political party in opposition to the Christian Maronite party (Guerrero, 2016). Founded in 1936 as a Maronite youth movement³⁴ by Pierre Gemayel under the title of the *Phalanges* party, the influx of Palestinian refugees in the post-1948 period drove its evolution into the *al-Kata’eb* party, a Maronite paramilitary group with “the purpose of challenging the power and prestige of the PLO” (Entelis, 1985, p. 50). In

³⁴ The Phalanges party was originally inspired by the youth movements emerging in Europe at the time associated with fascism and Nazism. Observers note that though inspired, the parallels are restricted to “superficial external features” rather than philosophical consistency (Entelis, 1985, p. 50).

1975, this group massacred a busload of Palestinians in the Mount Lebanon region, an event that has been widely cited as the start of the Lebanese civil war (Entelis, 1985). In response to fighting in the Western suburbs of Beirut between the PLO and *al-Kata'eb*, the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) was formed between the Druze and other Lebanese militias in support of the Palestinians (Guerrero, 2016). This is one example of the interwoven dynamics of inter- and intrastate conflict in Lebanon.

In the face of intense fighting in 1976, Maronite political leaders appealed to Syria for intervention to re-establish order in Lebanon (Guerrero, 2016). Syrian “peacekeeping forces” were deployed from October 1976-2005, under the approval of the Arab League (Entelis, 1985, p. 51; Guerrero, 2016; Fisk, 2002). Though responding to a call for peacekeepers, Syria had its own political incentives to intervene, seeking to pressure Israel with whom it had (and has) ongoing territorial disputes (Guerrero, 2016). “Therefore, [despite a mandate to do so] Damascus was disinclined to disarm the Palestinians, whose attacks on Israel during 1977 prompted Israeli reprisal attacks on Lebanon” (Guerrero, 2016, p. 404). These attacks resulted in the start of the Lebanon-Israel war in 1978, when Israel launched “Operation Litani” and deployed “25,000 soldiers into southern Lebanon” (Guerrero, 2016, p. 410). This sequence of events is illustrative of how regional dynamics exacerbate internal tensions in Lebanon, which fuel the interstate conflict between Lebanon and Israel.

During the war, Israel made a practice of supporting sympathetic militia groups within Lebanon as their proxies (Fisk, 2002; Murphy, 2008). Though contested, it has been argued that under the bidding of Israel, the *al-Kata'eb* perpetrated a massacre in 1982 in the Sabraa and Chatila refugee camps of West Beirut (Fisk, 2002). Israel’s objective to maintain a security buffer zone south of the Litani River, led them to employ a Lebanese Christian militia called the

South Lebanese Army (SLA) as their proxies in the south, supporting Israeli troops deployed during the 1985-2000 occupation (Borneman, 2014; Fisk, 2002; Murphy, 2008). Israel's use of Lebanese sectarian groups throughout the interstate war is the clearest evidence for the interwoven nature of intra- and interstate conflict drivers in Lebanon. Stoking tensions within Lebanon for their own military ends, this also served to destabilize the Lebanese state and social contract, breeding distrust and animosity between religious groups.

More recently, the 2006 war between Lebanon and Israel, often referred to as the Hezbollah-Israeli war, is emblematic of the interwoven intra- and interstate conflict dynamics. The 34-day war in July 2006 was arguably triggered by Hezbollah,³⁵ when it abducted two Israeli soldiers across the southern border (Geukjian, 2008). This action, undertaken unilaterally and without the support or consultation of the Lebanese Parliament, undermined "trust between Lebanese religious communities" (Geukjian, 2008, p. 135). Further, it "brought into question the political consensus" (Geukjian, 2008, p. 136) and weakened the power-sharing institutions on which the Lebanese political system is based.

These political ramifications arose alongside a humanitarian crisis and severe economic losses for Lebanon as a result of the war (Geukjian, 2008). This action reflects a long history of Hezbollah inhibiting nation-building and undermining the strength of the Lebanese state in order to preserve its own political autonomy (Geukjian, 2008, p. 139). Further, it has been suggested

³⁵ Hezbollah was created in 1982 in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon as a splinter group of the Battalions of the Lebanese Resistance (Amal) (Harik, 2007). Following the disappearance of Imam Musa al-Sadr in 1978 in Libya, Amal was taken over by Nabih Berri, current Lebanese Speaker of the House, and its Islamic content was reduced. This inspired a cleric within Amal, Hussein Musawi, to establish a new movement which eventually developed into Hezbollah (Harik, 2007). It formed in the context of the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution and the spread of the ideology and governance principles of Iran. These values include "struggling against secularism, injustice and the oppression of Muslims by foreign imperialists," as well as "the creation of a wider Islamic community beyond the boundaries of its own country" (Harik, 2007, p. 16). In the context of Lebanon's political system and internal tensions, Hezbollah sidelined its political goals and functionally focused on its efforts as a "resistance movement against the Israeli occupation" starting in 1985 (Geukjian, 2008; p. 143; see also Harik, 2007).

that Hezbollah had internal political incentives for launching this war. Faced with a “Western orientated government in Beirut, Nasrallah undoubtedly foresaw the erosion of Hizbullah’s influence” and thus sought to reaffirm “the centrality of Hizbullah to the political direction of Lebanon” (Jones, 2009, p. 3). From a more regional perspective, the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli war has been understood as an effort to “change the strategic balance in the region” by Damascus and Tehran (Jones, 2009, p. 2).

The influence of external actors in Lebanon, engaged in various configurations of support and financing to sectarian groups as proxies for their political interests, has resulted in a deep seeded suspicion between groups regarding “each other’s relations with foreign actors” that continues today (Geukjian, 2008, p. 139; see also Barrington, 2017).³⁶

This accounting of the interstate conflict between Lebanon and Israel points to several ways in which Lebanese identity constructs have been threatened by actors implicated in the conflict, undermining not only the precarious peace between Lebanon and Israel, but also the internal stability of Lebanon (see Chapter 2, section 2 for a discussion of how the conflict between Lebanon and Israel threatens human identity needs in Lebanon, as a result of these blurred intra- and interstate dynamics).

1. 4. 3 UNIFIL

The UNIFIL mandate, originally established in Resolutions 425 and 426 (UNSC, 19 March 1978) and updated in Resolution 1701 (UNSC, 11 August 2006), stipulates the primary functions of the operation as: monitoring the cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel; facilitating the reach of the Government of Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)

³⁶ The abrupt resignation and supposed “kidnapping” of Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri in November 2017 by Saudi Arabia is an illustrative example of the involvement of foreign actors in Lebanon’s domestic politics. Other foreign actors however are regularly implicated in Lebanese politics, primarily Iran and Syria.

throughout the area south of the Litani River; ensuring the full withdrawal of Israeli armed forces and the cessation of violations of Lebanon's sovereignty by Israel; ensuring humanitarian access to civilians throughout the area of operations; and ensuring that no groups other than the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL maintain weapons in this region (UNSC, 11 August 2006; UNSC, 19 March 1978; UNSC, 30 August 2017). Though the mandate of UNIFIL fits firmly within the "peacekeeping" range of operations, in practice UNIFIL activities are implicated in functions contributing to "peacebuilding."

UNIFIL's key contributions to peacebuilding are its roles in the "Tripartite Mechanism" and the "Strategic Dialogue" mechanism. The former is the liaison and collaboration protocol between the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and UNIFIL, established following the 2006 war, wherein UNIFIL serves to facilitate information flows in the interest of preventing escalation (UNSC, 12 March 2012; UNIFIL, 22 September 2016).³⁷ The latter is an institutionalized engagement and coordination mechanism between the LAF and UNIFIL (UN, 17 June 2014; UNIFIL, 29 July 2013; UNSC, 11 August 2006; UNSC, 30 August 2017).³⁸ The strategic and operational relationship between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL is important, as the LAF has a key role in "containing localised violence and mediating between rival groups" within Lebanon's complex social landscape (Hackett, 2014; UN, 25

³⁷ In its 2017 mandate update, the UN Security Council welcomed the "constructive role played by the Tripartite Mechanism in facilitating coordination and in de-escalating tensions, which has helped to further stabilize the situation along the Blue Line and build trust between the parties, and expresses in this regard strong support for the efforts of UNIFIL to engage with both parties to facilitate liaison, coordination, and practical arrangements on the ground and to continue to ensure that the Tripartite mechanism enables the parties to discuss a wider range of issues" (UNSC, 30 August 2017, p. 4; see also UNSC, 9 March 2017).

³⁸ In fact, coordination between UNIFIL and LAF is extensive and prioritized by UNIFIL as a key aspect of its operations. UNIFIL is implicated in both security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities, since the extension of its mandate following the 2006 hostilities between Lebanon and Israel (UNSC, 11 August 2006). UNIFIL contributes "material as needed" to "strengthen the Lebanese armed forces" (UNSC, 11 August 2006, p. 2), provides training and support to the naval branch of the LAF (UNSC, 9 March 2017) and facilitates the cultivation of civil-military cooperation between the LAF and local communities (UNSC, 9 March 2017).

September 2013). UNIFIL's operational scope also includes "promoting arrangements and pragmatic localized understandings between the parties, which would serve to further stabilize the situation along the Blue Line" (UNSC, 12 March 2012, p. 3). These are examples of mandated UNIFIL activities that impact both intra- and interstate conflict dynamics.

In recent years there have been several incidents of hostility and aggression toward UNIFIL operations, equipment and on rare occasions personnel (UNSC, 12 March 2012; UNSC, 4 November 2016). Such events have prompted calls from the Security Council for "improving relations with the local population [...] and the reinforcement of the UNIFIL civil affairs capacity" (UNSC, 12 March 2012, p. 4). Later reports indicate improved relations, including engagement with "religious and municipal representatives," and UNIFIL efforts in quick-impact projects in the interest of social and economic development in its area of operations (UNSC, 4 November 2016, p. 4). These activities have been identified as key sites of socialization between peacekeepers and local individuals, as well as avenues through which UNIFIL contributes to peacebuilding (Nicholas, 2014).

1. 5 Findings and Contributions

Based on empirical data from participant and field observation, and 82 interviews conducted with UNIFIL veterans and Lebanese individuals, this dissertation demonstrates that religion does not function as a significant factor in mediating or motivating connections and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals (see Chapter 4, section 1). Rather, these groups interact primarily through commercial, event-based, and service-based interfaces, where their encounters are often formal and superficial. However, these encounters constitute platforms from which new opportunities emerge for more substantive interactions, as a result of the Lebanese culture of hospitality and invitations to share tea, coffee or food (see Chapter 4, section

2). Through hospitality, Lebanese people exert agency in transforming and translocating interactions from international, public spaces in which ‘thin’ identities are presented, into local, private spaces in which ‘thick’ identities are enacted. In so doing, Lebanese agency transforms encounters into relationships with meaning at individual- and societal-levels.

These substantive interactions amount to cultural exchange, wherein individuals share their opinions, perspectives, and experiences, and in so doing participate in the co-construction and co-evolution of each other’s knowledges and identities. Both UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals in these interactions take up pieces of one another’s knowledges and identities into their conception of self, resulting in hybridization (Chapter 5). In some cases, this produces interlocutors who subsequently facilitate the connections and interactions of others in their communities, and contribute to the flow of information and ideas across the international-local divide (Chapter 5, section 3). This builds on Autesserre’s discussion of exceptional people who traverse the boundaries of Peaceland to engage meaningfully with local communities (2014b), and advances a more nuanced argument for who these people are and what impacts they have in a peacekeeping society.

Through relationships and connections, Lebanese individuals are active participants in constructing the pool of local knowledge to which UNIFIL has access, which improves UNIFIL’s local support and operational capacity through ad hoc, ground-level diplomacy (Chapter 6, section 2). Further, through their physical and relational presence in south Lebanon, UNIFIL’s role and effectiveness is reconceptualized by Lebanese people as witnesses and deterrents to Israeli aggression, and as advocates for Lebanon in the international community, thereby bolstering Lebanon’s political influence. This points to an experience of peacekeeping-as-presence and a function of peacekeeping not captured by UNIFIL’s mandate or common

measures of effectiveness, but that nonetheless has real impact and value for the people of south Lebanon.

At a more macro-level, through connections and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, UNIFIL contributes to the disruption of rigid identity constructs by restoring or ameliorating the core components of human identity needs in Lebanon – “*connectedness, meaning, security, action, and recognition*” (Moore, 2013, p. 32) – which are threatened as a result of the conflict with Israel. These impacts on human identity needs, which are a result of the cultural exchange that occurs in substantive interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, constitute positive, incremental contributions to the complex pathways toward peace in south Lebanon (Chapter 6, section 3). As such, these interactions are a form of cultural peacebuilding. This research constitutes a significant contribution to the literature on peacekeeping and peacebuilding insofar as it not only notes the interwoven dynamics of inter- and intrastate conflict, but it theorizes a complex, incremental pathway of positive change toward peace, flowing from the intrastate through to the interstate, mediated by UN peacekeepers and their connections and encounters with local individuals.

Significantly, these findings constitute evidence of how individual agents within host communities and peacekeeping interventions can generate unique outcomes and impacts, independent of the strategies, projects and initiatives undertaken by the intervention itself. To enable this agency, UN missions need to be accessible to the public through both formal and informal social and physical spaces. While this introduces risks, it also constitutes potential, as increasing points of access and connection increases opportunities to gain information and local knowledge, and helps build solidarity and support for an operation. As this research

demonstrates, these opportunities have important implications for both UNIFIL's effectiveness and the promotion of peace in south Lebanon.

1. 6 Structure of the Dissertation

The remainder of this dissertation is structured as follows. In Chapter 2, I articulate the theoretical framework underpinning this study, establishing the meta-theoretical orientation through social constructivism and complexity theory. I subsequently detail the theory of conflict utilized in this research, which blurs the distinction between inter- and intrastate dynamics and understands the Lebanon-Israel conflict as a threat to human identity needs in south Lebanon. This theory of conflict generates a corresponding theory of peacebuilding aimed at the disruption of rigid identity constructs in south Lebanon, through the relationships and connections between UN peacekeepers and local individuals. These connections are conceptualized through the lenses of cultural peacebuilding and hybridity.

In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology used in this research, articulating the overall research design of this political ethnography. I detail the methods used for scoping and gaining access to research participants, including the impact of challenges I encountered on the structure of the project and the data collected. I then describe the methods used in data collection, including semi-structured ethno-biographical interviews and participant and field observation. In data analysis, I explain my approach to qualitative coding, which combines the use of inductive, open codes emerging from the data, with codes derived from the theoretical framework. I also discuss reflexivity, positionality and ethical research conduct in this chapter.

The next three chapters are structured in response to the core research questions in this study. In Chapter 4, I respond to the first of the central research questions: what are the social and physical spaces that connect UN peacekeepers and Lebanese people? In this chapter, I

address the absence of religion as a significant bridging or mediating factor and discuss the importance of culture and hospitality in connecting international and local actors in south Lebanon.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the first part of the second research question: what do these relationships and connections mean to those involved? In this section, I discuss the hybridization of knowledges and identities that occurs through interactions, and the ways in which these impacts trickle out from individuals into their social networks, through interlocutors.

In Chapter 6, the final part of the second research question is explored: what do these relationships and connections mean to both the mission and to peace? In this chapter, I discuss the development of UNIFIL's access to local knowledge through relationships, and the impact this has on local support and operational effectiveness. I subsequently present an argument for the influence of connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese people on the disruption of rigid identity constructs, thereby positively and incrementally contributing to peace.

In the final chapter, I bring the full analysis together to articulate the ways in which this dissertation contributes to the peacekeeping and peacebuilding literature, primarily in reference to the three gaps identified in this introduction. I then suggest policy recommendations for UN peacekeeping, and UNIFIL in particular, so as to create and support a permissive environment for the interactions at the centre of this study. Finally, I identify areas for further research in the interest of developing a people-centric peace intervention studies research agenda, building a pool of qualitative, case study data from which to engage in comparative analyses.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce the theoretical framework that informs my research project on the relationships and connections between UN peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals, investigating what those encounters mean to the individuals involved and to peace at a broader level. In the first section, I explain the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this inquiry, which are grounded in social constructivism and complexity theory. This orientation enables a non-linear focus on agency and the intersubjective experience and creation of social reality (2. 1). I then situate this project within a conceptualization of the conflict in south Lebanon that focuses on threats to human identity needs that result from the interwovenness of inter- and intrastate conflict dynamics (2. 2). This view of conflict generates a corresponding theory of peacebuilding that focuses on relationality between groups and the intersubjective co-construction of knowledges and realities that emerges through interactions. This theory of peacebuilding draws together cultural peacebuilding and hybridity to understand the “interfaces and interchanges” (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012, p. 4) between peacekeepers and Lebanese people across social and spatial divides (2. 3).

2. 1 Metatheoretical Perspectives

2. 1. 1 Social Constructivism

Social constructivism, as a meta-theory, informs the ontological and epistemological positioning of this research project. Following Guzzini (2000), Pouliot conceives of constructivism as a “metatheoretical commitment” with three foundational claims:

First, that knowledge is socially constructed (an epistemological claim); second, that social reality is constructed (an ontological claim); and third, that

knowledge and reality are mutually constitutive (a reflexive claim) (Pouliot, 2007, p. 361; Guzzini, 2000).

Each of these three claims are foundational to the arguments and evidence presented in this dissertation. Ontologically, the social reality being explored is not composed of discrete or static entities and structures, but of interactions, processes and human agency (Bousquet & Curtis, 2011; Distler, 2016). This is a relational, interactionist view of social reality as the product of the socialization of agential actors within a particular contextual environment. As such, the focus of inquiry is on the intersubjective dimension of a peacekeeping intervention with its host environment, rather than the constitutive features of either the intervention or the local environment. Interactions and social process make up social reality, as they inform, transform and construct social entities, such as individuals, groups, institutions and organizations.

Epistemologically, the claim that knowledge is socially constructed necessitates a focus on the “importance of interaction and social experiences for the development of knowledge and knowledge transfer” (Distler, 2016, p. 328). However, this individualized conception of knowledge development is also linked to collectively held knowledges, which define social norms and social reality. This feeds directly into the conception of change that underpins this research.

Following a relational, interactionist tradition, this project understands agency as driving change, and structures as constraining change (Bousquet & Curtis, 2011). Intersubjectively shared ideas and norms are the structures shaping the interests, identities and behaviours of actors, who through their agential capacity in social life contribute to the construction of the ideas and norms that constitute those structures (Copeland, 2005). “This means that agents, through acts of social will, can change structures” (Copeland, 2005, p. 3). This relational, constructivist social ontology privileges a focus on the interactions of agents at the international-

local interface in the UNIFIL peacekeeping environment, and explores their constructive capacity to develop knowledge and shape and change ideational structures and norms in ways that are productive to peace (this is a reflexive claim regarding the mutually constitutive relationship between knowledge and reality, as noted above by Pouliot, 2007). An interactionist, sociological approach thereby links “the subjective knowledge of actors” to social action (Distler, 2016, p. 332). To conceptualize the pathways and processes through which individual actors can generate social change, this research draws on complexity theory (Bousquet & Curtis, 2011).

2. 1. 2 Complexity Theory

Complexity theory, which originated in the natural sciences (Hendrick, 2009), is a systemic theory used in this research less as an operational or testable theory, and more as an ontological perspective that demands and enables the use of a diverse theoretical toolkit to understand and approach the two central questions.

Complexity theory rejects the notion that events unfold in a linear manner (Hendrick, 2009; Benitez-Schaefer, 2015; de Coning, 2020). It embraces a relational, systemic worldview that works to understand

how individuals and organisations interact, relate and evolve within a larger social ecosystem. Complexity also explains *why* interventions may have un-anticipated consequences. The intricate inter-relationships of elements within a complex system give rise to multiple chains of dependencies (Mitleton-Kelly, 2007 as referenced in Hendrick, 2009, p. 5).

Complexity theories conceptualize change as arising from the inherent characteristics of complex systems. These include: 1) self-organisation, meaning that the actions of agents can influence the organization of the system (agents determine structure, not the other way around); 2)

emergence,³⁹ meaning an individual action can produce a context in which new opportunities that were not available before materialize and introduce new possibilities for further action (Hendrick, 2009; Bousquet & Curtis, 2011); 3) nonlinearity and non-proportionality, meaning that small inputs can have large outputs and there is not a clear, direct causality between a particular input and a corresponding output; and 4) adaptation,⁴⁰ meaning that agents adapt to one another and through interactions are co-constructed and co-evolve (Hendrick, 2009; Bousquet & Curtis, 2011; de Coning, 2020).

In commencing with a constructivist and complex systems perspective of social reality, the tendency toward reductionism is resisted, the agential capacity of actors is embraced, and relations are placed at the forefront of analysis (Hendrick, 2009). Much scholarship exists studying UN peacekeeping interventions and their outcomes and impacts. What the conceptual lenses of social constructivism and complexity theory necessitate, is expanding those studies beyond viewing interventions as abstract, static policy constructions, concrete mobilizations of resources, or empirical applications of theories and strategies for change. It demands that interventions be studied also as mobilizations of individual agents, each with unique relational capacities and proclivities that permeate local landscapes and have unique outcomes and impacts.⁴¹

In studying the connections and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals, this research rests on the assumption that interactions between individuals have a constitutive effect on social life and norms – individuals can change themselves, others, and their

³⁹ Emergence stipulates that “macroproperties emerge from microinteractions,” often in an unpredictable manner (Hendrick, 2009, p. 10; see also Bousquet & Curtis, 2011). Macroproperties materialize as a result of emergence and feedback mechanisms that work to reinforce or diminish the original actions or activities (Hendrick, 2009; Bousquet & Curtis, 2011; Redekop, 2012).

⁴⁰ “Agents in these systems interact in such a way that they adapt to the behaviour of other agents, who in turn adapt” (Hendrick, 2009, p. 7).

⁴¹ Distler (2016) calls for understanding interventions as “social practice” (p. 328).

environments (structures) through their social interactions. These pathways of change are not linear, but rather are complex, iterative, unpredictable, and bottom-up. This conception of social reality and change is contrary to the logic underpinning UN peacekeeping and much of the peacebuilding literature. International security governance through UN peace operations assumes change to emerge from the top-down, from structural reforms and political processes contained within mandates that assume certain inputs will generate certain outcomes, resulting in a linear progression toward peace. To flip this conception of change and understand the range of outcomes resulting from the agency and interactions of individuals in a peacekeeping environment, this research requires a theoretical framework that links international-local interactions to interstate conflict drivers, in order to understand the relevance of these relational interfaces to the peace UNIFIL is intended to keep. As such, in the next section I articulate a theory of conflict in south Lebanon that links the interstate conflict to the social realities and interactions that occur within Lebanon, between Lebanese people. As UNIFIL is exclusively deployed in south Lebanon (and not in northern Israel), these social realities and interactions within Lebanon constitute the range of its potential outcomes that are relevant to the interstate conflict.

2. 2 Theory of Conflict

John Paul Lederach (1997) suggests that in order to analyze or theorize mechanisms and approaches to peacebuilding, one must first identify the conflict theory with which one works. To understand the conflict in Lebanon, one requires both a historical and regional lens, alongside a clear understanding that the interstate conflict cannot be conceptualized apart from the intrastate conflict, as both are deeply interwoven in the post-1948 period (as discussed in Chapter 1, section 4). While security and livelihoods are ever present concerns, I argue that the more

profound and intractable grievances underpinning the conflict for Lebanese people are related to human identity needs and emerge as a result of the interplay of interstate and intrastate conflict dynamics.

2. 2. 1 Human Identity Needs Theory

Emerging from debates and analyses regarding the ‘new wars’ thesis, the salience of identity to intrastate conflict has been articulated by several scholars. Marked as a defining feature of the intrastate wars of the 1990s by Mary Kaldor (Kaldor, 1999), Terrell Northrup earlier theorized that when a group’s core sense of identity is threatened, inter-group relations harden and fragment and intractable conflict can ensue (Northrup, 1989; Kelman, 2008; Moore, 2013).

Northrup identifies four stages to this theory of conflict: threat, distortion, rigidification and collusion (Northrup, 1989; Moore, 2013). Moore writes that “threats to one’s core constructs undermine meaning and an individual’s ability to predict,” which can ultimately constitute a loss to one’s sense of self (Moore, 2013, p. 22). The response that is generated by such threats is distortion, or the application of alternative meanings onto the ‘other’ in the interest of “invalidating it” so as to preserve one’s own “sense of identity” (Moore, 2013, p. 23). As this environment persists, distortion becomes increasingly entrenched and the boundaries between groups become increasingly rigid (Moore, 2013; Lamont & Swidler, 2014; Tajfel, 1981⁴²; Kuran, 1998⁴³). Northrup’s final stage is when alienation generates conflict and “both parties collude in

⁴² Henry Tajfel (1981), who pioneered thinking in social identity theory, posited that “individuals seek to reduce uncertainty and achieve a secure and positive sense of self through their participation in groups. This human tendency results in the formation of in-groups and out-groups. [...] social categorization sets in motion escalatory dynamics of group comparison, group competition and, ultimately, group hostility” (Demmers, 2017, p. 43). These insights have been used in explaining ethnocentrism.

⁴³ “Experimental research on intergroup relations has uncovered a pervasive tendency for individuals to cooperate more readily with members of their own groups than with nonmembers” (Kuran, 1998, p. 630).

maintaining the dispute” by adopting the conflict itself into their identity constructs (Moore, 2013, p. 23-24).

Originating with John Burton (1990), human needs theory has been significantly expanded upon by Redekop (2002), and summarized by Moore, who identifies the core human identity needs categories as: “*connectedness, meaning, security, action, and recognition*, all of which function together to create the need for *being*, or an integrated sense of the *self*” (Moore, 2013, p. 32, emphasis in original; Redekop, 2002; Burton, 1990). This theory emphasizes relations, including the role of community, in generating meaning and a sense of self. In line with interactionism and social constructivism, human identity needs theory posits that an individual’s sense of self is developed and negotiated through their relations with others (Moore, 2013). Significantly, “identity is created by integrating something of the *other* within the *self* through encounter, an aspect of mutuality” (Moore, 2013, p. 32, emphasis in original). This means that an individual’s, or a group’s, identity inherently incorporates aspects of the ‘others’ encountered in a social environment – how a group (or individual) is seen by ‘others,’ sees ‘others,’ and differentiates itself from ‘others,’ are all examples of how the ‘other’ is a part of the ‘self.’

In the case of Lebanon, for example, Lebanese identity is produced, in part, through how it understands Israel, how Israel understands it, and how it differentiates itself from Israel. In light of the interwoven intra- and interstate conflict dynamics, both Lebanon and Israel as identity groups in this self-other binary, are complicated by the alliances, proxy arrangements, and support structures that implicate Christian and Muslim sectarian groups into the interstate conflict. These linkages threaten or problematize identity construction – “*connectedness,*

meaning, security, action and recognition” (Moore, 2013, p. 32) – within Lebanon and for Lebanon as a nation.

Challenges to the ability of groups to make meaning or achieve a sense of justice, to find social location in a community, to feel secure in the connectedness of such a community into the future, to exercise choice through meaningful action, and to be recognized and included in the broader social system, all threaten the individual’s sense of being, or sense of self (Moore, 2013, p. 33-36). “Human Identity Needs testify to how the externality of conflict impacts individuals and groups internally” (Moore, 2013, p. 36).

For this project, this theory provides a lens through which to understand and interpret an important aspect of Lebanon’s vulnerability to conflict and instability. It narrows the focus of this research on identity-related vulnerabilities, without precluding other drivers of instability, such as lack of economic opportunity, governmental precarity, regional security concerns or distribution of power issues. Such a theoretical understanding of conflict necessitates a corresponding understanding of peacebuilding, which provides a framework through which to conceptualize the connections and relationships between UN peacekeepers and local individuals.

This conceptualization of the Lebanon-Israel conflict points to a necessity for peace work to restore or ameliorate identity needs in south Lebanon. Several studies have pointed to the positive effects of peacekeepers on disrupting rigid identity constructs, particularly in the context of civil wars (Page & Whitt, 2020; Mironova & Whitt, 2017; Kuran, 1998; Pettigrew & Troop, 2008). Such research points to “informational and reputational effects” of peacekeepers, which “reduce fears and uncertainty and build empathy over time” (Page & Whitt, 2020, p. 214), through the promotion of inter-group contact and “cooperative norms of behavior” (Page & Whitt, 2020, p. 216-217). There is a gap, however, in the literature on how such positive effects

of peacekeepers manifest in the context of an interstate conflict, where inter-group contact is limited or impossible, as in the case of Lebanese and Israeli civilians.

2. 3 Theory of Peacebuilding – Cultural Peacebuilding

If the interstate conflict in Lebanon is understood to result from threats to human identity needs, then peacebuilding must address those identity needs and contribute to the restoration of “*connectedness, meaning, security, action and recognition*” (Moore, 2013, p. 32). In other words, peace must go beyond the “absence of violence,” and include equity and the elimination of “structural and cultural violence” (Galtung, 1996, p. 14).

The connections and relationships in which this research is interested are best understood through the lens of cultural peacebuilding, which calls for activities and actions that aid in fostering and repairing relationships and disrupting stereotypes and antagonism toward the ‘other’ (Wang, 2014, p. 80).⁴⁴ In this understanding, peacebuilding is a “cultural-relational” process of “working with and across cultural difference” (Boege, 2019, p. 1). Culture determines the strategies of action available to individuals (Swidler, 1986) as they interact and relate to one another in a peacekeeping environment.

Culture is not a single entity or process, and its strict definition is widely debated in cultural studies (Jepperson & Swidler, 1994; Rogers, 2020). Culture can refer to

codes, rules, schemas, models;
identities, practices, recipes, strategies, norms, values;
convention, custom, tradition;
symbols, signs, rituals;
knowledge, discourse, representations, doctrine, ideology;
ethos, style (Jepperson & Swidler, 1994, p. 360).

⁴⁴ As expressed in the literature on constructivism and culture, constructivists focus especially on the study of “agency and volition” through ethnographic methods as a methodological approach to “finding out how collective action can happen” (Baumann, 2001, p. 279).

Culture is often defined in contrast to structure, as interactional, interpretive, symbolic and communicable, while structure refers to “actualized relational patterns,” which are situated and have “congealed” into particular social arrangements (organizations and institutions, for example) (Jepperson & Swidler, 1994, p. 361 and 362, respectively). Culture constitutes “representations of or commentary upon” social structures (Jepperson & Swidler, 1994, p. 362); it is the “locally received or constructed common sense” from which individuals understand their social realities (Avruch & Black, 1991, p. 31). In this sense, culture is an aspect of group socialization.⁴⁵ For the purposes of this research, culture is understood as what links identities, norms, knowledges, and beliefs to practices and strategies for action in an interactional, relational environment.

Intercultural exchange or cross-cultural interaction constitutes the performance or representation of one’s social reality to an ‘other’ – it is an enactment of one’s identity in a relational space. Cultural peacebuilding posits that through interactions and intercultural exchange, both UNIFIL and Lebanese people are “changed and transformed through their relations” – they are “co-constitutive of each other” (Boege, 2019, p. 2). In sharing a part of one’s identity and sense of social reality with an ‘other,’ an individual is inviting the ‘other’ to see and experience the social world through their perspective, as culture is a representation of

⁴⁵ Socialization is “the process through which actors adopt the norms and rules of a given community” (Checkel, 2017, p. 592). The “intended result” of socialization is “not simple behavioural adaptation, but a deeper change in an actor’s sense of self” (Checkel, 2017, p. 594). While culture is undoubtedly an aspect of the internal dynamics of group socialization, its function in cultural peacebuilding theory is not as a socialization tool. Socialization theories discuss the induction of individuals into existing groups with shared norms and rules. Cultural peacebuilding theory as a hybridization process between individuals is not about induction of one individual into another’s group, it is about the co-evolution of individual identities and knowledges through intercultural exchange. This is a fundamentally agential, bidirectional and mutual theory of change, in a way that socialization is not. Socialization theory is structural and unidirectional, despite efforts to better theorize and account for agency within this tradition (Checkel, 2017).

their social reality. As such, cultural peacebuilding is fundamentally a practice of sharing and communicating both knowledge and identity.

Cultural peacebuilding posits that while cultural difference produces the need for cultural exchange, cultural sameness can generate trust and relationships (Boege, 2019). Through the co-evolution and co-constitution of cultures, knowledges, and identities through interactions, different cultures move toward sameness, as they are “infused” with aspects of the other (Boege, 2019, p. 2). As such, cultural peacebuilding is a process of trust and relationship building, through the sharing of knowledges. Cultural interactions thus result in the hybridization of knowledges and identities (Boege, 2019, p. 2), enabling some individuals to emerge as “bridge-builders or intermediaries between cultures” (Boege, 2019, p. 13).

Fundamentally, cultural peacebuilding is a theory of hybridization; it is an accounting of how individuals develop intersectional identities and knowledges through their interactions and experiences across social divides, such as those between international and local actors (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012). The language of hybridity and hybridization

reminds us to retain a focus on the interfaces and interchanges between actors. These repertoires of interchange can take very many forms, and often operate in non-obvious ways. Secondly, the concept of hybridity encourages us to recognise the fluidity within groups. [...] all social groups engage in some form of negotiation and adaptation. There may even be dissent. Often this occurs at the level of 'the hidden transcript' and is not always visible to outsiders (Scott 1992). A third reason to recommend the lens offered by hybridity is that it moves us away from the elite-level and encourages us to take non-elites more seriously. [...] The concept of hybridity encourages us to look beyond state and institution-centric analyses and instead see a fuller cohort of actors, including local actors and those not on the national stage. [...] The fourth reason to recommend the lens offered by the concept of hybridity is that it keeps us focused on the dynamic nature of peacebuilding and development contexts [...] often organic, piecemeal, unplanned and unforeseen change (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012, p. 4-5).

Cultural peacebuilding as a form of hybridization enables an acknowledgement of the agency of the individuals on both sides of an interaction (in this project, an outsider, international actor, and

an insider, Lebanese actor) to negotiate social and physical space within peace interventions (Peterson, 2012, p. 12), in the context of, and in some cases in spite of, power differentials. This constitutes an understanding of hybridity as a complex, relational process through which knowledges and identities are actively constructed and transformed (Hunt, 2018⁴⁶; Peterson, 2012).

Visoka (2012) identifies three levels of hybridity between internationals and locals: institutional practices, public practices and hidden practices of hybridization (see also Richmond & Mitchel, 2012). In each of these levels, Visoka specifically draws attention to the forms of resistance and adaptation enacted by agents and groups in response to an externally-driven peace project. Of particular relevance to this research is the hidden practices of hybridization, which Visoka conceptualizes as the “everyday, informal, uncoordinated, individual and covert forms of agency that implicitly influence socio-political processes” by impacting the discourses and practices of other individuals and communities (Visoka, 2012, p. 30). Cultural peacebuilding locates this agency within the interactional co-construction and co-evolution of knowledges that occurs through cultural exchange.

While Visoka primarily considers the agential capacity of “recipients” of peace interventions in resisting and adapting to macro-level initiatives, this research also considers the agency and actions of individuals within the interventions themselves, to adapt to local environments, cope with the experience of intervention and resist those norms and practices that may divide them from the host communities in which they work.

This concept of cultural peacebuilding has appeared under different labels, including horizontal citizenship and situated theory. Kabeer’s (2005) discussion of “horizontal citizenship”

⁴⁶ Hunt (2018) explicitly attributes the same dynamics at work in complex systems to hybridity and the development of complex social orders.

(p. 21-22), understands individual citizens as engaged in a multiplicity of collective associations and communities that define their identity⁴⁷ (see also McGee, 2014). This theory argues that the relationships “*between*” citizens are at least as important as the more traditional vertical view of citizenship as the relationship of the state and the individual” (Isin & Wood, 1999, p. 23, emphasis in original; see also McGee, 2014), particularly in settings where the social contract between the state and its citizens has been undermined or eroded (McGee, 2014). In societies that experience social divisions, such as those that exist between religious groups in the south of Lebanon, cultural-relational exchanges that encourage cross-cutting associations are positive contributions to peace.

In line with ubiquitous calls for local ownership and context sensitivity, situated theory posits that for peacebuilding to have its desired effects, actions must be undertaken with knowledge of the various constructions of meaning extant within the relevant socio-cultural context (Miller & Rudnick, 2010; Avruch & Black, 1991; Cohen, 2014). The lack of situated knowledge, and the absence of feedback mechanisms to incorporate such knowledge into programming and strategy, has been widely attributed to the limited success of peace efforts globally (De la Haye & Denayer, 2003; Paffenholz & Reyhler, 2005; Müller & Bashar, 2017⁴⁸). From a complexity perspective, situated theory demands a nuanced, intricate and expansive understanding of “civil society” and the “local” in order for peace to be legitimate, representative and sustainable (Sherriff, 2009, p. 99; Donais, 2009; Cohen, 2014). Relational interactions and intercultural exchanges are pathways through which internationals can develop situated

⁴⁷ This resonates with social network theory, as discussed in Chapter 5.

⁴⁸ Müller & Bashar (2017) argue that “rethinking more direct engagement with local population groups that allows systemic inclusion of conflict narratives from all sides into UN reporting would not only contribute to the creation of trust between UN peacekeeping forces and local populations, but also has the potential to contribute to long-term conflict resolution strategies and mediation efforts grounded in local realities” (p. 775).

knowledge, wherein their pre-existing understandings become infused with local perspectives and knowledges, improving the effectiveness of their activities and efforts.⁴⁹

In considering peacebuilding as a fundamentally cultural project in response to identity-based conflict drivers, this research adopts a theory of cultural peacebuilding as action rooted in the positive evolution of social relationships away from antagonism, exclusivity and rigidity (Wang, 2014), thereby strengthening the bonds and social contract between citizens within communities (Kabeer, 2005; McGee, 2014), based on contextually-situated knowledge and understanding that is representative of, and inclusive of, the full spectrum of actors in a conflict-affected society (Miller & Rudnick, 2010).

This theoretical framework of peacebuilding is fundamentally relational, rather than structural. While much of the literature and theory around peacebuilding is “focused [...] on ontological questions of what entities exist and their characteristics,” cultural peacebuilding as an interactionist, relational conception of the transformation of knowledges and identities through hybridization, focuses on how “pertinent entities interrelate and co-produce [everyday] order” or constructive increments of peace (see Chapter 6) (Hunt, 2018, p. 61).

Conclusion

In this chapter I explain the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation. With ontological and epistemological grounding in social constructivism and complexity theory, this dissertation explores how knowledges, identities and social realities are constructed and

⁴⁹ Goetze (2019) argues that there is an existing system of knowledge legitimization that systematically excludes local knowledge and inhibits its promotion in international institutions. This system privileges knowledge acquired through education and professional career trajectories. Goetze’s critique is that careers in peacebuilding are not structured to encourage or enable international actors to seek out local or contradictory knowledge. While this research presents evidence in support of this critique (see Chapter 4, section 4), it argues that despite institutional barriers, some individuals do seek out local knowledge and acquire new understandings through cultural exchange and the mutual co-construction of knowledge that occurs through interactions across the international-local divide.

transformed through relational interactions in complex systems (2.1). By articulating the ways in which the interstate conflict with Israel threatens human identity needs in Lebanon, this dissertation links intrastate dynamics and relationships into the interstate conflict narrative, thereby implicating UNIFIL in stabilizing intrastate as well as interstate tensions (2.2). This relational theory of conflict necessitates a correspondingly relational theory of peacebuilding. As such, I analyze the relationships and connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals through the lens of cultural peacebuilding, which posits the relational co-construction and co-evolution of knowledges and identities through inter-cultural exchange in everyday interactions, which amounts to a theory of hybridization (2.3).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I explain the methodology I used to conduct this political ethnography on peacekeeper-local “interfaces and interchanges” (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012, p. 4) in south Lebanon. This approach allowed me to develop a nuanced understanding of the social and physical spaces in which UN peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals interact, the meanings of those interactions to the individuals involved, and the ways in which those interactions connect to broader social, political and peace dynamics in Lebanon. The first section of this chapter details my research design, which provides a single case study rationale and the research questions under investigation (3.1). The second section recounts the methods used in scoping and in recruiting and accessing research participants (3.2). In the third section, I explain the methods used in data collection (3.3), namely semi-structured ethno-biographical interviews and participant and field observation. I then describe the methods used in data analysis in the fourth section (3.4). Finally, I discuss the reflexivity methods undertaken in this research, namely journaling, as well as explore my own positionality, and the measures taken to ensure ethical research conduct (3.6).

3. 1 Research Design

3. 1. 1 Political Ethnography

This study is phenomenological in so far as it focuses on the everyday “life world[s]” of participants, with an “openness to the experiences of subjects,” unburdened by external legitimization, validation, or accuracy (Kvale, 1996, p. 38 and 54, respectively; see also Schatz, 2009a and b). In such an approach, “the important reality is what people perceive it to be”

(Kvale, 1996, p. 52) and the subjective meanings ascribed to experiences are “the topic for interpretation in this study” (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 81). Constructivist research must begin with “social agents” and “social facts” as the basis of knowledge (Pouliot, 2007, p. 364). Ontologically, this approach understands reality to be “perspectival” (Kvale, 1996, p. 42) and relational (Bousquet & Curtis, 2011). This fosters a focus on context and practice as the means through which knowledge is validated and inter-relationally enacted in the world (Kvale, 1996).

Epistemologically, this research is interpretivist (Wedeen, 2009) and takes conversation as “a *basic mode of knowing*” (Kvale, 1996, p. 37) and narrative as both constituted by and constitutive of life (Bruner, 2004; Spector-Mersel, 2010). “By telling stories we impart meaning to ourselves and the world [...] and form our personal identities” (Spector-Mersel, 2010, p. 208), drawing on and building intersubjective, collective and cultural contexts (ibid., p. 212). While this research encouraged the use of narratives and storytelling in interviews to reveal hidden meanings and overlooked content – “taking people’s worldviews seriously” (Schatz, 2009b, p. 13) – it is not ultimately a narrative analysis.

Methodologically, this research is a political ethnography,⁵⁰ wherein the objective is not to “represent *holistically* a culture, society, group, or locale” as in anthropology, but rather to investigate the interface and exercise of different forms of power and agency in a particular social context⁵¹ – namely that of a UN peacekeeping deployment in the single case study context of south Lebanon (Schatz, 2009a, p. 305; see also Wedeen, 2009). The qualifier “political” was

⁵⁰ As Vrasti (2008, p. 280-281) points out, the adoption of ethnography by international studies social constructivists (such as Cohn, 1987; Enloe, 2004; and Pouliot, 2007) has largely ignored the wealth of critical scholarship on this methodology in cultural anthropology. What makes in-depth interviews and participant observation ethnographic is being “reflexive about how the representations they generate are shot through with power and pregnant with political meaning” (Vrasti, 2008, p. 286).

⁵¹ I distinguish this conception of “politics” from the common understanding within political science and political sociology, which “focus on formal actors and delimited institutional domains” (Benzecry & Baiocchi, 2017, p. 231).

added to the ethnographic methodology with which I set out to conduct this project during the process of fieldwork in south Lebanon. In questioning how Lebanese people relationally experienced and engaged with UNIFIL, it quickly became clear that participants understood certain subjects to be political that I did not. From these conversations, I became attuned to the ways in which power was interwoven and negotiated through the relationships and connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals (Benzecry & Baiocchi, 2017).⁵² While the contents of the dissertation that follows may not be readily identifiable as ‘politics’ according to conventional definitions,⁵³ the social interactions and their impacts under study are political to the people involved. The political ethnography that follows explores

the particular categories through which participants self-define their experiences and how they imagine what counts as political and what does not, as well as how these categories may be generative of forms of institutionalized inclusion and exclusion (Benzecry & Baiocchi, 2017, p. 239).

Inductive methods, including narrative, ethno-biographical interviews and participant and field observation are used to access and understand the subjective experiences and understandings of participants.

To trace the intersubjective meanings of narratives, practices and actions (Pouliot, 2007; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995), this research uses an adapted form of Outcome Mapping (Earl, 2001) in the interview design. Outcome Mapping is a participatory research tool developed for the international development field in order to improve project evaluation by reducing the gap

⁵² Benzecry and Baiocchi (2017) advocate for going into a research project with an “extensive and broad knowledge of the pre-existing theories” so as to “allow for anomalies to be identified and for theory to be constructed,” but ultimately to begin “with the world that informants construct for themselves” (p. 237).

⁵³ In developing a common definition of ‘politics,’ Benzecry and Baiocchi (2017) describe three categories for study: “the polis [...] the encounter with formal politics, either in its routine form or in resistance or negotiation with it” (p. 234); “demos [...] the available civic spaces, and on identifying how interactions and organizations allow for certain patterns of communication or discursive styles” (p. 235); and “elector [...] the power/knowledge syndrome, and for an analysis of the agents who decide what are the defining contours of the legitimate political community” (p. 236).

between design with specific long-term impacts in mind, and implementation, which often produces shorter-term, contextualized (unforeseen), behavioural outcomes. This evaluation approach is aligned with complex, incremental conceptions of change, encouraging development actors to both realize and value the experiential effects of programs, rather than only the achievement of externally-conceived indicators of impact. This tool was used as inspiration in designing a semi-structured interview guide (Appendices 6 and 7) to capture the motivations, intentions, and expectations individuals had for their social interactions, and the strategies, adaptations and impacts they utilized to pursue those objectives (for more detail, see section 3.3).

Data analysis has been undertaken in line with basic phenomenological methods, commencing with taking the “direct description[s] of experience” expressed by participants in interviews as “separate phenomena,” then “searching for their common essence” (Kvale, 1996, p. 53) through qualitative coding, as detailed in section 3.4. In pursuit of this interpretive understanding, narratives were categorized based on an initial, descriptive, open-coding protocol, producing a codebook directly from the empirical data (Saldana, 2015; Charmaz, 2000). In second and third rounds of coding, these inductive codes were evaluated in reference to the theoretical framework of this research for points of alignment or insight, facilitating the development of patterns or relationships between narrative categories (Appendix 8). Finally, analysis also occurred through the writing up of this dissertation (Yanow, 2009) and the use of secondary sources, stitching together the subjective and intersubjective into an interpretive accounting of cultural peacebuilding as hybridization in south Lebanon.

3. 1. 2 Single Case Study

While UN peacekeeping has been widely studied for decades, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, through both comparative and case study analyses, there remains a macro-

and meso-level focus. There is little evidence regarding the unique experiences and impacts of individuals, both peacekeepers and locals, as they inhabit and constitute the peacekeeping society. Studies have tended to treat peacekeepers and locals as collective entities with collective experiences and practices, largely reported by relative elites in each group, neglecting the idiosyncrasies and exceptionalism that can emerge at the individual, informal level. However, in speaking with former UN personnel and local individuals living in an area of operations, the stories told often point to highly personal and unique experiences that emerge in informal spaces, often in contravention of the “official.” To access and explore these micro-level experiences and interfaces between UN peacekeepers and local individuals and connect them to broader social, political and peace dynamics, a single case study needed to be chosen for this political ethnography to attain sufficient depth and understanding.

Case study research lends itself well to a phenomenological study in privileging the impact of context on a particular phenomenon (Yin, 2003; Baxter & Jack, 2008). In this research, the phenomenon under study is the social interface between UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals in the course of their daily lives and activities. As such, context could not be extracted away from the subject of study, which necessitated a case study methodology (Yin, 2003; Baxter, & Jack, 2008). This case study is exploratory (Yin, 2003), in so far as it examines these interactions with no pre-defined set of outcomes – it seeks to understand what the relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese people mean in the specific contexts in which they occur. Case study methodology also promotes the use of multiple data sources to improve “data credibility” and develop a “holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554). As such, this study includes interviews, observation and documentary evidence (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Participants were recruited from relevant UNIFIL departments, UNIFIL veterans groups on Facebook, Lebanese non-governmental organizations, Lebanese municipalities and south Lebanese communities. Including such a diverse set of participants, from both ‘sides’ of the interface in question and with various levels of social and political reach, allowed me to triangulate findings, explore changes over time, acknowledge power imbalances, and interrogate whether interactions for one group are differently perceived by other groups. This aspect of my research design actively sought evidence to contradict or challenge the information gathered, fulfilling an important criteria of rigorous social analysis (Autesserre, 2014b). This enhances the credibility and validity of my research findings, reducing the impact of my own subjectivity or bias through soliciting counterfactuals and diverse narratives. The subject and theoretical orientation of this study precluded quantitative analysis and necessitated qualitative, in-depth analysis of a single case.

Though single case studies are often criticized for their lack of generalizability (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003), a political ethnography of this topic necessitated such an approach. A gradual, staged research design (described in the remainder of this chapter) and a long-term fieldwork period (14 months) were required in order to execute a realistic, ad hoc protocol to gain the necessary access, develop contextual understanding, and afford adequate time for participant and field observation (Autesserre, 2014b). Future research could benefit from the introduction of other single case studies of this phenomenon to enable comparative analysis and bolster generalizability across contexts (discussed further in Chapter 7).

3. 1. 3 Research Questions

The objective of this dissertation is to investigate the social and physical spaces in which UN peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals interact and the meaning of those connections to the

individuals involved and to peace at a broader level. As such, this research has been centered on the following core questions:

1. Does religion foster or mediate interactions and relationships between UN peacekeepers and individuals in host communities? If so, how? And if not, do other types or elements of culture mediate relationships?;
2. What are the impacts of such connections and relationships to the individuals involved? Do they contribute to peace at a macro-level?

In the course of my fieldwork investigation, it became clear that the role of religion or spirituality in providing such social and physical spaces of interface was minor, a topic which will be explored further in Chapter 4.

3. 2 Access and Recruitment

3. 2. 1 *Overview of Fieldwork*

My fieldwork period took place from October 2017 to December 2018,⁵⁴ partly in Beirut, Lebanon from October 2017 to March 2018 covering my scoping period and some of the time spent negotiating access issues, and then in Tyre, Lebanon from March 2018 to December 2018 in which the core data collection took place. At the outset of this study I aimed to conduct 80 interviews with an even mix of UNIFIL personnel and local individuals. In the end, I completed 82 interviews, 24 of which were with foreigners and 58 of which were with Lebanese individuals.

While embarking with a theoretical and methodological approach, I entered this project as a “traveler” (Kvale, 1996, p. 4; see also Sherman Heyl, 2001) engaging in conversation, the

⁵⁴ I traveled home to Canada or abroad several times during this period, in part due to the parameters of my entry visa, which required me to depart Lebanon and get a new entry stamp every three months. I went to Canada for 1 month over Christmas 2017, and again for 1 month in July of 2018. Apart from these longer trips, I left Lebanon for holidays 3 times, once for 5 days in February 2019, once for 2 weeks in April of 2019, and once for 1 week in September of 2019. As such, my cumulative time on the ground in Lebanon, including both scoping and fieldwork, was just over 11 months.

Latin root meaning “wandering together with” (Kvale, 1996, p. 4). In so doing, as an interviewer I engaged participants in topics of interest to me, but followed along the path of what they chose to share.

As is true with any traveler today, what one receives in new knowledge and experiences is influenced by just how one manages to connect to the people one meets along the way and how long one stays to talk, learn and build a relationship with them (Sherman Heyl, 2001, p. 4).

In a subjective, phenomenological study such as this, validation and credibility are rooted only in the quality and richness of the data I present. For the reader to assess the credibility of the data included in this dissertation, they must understand where that data came from and how I collected it. As such, the origins of my connections to research participants, and how my social and professional networks were built and developed, are important inclusions in an accounting of my methods.

3. 2. 2 Scoping

While my scoping period officially began on October 17, 2017 when I landed in Beirut, in reality the practice of scoping began many months earlier in Ottawa. Prior to departing, I researched the basics of life in Lebanon, reading both blogs and travel books for tips and information. I also spoke with anyone I could about my plans to travel to Lebanon, which yielded some valuable insights and contacts.

Studying and living in a government town proved beneficial, as a regular feature of one’s social network may be Global Affairs Canada employees, Foreign Service and development workers. Through personal friends in Ottawa, I gained contacts in Beirut in the Canadian Embassy, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and in journalism. Through these conversations, it became apparent that I would need a local “fixer,” a practice common in

journalism (Murrell, 2019). The journalist with whom I was connected introduced me to a local fixer they had previously worked with. I corresponded by email with this individual, who expressed his willingness to work with me and his daily rate, including transportation from Beirut into the south of Lebanon.

In mid-October, 2017, I landed in Beirut to commence a two-month scoping and language training period. Providing time for cultural acclimation, this period also consisted of networking and probing on how to execute my project and navigate access issues regarding both UNIFIL and local communities in south Lebanon. Lebanon has a reputation for being a country in which it is not “six-degrees of separation” between any two people (Guare, 1990), but rather three, conveying the importance of networking. This aphorism proved generally true during my time in-country.

Upon arrival in Beirut, I began with a one-week hotel stay and exploration of Beirut on foot, getting a sense of different neighbourhoods, many with sectarian identities and characteristics. A few days after my arrival, I met a Canadian embassy staffer to whom I was introduced through a mutual friend in Ottawa. She invited me to join her at a social event later that evening, thereby welcoming me into a network of affluent internationals and their world of upper-middle class Beirut.

This group, many of whom quickly become dear friends, included non-governmental organization (NGO) employees, lawyers, journalists, security professionals, embassy staffers, and their network of Lebanese friends, many of whom are restaurateurs in Beirut, work in fashion, or otherwise function in the upper-middle class milieu. In all my time in Lebanon, this social group most closely displayed the lifestyle and practices of “Peaceland” (Autesserre, 2014b) or “Aidland” (Mosse, 2011).

This first social event further demonstrated a key feature of Lebanese culture and hospitality – the invitation (Derrida, 1999; Hultin et al., 2021). It is common practice in Lebanon to invite friends to join in celebrations, providing a constant rotation of introductions and networking. This practice lends itself to the centrality of connections and networks to the functioning of Lebanese daily life – it is how ‘things get done’ in many circumstances. Mirroring this cultural reality, networking like this proved indispensable to me. This Canadian embassy friend was vital to my research progress, providing me with both a social network in Beirut, as well as a Lebanese contact, who later became my first interlocutor to the south of Lebanon.

Prior to departing for Lebanon, I met with a fellow doctoral student who had lived in Beirut for several years working for an international organization. She had valuable insights into the basics of life in Lebanon, including the names of grocery stores and cellphone providers, good neighbourhoods to stay in, and vitally, a Facebook group that is widely used for apartment hunting in Beirut – “Apartments in Beirut.” For several weeks I followed this Facebook group gauging the going rates for apartments, and within two days of arrival, I began messaging people and setting up viewings. Five days after landing, I viewed two apartments in the eastern neighbourhood of Achrafieh, and ended up taking the second.

Following my hotel stay, I moved into a hostel in East Beirut, in Gemmayze, hoping to expand my network and gain some allies for exploring the city and country. Unlike other travel destinations where most tourists are quickly passing through, travelers to Lebanon are typically either staying for an extended period, or are looking to volunteer with local NGOs and non-profit organizations. This meant that several of the friends I made while staying in this hostel remained friends for the majority of my stay in Lebanon.

It was with other travelers that I learned how to navigate the Lebanese bus system and gained the confidence to move away from the typical international mode of transportation – taxis and hired drivers. This not only saved me money in my regular travels around Lebanon, but also provided me with a far more culturally-proximate experience of travel.

Amongst my tourist friends, I also built a social network of Lebanese people in Beirut, including a local bar owner and his network of Lebanese and Syrian friends. These individuals became my family in Lebanon, so to speak, and beyond giving me social support throughout my stay, they later connected me with a small number of research participants as well.

Without any expectation of attaining sufficient fluency to conduct interviews without a translator, I enrolled in beginners “Urban Arabic” language classes at the Saifi Institute in Beirut. These classes provided some basic “market Arabic” to facilitate living in Lebanon and traveling to less urban areas where English and French are less universal than in Beirut. These classes also constituted good networking opportunities, as foreigners of varying types also enroll in these programs. Some students were European travelers undertaking language training, others were the spouses of business people stationed in Beirut, some were foreign spouses of Lebanese people looking to learn the language, and others were prospective NGO workers hoping to improve their job prospects with the non-profit/relief sector in Lebanon.

During this two-month scoping period, I began my efforts to attain access to UNIFIL and individuals living in south Lebanon.

3. 2. 3 Access to UNIFIL

This section details the four techniques utilized in my efforts to gain access to UNIFIL peacekeepers. These techniques can be summarized as: cold emailing, strategic networking, open networking (without strategic intent), and targeted Facebook recruitment.

The primary obstacle of this research was access to UNIFIL. For this group of participants a variety of challenges existed, not least of which was the “culture of secrecy” that characterizes UN peacekeeping operations and the military institutions of troop contributing countries (TCCs) (Autesserre, 2014b, p. 275; see also Ghosh, 1994). Both UNIFIL and TCCs have operational protection and public information policies to control messaging and the flow of information (UN PKO/DFS, 2017). There is a basic organizational incentive to retain control of messaging and inhibit independent researchers and journalists from speaking with personnel who are not trained or qualified to speak formally on behalf of the mission (UN General Assembly, 2007).⁵⁵ According to the reflections of Séverine Autesserre, earning the trust and legitimacy necessary to “gain privileged access” (Autesserre, 2014b, p. 276) to such organizations and build the relationships necessary to achieve ‘thick’ description requires significant periods of time (Geertz, 1973). In my experience it also requires the right connections and sufficient scholarly profile and credibility.

My strategy at the outset was to use both the scoping period and the initial months of fieldwork to embed into the local landscape through informal discussions over drinks, dinner and so forth with international workers. Through networking and presence, I hoped to connect with UN personnel, gaining access to the UNIFIL base and relevant contacts to facilitate permissions to interview UNIFIL personnel and engage in participant observation. I hoped to accompany UNIFIL on “market walks,” quick-impact projects and community outreach activities for participant observation purposes.

⁵⁵ “We will never: [...] Make unauthorized communications to external agencies, including unauthorized press statements; Improperly disclose or use information gained through our employment” (UN General Assembly, 2007, p.8).

In my initial scoping period, I made several useful international contacts, however, I underestimated the functional distance⁵⁶ between social networks in Beirut and those in the south of Lebanon, where UNIFIL is deployed. As such, while some promising contacts were made, none provided direct pathways to UNIFIL leadership or gatekeepers. I thus quickly shifted my access efforts toward making email contact with relevant UNIFIL departments and actors. I had several false starts in these efforts.

Prior to departing for Lebanon, I attempted to exploit some personal networks to identify contacts, find a pathway into UNIFIL, and gain information about the processes involved in conducting research with this institution. Firstly, I talked with my fellow doctoral candidate, mentioned above. This individual connected me with a relative who worked with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKO) in New York. Over email and telephone calls, we discussed my project and she provided me with the emails for two UNIFIL desk officers in New York and an email for the UNIFIL Head of Mission. I emailed the two desk officers and followed up, but never received a reply.

When I first arrived in Beirut, I then emailed the UNIFIL Head of Mission, who did reply, advising me that the proper procedure would be to direct my inquiry to the Public Information Office. I subsequently sent out emails to two individuals listed on the UNIFIL website as Public Information Officers, inquiring about the processes involved and the permissions necessary to gain access to UNIFIL personnel for interviews. These emails were never answered.

⁵⁶ Historically, this functional distance would not have been as stark as it is today. In the 1970s, 80s, and 90s it was common place for UNIFIL personnel to have leave and liberty opportunities in Beirut, or more frequently in Israel. At the time, the only village deemed safe for off-duty UNIFIL to socialize and relax was Naqoura. When the PLO moved out of Lebanon beginning in 1982 and concluding in 1985, Tyre began to develop commercially with the return of Lebanese people to the city. Post-2006, Tyre has supplanted Beirut as a liberty destination for UNIFIL. For many UNIFIL personnel today, the only part of Beirut they see is the airport on arrival and departure, from which they are shuttled by buses straight to the bases in Naqoura, and then deployed to their relevant sectors from there.

Getting nowhere by cold emailing UNIFIL, I next turned to the networks of my advisory committee members, one of whom connected me with a colleague with international military contacts. He reached out to an Irish Defence Forces friend, who subsequently connected with a friend who worked for the Joint Military Analysis Centre for UNIFIL. This individual provided the contact information for the Chief of Civil Affairs with UNIFIL, who subsequently connected me with an individual within the Public Information Office at UNIFIL. After bandying my email about in the Public Information department, I was finally able to set up a meeting with a UNIFIL Public Information Officer. In total, this chain of emails took five months to reach this result.

Through the network of a different committee member, I was connected with a former Lebanese-Canadian diplomat, who met with me in Beirut and offered some interesting context and insights. He provided me with the contact information for Timur Göksel, a well-known former spokesperson for UNIFIL during the civil war and the Israeli invasions of Lebanon. Mr. Göksel agreed to be interviewed at a later date.⁵⁷ He also offered the advice to connect with the UNIFIL Public Information, Political Affairs, and Civil Affairs offices. He gave me the contact information for a former colleague in the Public Information Office, who had since left that position and was not able to connect me with anyone else.

Another component of access efforts was directed toward the Beirut academic sphere. While in Beirut, I connected with several international and local academics, including Karim Makdisi from the American University of Beirut, who kindly met with me and offered me advice, but no concrete contacts. Through the owner of a local tourism organization with which I had gone hiking in the Chouf Mountains, I was introduced to Vanessa Newby, who has written

⁵⁷ Timur Göksel passed away from complications due to COVID-19 early in 2021 (Parasiliti, 2021). The conversation I had with him in 2018, over coffee at Al Rawda in west Beirut will remain one of the more memorable conversations of my life.

extensively on civil-military relations in Lebanon (2017; 2018). She graciously chatted with me, offered advice, and provided me with the contact information of someone she had previously worked with at UNIFIL. This individual never replied to my inquiries.

Finally, harkening back to my original plans for gaining access to UNIFIL, I attended a St. Patrick's Day Gala in Beirut with some Canadian embassy friends and happened to be seated at a table with mostly UNIFIL people. Over the course of the dinner, we got to chatting and I mentioned my research. One of the guests at the table happened to be someone who worked with Civil Affairs and provided me with her email address. I emailed and followed up with her, but she never replied. At this gala I also met an United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) officer, with whom I later followed up and arranged a contextualizing interview.

Despite some successes in my efforts from Beirut to tap social networks, professional networks, and engage UNIFIL via email, it quickly became clear that I would not be able to gain access to UNIFIL participants, nor to south Lebanese participants, from Beirut. As such, in early January 2018 when I returned to Lebanon, midway through much of this email and social engagement, I began setting in motion a move to the south of Lebanon. It should be noted that the Canadian government has advisories to avoid all travel to the areas south of the Litani river, excluding Tyre and the main coastal highway to Tyre. This encompasses the entire area of UNIFIL operations.

Through my Canadian embassy contacts in Beirut, I became friendly with a Lebanese woman from Tyre (also called Sour),⁵⁸ one of the largest cities in the south of Lebanon and home

⁵⁸ Tyre and Sour are both names commonly used to refer to the same city. Tyre is the name most used by the international community in Lebanon. A Lebanese friend told me that there is a sectarian character to the nomenclature of Tyre/Sour in Lebanon – Tyre is the preferred term of the Christian community, while Sour is used more commonly by the Muslim community in Lebanon. In my experience, many Lebanese people use the names interchangeably. While I was in Lebanon, I used the names interchangeably and contextually, however in this dissertation, to avoid confusion, I will consistently use “Tyre.”

to the majority of civilian expats residing outside of Beirut. She spoke highly of Tyre, reminisced about her childhood experiences growing up with UNIFIL in her neighbourhood and attending their Christmas parties with her family as a child. Based on her positive reviews of the lifestyle and safety in Tyre, and her recollections of contact with UNIFIL, it quickly became the target for my move to south Lebanon.

In mid-January, I took my first day-trip to Tyre with a local travel company called Mira's Tours, which demonstrated not only the beauty and safety of the city, but also offered the opportunity to observe multiple points of interface between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals. This made it clear that Tyre would be the city to which I relocated.

Following this trip, I reached out again to my friend in Beirut and asked for advice about finding an apartment in Tyre and which Facebook groups to use. Unlike Beirut, Facebook is not the way to apartment hunt in the south, so she instead connected me with a friend who lived in Tyre, in the neighbourhood of Haraa, the old city and Christian quarter. After making contact with this individual, I arranged a weekend trip. There I met with this man and his friend and he made a few calls around on my behalf inquiring about available apartments. He also had a room for rent in his own apartment, for a very reasonable price, which I took.

As it happens, his friend at that first meeting had recently lost his job in Beirut amidst the turmoil of Prime Minister Saad Hariri's resignation (Barrington, 2017), as he worked for a Saudi-affiliated company. In our initial conversation, I mentioned my research and that I needed to hire a translator and driver. This man, who had worked as a translator before for researchers in the south of Lebanon and had excellent English, indicated his willingness to work with me while he remained unemployed in his career. Thus, through the network of my first Canadian embassy friend, and subsequently her Lebanese friend, I found an apartment in Tyre and a Lebanese

flatmate, who's network found me a translator/driver, thereby establishing the foundations of my fieldwork and negating the need to hire a professional fixer out of Beirut.

Soon after moving to Tyre, I had my first meeting with the Public Information Office at UNIFIL. In this meeting it was made clear to me that UNIFIL does not have a pathway for permission to interview rank-and-file UNIFIL personnel. They control the flow of information through Public Information Officers that are trained to speak to researchers and journalists and able to speak officially and publicly on UNIFIL's behalf. While a potential pathway of access may have been through the troop-contributing countries individually, with the diversity of participating countries, attaining the required permissions would have substantially delayed my research progress.

In line with my intended focus on religion as a source of interface between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, I emailed the chaplaincy services of troop contributing countries, where I could identify a distinct chaplaincy department on the military's website. The countries contacted included, Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Korea, Brazil and El Salvador. I received a reply from only one of these chaplaincies and arranged an interview with a serving chaplain.

The only interviews I was able to obtain officially with UNIFIL were with representatives of the Political Affairs and Civil Affairs offices, in addition to the informational meeting I had with the Public Information Officer mentioned above.

In light of restrictions on my ability to speak directly with UN peacekeepers currently deployed in Lebanon, I shifted focus toward interviewing UNIFIL veterans, recruited through a public posting on a Facebook group named "UNIFIL in Lebanon." This group was selected for its non-country specific membership, its large number of members (over 6,000), and its English language focus. I posted on Oct 15, 2018, writing:

Hello all,
My name is Katelyn Cassin. I'm a Ph.D.⁵⁹ student at the University of Ottawa in Canada and a research affiliate at the American University of Beirut. I'm doing my doctoral research on the relationships and connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, particularly the places in which people interact and what those relationships mean to those involved. I have been living in Lebanon for the last year conducting research and doing interviews with Lebanese people in the south. I would also very much like to hear from UNIFIL alumni about their experiences in south Lebanon. If anyone is interested in speaking with me, please private message me on Facebook or contact me at my email address
Your participation will be confidential and you will not be named in my research. Thank you very much for taking the time to consider assisting me with my research.
Kind regards,
Katelyn

Individuals who reached out and connected with me virtually, were then given greater detail about the project. If willing, an interview was arranged over Whatsapp or Facebook calling at their convenience. All interviews with UNIFIL veterans were conducted in English, without the presence of my translator. A small selection of participants, often sighting language capabilities, requested instead to receive a list of questions and respond in written form. In these cases, I prepared a questionnaire aligned with my semi-structured interview guide and emails were exchanged with follow up questions.

From this post and through subsequent snowball sampling I was able to conduct interviews with 22 UNIFIL veterans, from countries including Turkey (1), Norway (1), Ireland (6), Sweden (5), the Netherlands (6), Denmark (1), France (1), and Indonesia (1). Through my personal networks, I was able to interview a current UNIFIL international civilian staff member. I was further able to speak with five UNIFIL local staff, recruited using methods similar to those for Lebanese community participants (see below). In one case, a UNIFIL veteran provided me with the contact information for a Lebanese individual, who later agreed to be a participant.

⁵⁹ Philosophical Doctorate (Ph.D).

3. 2. 4 Access to Lebanese Individuals

This section details the four techniques used in gaining access to Lebanese participants. These techniques can be summarized as strategic networking, snowball sampling, “dropping by” and field observation.

Shortly after arriving in Lebanon, research and discussion made clear that I would require permits to travel within south Lebanon, as checkpoints exist throughout the countryside, though few were active at the time. Firstly, I attained a letter of support from the University of Ottawa (Appendix 1), detailing that I was a supported Ph.D. candidate, under the supervision of a team of faculty, operating under standard ethical guidelines, and that my project had been academically reviewed. This letter was used to attain a research affiliate position with the Centre for Arab and Middle East Studies at the American University of Beirut (AUB), which I held from February 23, 2018 to December 23, 2018 (Appendices 2 and 3). Research affiliate status was an important aspect of gaining permission from the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to travel in south Lebanon.

I received the contact information for a Lieutenant Colonel in the Directorate of Orientation at the Lebanese Armed Forces through the UNIFIL Public Information officer I met. After numerous emails, phone calls and follow-ups, I was able to attain monthly permits to research and travel in south Lebanon (Appendix 5). This required providing my AUB affiliation, my letter of support from the University of Ottawa, and my passport information, including entry stamps. I held these permits from May to December of 2018, renewed monthly via email. I never had to show these permits during my travels in south Lebanon.

With respect to the second population of research participants – Lebanese individuals – my initial strategy was to engage in participant observation in the community, observing local

religious centers, markets, cafés and general street-level activities for places and moments of contact with UNIFIL. Over time, through observation, I planned to identify and make contact with potential participants to discuss, first informally then in a more formal setting, the nature of their interactions with peacekeepers in their daily lives. I also hoped to identify potential host community participants in interviews with peacekeepers. From these initial points of contact with both UN peacekeepers and local individuals, I planned to use snowball sampling (Charmaz, 2000) in making contact with other potential participants.

In light of the difficulties I had in gaining access to active UNIFIL personnel, recruiting local participants through UN contacts was not possible. Further, in planning my recruitment approach through participant observation, I neglected the degree of awkwardness and invasiveness that such a strategy would generate in real life circumstances. Though participant observation was a significant part of my fieldwork (see below), it played only a minor role as a recruitment strategy. There is an historically-rooted apprehension of foreigners as potential spies in Lebanon (Fisk, 2002). As such, where potential participants were approached based on observation, it was done carefully and tactfully with the help of my translator and often based on a tip from a local interviewee. Where I observed repeated contact between peacekeepers and local individuals, my translator and I approached the relevant individuals to request an interview.

The primary strategy for recruiting Lebanese participants was through networking. I sent cold emails to civil society organizations operating in south Lebanon, in both English and Arabic, which generated several initial interviews (Appendix 4 contains the research information sheet I used for these cold emails). Meetings with civil society organizations typically occurred on-site, providing a tether or point of entry to different villages (Hennings, 2018). Following the pre-arranged interview at the organization, we requested suggestions for other people we should

talk to in the community, which we followed up on immediately, dropping by to request an interview. From each civil society interview, we typically got 1-2 contacts in the village. This constituted a snowball sampling approach (Charmaz, 2000).

In each community, we also visited the local municipality to request an interview with the mayor, asking again for other people we should talk to in the village. From municipalities, we were less likely to attain further leads, with some offering no suggestions or dissuading us from seeking out participants, while others provided one contact. Traveling to each village provided the opportunity for field observation in new communities, as well as observation while driving through the area of operations (AO).

Like Hennings (2018), a degree of legitimacy was earned in my move out of Beirut and into the south of Lebanon. While there is a strong community of internationals in Tyre, most expats, academics and aid workers are based in the capital, Beirut. Moving south opened doors in terms of networking, and also implied “genuine interest” in Lebanese culture and the conflict (Hennings, 2018, p. 643). As such, I was able to recruit Lebanese participants through the personal networks of myself, my flatmate, and my translator, in a similar format to the approach used to engage civil society organizations. When one of our personal contacts agreed to be interviewed, we traveled to conduct the interview and subsequently asked for other contacts and potential participants, then followed up either by phone or immediately, dropping in to request an interview.

Yanow (2009) writes, “as a reader, I want to know that the researcher has thought about whether there might be silent, and silenced, voices and, if so, what efforts have been made to identify and include them” (p. 287). The intention of this research was explicitly to explore the experiences and perspectives of individuals who are not often captured in academic research –

the shopkeepers, the individuals who grew up across the street from a UN base, the neighbours who were commissioned by cunning soldiers to do their laundry, etc. The described access strategy explicitly sought multiple points of entry into communities in order to mitigate the reality that snowball sampling approaches build off of “relational networks,” which by definition do not include everyone (Yanow, 2009, p. 286). While the most prominent entry point to communities was through civil society organizations, the embeddedness and reach of such organizations in local networks, alongside field observation-based access strategies and the use of personal networks, generated a diverse group of participants.

Interviews were conducted in a variety of Lebanese communities, with a range of religious affiliations and political orientations, and within both the east and west UNIFIL sectors. In total, the aforementioned recruitment strategy enabled me to interview 20 civil society participants, 23 local community members, and 8 municipality leaders. These interviews covered the following communities in south Lebanon: Taybeh (Sector West), Qana (Sector West), Abbassiyeh (Sector West), Bazourieh (Sector West), Khiyam (Sector East), Ain Ba'al (Sector West), Fardis (Sector East), Halta (Sector East), Tayr Harfa (Sector West), Tyre (Sector West), Ebl el Saqi (Sector East), Naqoura (Sector West), Qlayaa (Sector West), Bint Jbeil (Sector West), and Baraachit (Sector West) (see Appendix 9 on page 321 for a map that highlights these research sites).

observation alone (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 461). Conversely, “the particular interactional dynamics and the physical constraints of most ethnographic interview encounters separate informants from their routine experiences and practices in ‘natural’ environments” (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 462), thereby necessitating the use of participant and field observation to situate interviews in their social contexts. Further there is an “agency bias” that emerges in interviews, wherein interviewees naturally construct themselves as “the key protagonists of their own lives” (Tavory, 2020, p. 459). This tendency must be counterbalanced with participant and field observation to grasp the social and political dynamics that contextualize personal life stories and experiences.

The combination of these methods enabled a wide temporal scope for this inquiry, capturing experiential impacts of UNIFIL policy changes over time. However, the combination of these methods also introduced temporal misalignment between data collection methods. By virtue of the access issues I encountered during UNIFIL participant recruitment, most of the data collected in interviews with UNIFIL is reflective. In contrast, data collected through participant and field observation, as well as my contextual knowledge and understanding are contemporary. The inability to observe historically was largely accounted for in interviews by asking participants to reflect on changes over time, to offer stories both past and present, to reflect on their experiences comparatively, and to offer contextualizing details on the spatial and social structure of Lebanon in the past. Conversely, data collected in interviews with Lebanese individuals included both reflective and contemporary insights, generating interview material temporally aligned with participant and field observation material.

3. 3. 2 Semi-Structured, Ethno-biographical Interviews

In total, I conducted 82 semi-structured, ethno-biographical interviews in the south of Lebanon, which can be broken down as follows:

TABLE 3. 1 PARTICIPANTS BY TYPE, GENDER AND INTERVIEW MODE

Type of Participant	Interview Mode	Male	Female	Total
Lebanese civil society	In person	6	14	20
Lebanese locals	In person	15	8	23
Lebanese municipality representatives	In person	7	1	8
UNIFIL veterans	Over the phone	22	0	22
UNIFIL civilian alumni	In person	1	0	1
UNIFIL Lebanese local staff	In person	3	2	5
UNIFIL international civilian staff	In person	1	0	1
UNIFIL Political Affairs representative	In person	0	1	1
UNIFIL Civil Affairs representative	In person	1	0	1
TOTAL	n/a	56	35	82

In interviews, consent was sought at the outset, and consisted of a verbal articulation of my study and the promise of confidentiality (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Informal interactions that preceded formal interviews did not have formal consent. They instead contributed generally to my understandings and interpretations, and largely contributed to building a foundational relationship with potential participants or aided in attaining contacts for the furthering of the research. After formal participation in the research was established, verbal consent was sought to use interview material with the promise of confidentiality, as well as anything that arose in informal settings or conversations prior to consent (Brinkmann & Kyale, 2015).

With the permission of participants, interviews were audio recorded using an iPad Voice Recorder application for the exclusive purposes of my own analysis. Several participants, took the liberty of either pausing the recording themselves or requesting it to be paused when more sensitive or political topics were discussed. Though not wishing to have recordings of sensitive topics, participants remained willing to share their reflections and opinions on the record.

A semi-structured interview guide (Appendices 6 and 7) with probing questions was used in interviews. It was designed with specific attention to alignment with the theoretical framework, however emphasis was on participant-directed discussions. Interviews consistently began with small talk and conversation, often rooted in discussion of the interview location (typically the participant's business, workplace or home) and the interviewee's routine in order to establish a "comfortable rapport" (Berg, 2009, p. 143).

This study employed a narrative, life-world research approach, carefully designing open-ended questions to encourage people to be reflective about their everyday lives and interactions (Kvale, 1996; Forester, 2007; Cohen, 2014; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995), and to tell stories as a "form of self-disclosure" (Abell et al., 2006, p. 222). This approach to interviews encouraged participants to share narrative "practice stories" (Forester, 2007, p. 10) that addressed the informal aspects of their daily lives and their regular interactions in the communities in which they work and live. This approach was chosen to elicit reflections and stories about what may be "implicit and automatic rather than explicit or deliberate," and thus may be difficult to access through a "question and answer" style of discussion (Autesserre, 2014b, p. 275; see also Kusenbach, 2003).

In collecting multiple narratives from different perspectives in both Lebanese and UNIFIL societies, I have sought out "multiple versions" of similar stories, embracing the messiness of "competing and often contradictory narratives emphasizing different issues and explanations" (Perera, 2017, p. 43). The goal of this inductive research approach is not to "sideline ambiguity" in search of "a clear narrative" (Perera, 2017, p. 45) about the phenomena of interaction between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. Rather the intent is to discuss the practices individuals use to interface and engage across divides in peacekeeping interventions and embed

those experiences within intersubjective systems of meaning-making and the structural constraints of interventions.

By virtue of this narrative, life-world approach (Kvale, 1996), interviews also encouraged elements of biography, which several scholars have acknowledged to be an essential and complementary aspect of ethnographies and ethnographic interviewing (Beatty, 2018; Carsten, Day & Stafford, 2018). Particularly in research on politics, renewing the primacy of personal experience and bridging the division of the private and the public through biography is essential to “bring[ing] the political into being” (Carsten, Day & Stafford, 2018, p. 8-9). Interviews were also ethnographic as participants were observed in the contexts of their daily lives, homes, businesses, and communities (Pinsky, 2015). As a foreign visitor, the welcome I received from Lebanese participants provided insights into the descriptions they gave of their encounters and relationships with UNIFIL.

This inductive approach aligns with the complex, reflexive quality of a social system such as that in a peacekeeping operational environment. Developed originally by George Soros, a complex reflexive system⁶¹ is one in which human beings embedded in the system are simultaneously seeking to understand the system, with limited knowledge, and have the ability to act in ways that impact the system, thus producing “self-referential circularity” (Beinhocker, 2013, p. 334; Soros, 1987). A key feature of these systems is the presence of internal models, in which each agent is able to internally model his/her unique perceptions of the environment in connection with actions that can manipulate the environment in the interest of achieving a

⁶¹ Beinhocker distinguishes between “complex adaptive systems” and what he considers a subset, or a unique variety of such systems, “complex reflexive systems.” The distinguishing features are that while “complex adaptive systems” are most often thought of as “multi-agent systems,” reflexive systems could well be single agent systems. Secondly, “in reflexive systems internal model updating often involves not only changes in model parameters or weights, but changes in rules and model structure as well.” Adaptive systems typically have fixed rules and structures (Beinhocker, 2013, p. 334).

particular goal (Beinhocker, 2013). As an agent reflects on the efficacy of these models, he/she may “learn” and update his/her models to improve the chances of achieving said goal (Beinhocker, 2013, p. 332). Such adaptations however, are based on imperfect knowledge of the complex system, and as such are fallible (Beinhocker, 2013). A narrative, reflexive approach to interviews, discussing encounters, motivations and meanings, reveals the various practices that individuals have enacted and adapted to connect across social and spatial divides.

Further, a constructivist outlook on narratives holds that the way a story is told is both constructed by and constructs the life and experience to which it refers (Bruner, 2004; Berger, 1967). The co-constitutive nature of narrative and life suggests that while fallible (Tavory, 2020), what is said in an interview has a direct correlation to action and behaviour in life, and vice versa. This means that while participants may misremember, distort, inflate, or diminish the ‘truth’ in the stories they tell during interviews, the stories are nonetheless representations of how participants understand their lives and experiences, and in the telling of stories, they simultaneously construct and impact their own lives.

Interviewees were also asked to reflect on the perceptions and experiences of others – whether others in their communities would share their attitudes or tell similar stories. This served to place personal narratives into a public perspective. This introduced a verification component to contextualize, or in some cases challenge, the distance between the narrative construction (memory) and the lived, collective reality. As Tavory writes, “the more public the act of talk, the more the researcher could assume that it is likely to structure the collective act” (2020, p. 461). In asking participants to situate what they told me into a community perspective, I have worked to mitigate the observed tendency of participants to tell researchers what they want to hear (Borneman, 2014), or to frame themselves in a chosen light.

To capture the intersubjective meanings of interfaces and interchanges between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, this research adapted a method of evaluation grounded in complexity theory – Outcome Mapping. Embedded in the semi-structured interview guide, questions aligned with aspects of Outcome Mapping were used to conceptualize and trace the outcomes of the relationships, interactions and practices of individuals interacting in the context of a UN peacekeeping operation. Outcome Mapping considers outcomes as “changes in behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organizations with whom a program works directly,” as well as the effects of partners on the program and its activities (Earl, 2001, p. 1). The focus on outcomes rather than longer-term impacts aligns well with complexity theory (as well as incremental conflict resolution theory, which emerges in Chapter 6).

Some interview questions were loosely based around two of the three stages of Outcome Mapping. The first stage, “Intentional Design,” is typically used for planning strategies and discerning the vision of the program, the partners with which it will engage, the desired changes to be brought about and how the program will contribute to such change (Earl, 2001, p. 3). In this research, interview questions explored what motivates individuals to engage people outside of their social networks, who they intend to communicate with, what they hope to achieve through connections, and how they suspect such effects will come about. From such discussions, the answer to the first of my research questions became apparent (paraphrased): does religion connect UN peacekeepers to local individuals and communities? If so, how? And if not, what does? In this approach, participants identified their own motivations and understandings of these connections, enabling a flexibility and openness that avoided distorting or essentializing their experiences. This approach also allowed motivations other than religion or spirituality to emerge in interviews, ultimately redirecting the course of the research (see Chapter 4).

While the initial focus on religion was embedded in the early interview guide, interviews consistently revealed the marginal place of religion in both the daily lives of many Lebanese people and the interfaces between them and UNIFIL. As a result, the interview guide was revised to generalize the questions further, though religion remained a topic that was explicitly asked about in certain questions. While Outcome Mapping in its original form is participatory, in this research it was not used explicitly in interviews. The participatory essence was maintained in so far as the information provided was generated exclusively from participants, who directed not only their own interviews but also the course of the inquiry more generally, through their narratives and reflections.

The interview guide was adjusted iteratively and in conversation with my translator, as we reflected on more effective linguistic or culturally-coherent ways to elicit the types of information the research was targeting. We spoke at length while driving around the Lebanese countryside about the purpose of the project and the content of our interviews. These discussions helped me to not only identify emerging themes and link different narratives together, but also to understand culturally and historically-rooted meanings and interpretations, modes of expression, allusions and the place of various participants and experiences in the social fabric of Lebanon.

The second stage of Outcome Mapping, “Outcome and Performance Monitoring,” offers a variety of tools to trace and monitor the evolution of the “program” (actions taken by one party to connect with the other), the progress of the partners toward their desired outcomes (how interactions are experienced and what they mean), and how the strategies of the “program” (peacekeeper/local) adapt in order to bring about the desired outcomes (reflexive adaptation of strategies and/or goals of interactions) (Earl, 2001, p. 83). This stage of analysis addressed the second research question (paraphrased): what are the impacts of such connections and

relationships? The material for this stage of analysis was generated from interviews, which were designed to be responsive to information that had emerged from earlier interviews. The final stage of Outcome Mapping, the “Evaluation Planning” stage, was not relevant for this analysis.

Embedded in the semi-structured interview guide were also questions addressing two specific subsets of relevant data, which can be summarized as ‘Perceptions of UNIFIL’ and ‘Defining Peace’. These subsets consisted of three and two questions respectively, which were asked in the same way of all participants. Korson (2015) connects the perceptions of both internationals and locals to effective communication and cooperation between parties, trust building, the tactical effectiveness of a peace mission, and the general success of the mission. In this package of questions, participants were asked to explain the role of UNIFIL in their own words and state whether UNIFIL is successful in this role. They were also asked to reflect on whether UNIFIL could change people’s minds about the conflict, and assess the impact if UNIFIL were to end its mission and leave Lebanon tomorrow. The ‘Perceptions of UNIFIL’ questions helped situate the narratives about interactions in the more meso- and macro-level social, political and peace dynamics in the country.

Relatedly, the ‘Defining Peace’ questions stepped back further from the primacy of storytelling and personal experiences, to situate reflections about interactions in participant’s philosophical and cultural systems of meaning regarding peace.

To identify prevailing peacebuilding deficiencies, one has to define the kind of peace one wants to achieve, specify the conditions that enhance the peacebuilding process, and compare current reality with this envisaged peace situation (Paffenholz & Reychler, 2005, p. 12).

To this end, I asked all participants: “what does peace mean to you?”, and “does UNIFIL contribute to peace as you understand it?” These questions situated the narratives about

interactions into the cultural, religious and political worldviews of participants, contextualizing their perceptions, experiences and understanding into an intersubjective context.

3. 3. 4 Participant and Field Observation

This research undertook both participant and field observation in south Lebanon. Participant observation refers to the participation of the observer “in the daily life of the people under study,” as well as the researcher “observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people” both inside and outside the boundaries of the interview (Becker & Geer, 1957, p. 28). Participant observation is a counterfactual and a contextualizing tool. In spending time in communities and amongst the people being studied, the researcher can explore contextualized meanings, grasp nuances and see what is sometimes overlooked or left unreported in an interview setting (Becker & Geer, 1957).

Direct participant observation was undertaken during interviews with Lebanese people, observing not only body language, but also some aspects of participants’ daily lives. This research incorporated “incidental ethnographic encounters” (Pinsky, 2015, p. 282), or the extended interactions with interviewees that occur outside of the defined interview. My translator and I were often invited to have tea and coffee, or to dine with our participants, lengthening the interview encounter and providing opportunities for participant observation.

Undoubtedly, the richest participant observation context in this study was Tyre, where I lived during my time in south Lebanon and where several of my research participants also resided. As Schatz (2009b) writes, “ethnography is a *sensibility* that goes beyond face-to-face contact” (p. 5, emphasis in original) based on an assumption that the “nearest possible” (p. 9) immersion generates the greatest understanding of “the meanings that people under study attribute to their social and political reality” (p. 5). My living circumstances, as previously

detailed, enabled me to embed meaningfully in “the social life of ordinary people” (Schatz, 2009b, p. 9), and become a participant in the peacekeeping society of Tyre.

Field observation supplemented participant observation, providing additional data and contextualization. I frequently observed points of interaction and contact between peacekeepers and Lebanese people in my community as well in my travels through south Lebanon. These observations were recorded in my field journal. Field observation also occurred at memorial sites in Qana and Ebl el Saqi, as well as during two ceremonial events I was invited to attend – a ceremony for the new Italian battalion commander on base at Mansourieh and a welcome breakfast for the new Korean battalion commander in the Tyre *souq* (market).

3. 4 Data Analysis

Prior to commencing data analysis, audio files were transcribed verbatim and uploaded in NVivo software. Reflecting the narrative approach embraced in the course of interviews, narrative loyalty was retained in transcription, maintaining the “uh-huh,” “hmm” and other such idiosyncrasies of language and storytelling (Stuckey, 2014). Pauses and inflection were retained in transcription, using “...” for pauses and bold or italics for inflection; laughter or humour was captured using “haha” (Stuckey, 2014).

Coding consisted of a first round protocol of open, inductive coding, wherein descriptive and thematic codes were derived from the interview transcripts (see Appendix 8 for the final codebook). “A theme is an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its variant manifestations,” (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000, p. 362). Open, thematic coding helps to avoid theoretical distortion in the course of analysis away from the described phenomena and experiences of participants (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Baralt, 2012; Charmaz, 2000). It also reduces the inherent distortion resulting from the act of speaking for or

representing ‘others’ (Spivak, 1993). Interview transcripts and participant/field observation notes were read and reread multiple times to attain nuanced and thorough understanding through coding (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). During the second and third rounds of coding, the codebook was evaluated in reference to the theoretical framework of this project to discover points of alignment or divergence, and assist in identifying patterns or connections between codes.

Initial coding consisted of “meaning condensation” according to first impressions of the data, and “meaning categorization,” wherein data that share characteristics were grouped and organized (Kvale, 1996, p. 192; see also Saldana, 2015). Several simultaneous coding strategies were used, ad hoc, including: attribute coding, descriptive coding, process coding and values coding. Attribute coding is primarily a data management technique, employed using the “classifications” function of NVivo, where demographic or informational characteristics of participants are recorded and associated with their interview transcript for analytical purposes (Saldana, 2015). In descriptive coding, the “primary topic of the excerpt” is captured (Saldana, 2015, p. 15). Process coding uses “-ing” words to capture action, while values coding identifies participant’s perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs (Saldana, 2015, p. 96).

Codes were connected and organized hierarchically, using parent and child nodes to capture categories and subcategories, respectively (Baralt, 2012). Free nodes were also used, though rarely, to capture unique phenomena (Baralt, 2012). All phases of coding incorporated “invivo coding,” making use of direct quotations from the interview material as codes to retain close proximity to the data and capture salient themes and expressions in participants own words (Saldana, 2015, p. 79). Data was often cross-coded to several different codes to capture nuances and meanings with greater accuracy (Saldana, 2015).

Second and third rounds of coding were undertaken to refine the distinct boundaries of codes (Nowell et al., 2017), eliminate overlap, revise the coding scheme and recategorize as necessary, all in order to reach greater analytical clarity. In this stage of coding, pattern coding was used to group codes into more meaningful categories and develop key themes (Saldana, 2015).

A pattern can be characterized by: similarity (things happen the same way), difference (they happen in predictably different ways), frequency (they happen often or seldom), sequence (they happen in a certain order), correspondence (they happen in relation to other activities or events), causation (one appears to cause another) (Saldana, 2015, p. 17).

The inductive interrelation and connection of concepts and themes through patterns enables theory development and data contextualization (Saldana, 2015; Kvale, 1996). During the second and third rounds, the existing codebook was examined to identify links between the inductive data analysis and the theoretical framework of this research (Saldana, 2015). Throughout the second and third rounds, the query function of NVivo was used to help identify patterns and relationships in the data. This interpretive phase of data analysis was undertaken strategically and not systematically, making use of matrices, hierarchy charts, and mind maps to conceptualize relationships between different codes and themes.

Throughout the coding process, I maintained a journal tracking decisions made in coding, the reorganization or rearticulation of codes, and my own reflections regarding both the process and the data itself (Baralt, 2012). Code descriptions in NVivo were consistently revised to capture the evolution of my thinking as I refined the boundaries of distinct concepts and the relationships between them (Stuckey, 2015).

As discussed by Yanow (2009), there is a “triple hermeneutic” involved in ethnographic research, wherein participants interpret their own experiences (the first interpretive moment), the researcher interprets the participant’s words and actions several times in the course of data

collection and analysis (the second interpretive moment), and the reader interprets the writing and analysis of the researcher about the phenomenon in question (the third interpretive moment). It is the objective of the ethnographic researcher to reduce the distance between the first and third interpretive moments by retaining inductive fidelity over the course of analysis and including illustrative quotations and excerpts of data in the final product (Nowell et al., 2017).

3. 4. 1 Historicizing and Contextualizing Methods

The topic of this research, which investigates the experiences, motivations and perceptions of individuals connecting and interacting across social and spatial divides at a micro-contextual level, becomes relevant to a broader academic inquiry by way of the ability to comprehend such interactions in light of theoretical discussions in the peacebuilding literature. Of relevance, are the arguments by critical theorists such as Richmond, who advocate for engaging with peace theory in a way that “recognizes and enables agency in its localized senses,” but also understands how the agents in question “become complicit in relations of power and oppression” and “become embedded in local, regional, national, transnational, and international structures” (Richmond, 2011, p. 199).

This research is necessarily rooted in the historical and contemporary context of southern Lebanon. Important methodologically, however, is that constructivists

do not assume [the relevance of historical factors] a priori and then ascribe to them some ‘causal capacity’; rather, we wait until they are expressed by the actors themselves and can be placed within specified contexts (Baumann, 2001, p. 277).

As such, secondary research was undertaken to understand the political, social, religious, and economic dynamics of southern Lebanon, as deemed relevant by interview and observation-based content.

A clear contextual understanding of UN peacekeeping at an institutional and historical level was developed, in the interest of comprehending the “*justificatory frameworks* that sanction prevailing forms of political organization and repertoires of institutional action” (Reus-Smit, 1999, p. 10, emphasis in original, as quoted in Pouliot, 2014, p. 248). This included the analysis of reports, UN resolutions, as well as diplomatic and public statements released in reference particularly to UNIFIL. Keyword searches and databases were used according to the needs of the analysis and the data.

3. 5 Reflexivity Methods

3. 5. 1 Journaling

The complex, reflexive quality of the social systems in which this study is interested, demands a similarly reflexive approach to conducting this research. During fieldwork, I too became an actor in these systems. “Just like the participants, the researcher tells stories” (Spector-Mersel, 2010, p. 217). My knowledge was imperfect, my perceptions fallible and the models that I developed to target my actions required updating and adaptation, as previously noted.

Beinhocker writes that “one cannot create scientific explanations [...] of human social systems because of the deep uncertainty and indeterminacy that reflexivity and fallibility introduce” (2013, p. 335). Accepting this reality, constitutes accepting that any insights I may derive from this research will inevitably be only the best that I can decipher based on the data I collected and the experiences that I had.

To trace the evolution of my thinking, perceptions, actions and internal modeling – in the interest of identifying and neutralizing biases, as well as facilitating the development of insights – I maintained a research journal throughout my fieldwork period (Wynne, 2005; Nowell et al.,

2017). Journaling was used to reflect on the power relationships involved in this study and the ways in which my “personal characteristics and biograph[y] affect the interaction and production of knowledge during the research project,” as seen in my discussion of positionality in the next section (Sherman Heyl, 2001, p. 12; see also Wedeen, 2009; Yanow, 2009). It also served to record my emotional, sensory and valuational responses to my experiences, in order to make these an embedded and transparent part of the analysis (Brigg & Bleiker, 2010, p. 795).

3. 5. 2 Positionality

Several aspects of my personal identity, appearance and positionality presented challenges to conducting this research and had implications on power relations between participants and myself. How those power relations manifested depended on the interview context, as “people are ‘insiders’ or ‘outsiders’ by degree in any named group or community” (Schatz, 2009b, p. 6)

As a young, female, white, civilian academic, I was consistently positioned as an outsider in this research. While as a “Westerner” and academic there are certain power advantages associated with those markers, these were counterbalanced to some extent, if not superseded in many contexts, by a variety of power disadvantages.

My youth and position as a junior academic undermined my credibility in the eyes of many participants, including UNIFIL staff in the Public Information, Political Affairs and Civil Affairs offices, Lebanese municipalities, and with some Lebanese participants. This emerged particularly in my difficulty making contact with UNIFIL authorities regarding access and permission to observe. This was less of a factor in interviews with UNIFIL veterans as these were done over telephone calls, so physical perception of one another was disconnected from the conversation. Nonetheless, recruiting via Facebook meant that my positionality was known to

veteran participants. In person, my youth and junior position provoked attitudes of dismissiveness or amusement from some participants, particularly men in positions of authority or at least 15 years my senior, conveying their perception of me as naïve and inconsequential. The power advantages of many participants resulted in a situation of “studying up” (Halme-Tuomisaari, 2018, p. 461; see also Nader 1972). Over telephone calls, the attitudes were more paternalistic and impressed, conveying a perception that I was brave and interesting for living in Lebanon and undertaking such a project. This difference may also be attributable to the Lebanese-foreigner distinction amongst participants.

My gender presented both advantages and disadvantages, however my perception is that it had less influence on interview dynamics than my age and junior status. In part, this may be attributable to the fact I traveled and interviewed with a male translator. Having a male, Lebanese interlocutor may have mitigated the patriarchal cultural dynamics present in interviews with men. In a patriarchal culture, however, my position as a woman (and a young person) may also have been perceived as non-threatening, encouraging a greater degree of openness, helpfulness and informality (Halme-Tuomisaari, 2018). In interviews with women, my gender seemed to encourage openness, ease, and relatability, however the presence of my male translator likely suppressed most of this dynamic.

Though my position as a civilian may have negatively impacted my ability to gain access to active UNIFIL personnel, it positively impacted my credibility with all other participants. Certainly, military affiliation would have provoked either performativity or hesitancy to speak honestly on questions of UNIFIL-Lebanese connections. My civilian, independent status removed distorting incentive structures around preserving a good relationship in order to improve access to development money or humanitarian support.

In the political environment of south Lebanon, where Hezbollah is an influential force and the experience of Israeli interference is deep-seeded and ongoing, my position as a visible foreigner generated varying degrees of apprehension amongst Lebanese individuals. As Robert Fisk (2002) observes, there is a widespread belief in a “plot” against Lebanon, primarily by Israel, but also other foreign forces. This generates skepticism of foreigners as potential spies. Further, as a visible foreigner, despite clear communication with participants about my independence and academic position, I may have been perceived to be affiliated with UNIFIL, which may have negatively impacted my credibility with local individuals or skewed the reflections and experiences conveyed by local participants into a more favourable light. Lebanese people often expressed some concern or fear around speaking disparagingly about their own government. With respect to these topics, my position as a visible foreigner, independent of government affiliation, seemed to encourage openness, with participants expressing some sentiment of “throwing caution to the wind” in their answers on more “sensitive” political topics, despite their concerns about reprisal or fall-out.

Despite some apprehension, Lebanon also has a strong hospitality culture and tradition of invitation (as discussed further in Chapter 4). As such, every person who my translator and I asked for an interview was polite and agreed to give us some of their time, though some likely did so out of cultural tradition rather than genuine willingness. Those in the former category were typically more brief or evasive in their responses during interviews, which we accepted and did not push further, acknowledging their consent to participate as kindness and cultural performance. Whether welcomed as a guest or perceived as a foreigner, the impact of having a southern Lebanese translator “vouch” for me by way of his presence and active participation in

the project cannot be underestimated for its impact in both my access to local participants and their willingness to speak openly and honestly with me (Johl & Renganathan, 2009, p. 42).

While Lebanon is comparably liberal in terms of attire and lifestyle in the Middle East, some regions and neighbourhoods are more socially conservative than others, roughly in line with the predominant sectarian identities in the area. Based on my appearance and obvious position as an outsider, I dressed conservatively while in Lebanon, covering my knees and shoulders according to cultural conventions. I always carried a scarf to cover my hair if needed, which was rare and typically only when entering a mosque or engaging directly with an Imam. During interviews, I dressed business casual as a sign of respect for participants, regardless of their social position or the location of the interview. This also enabled sufficient flexibility to move from interviewing a shop keeper to a *mukhtar* (village chief) or mayor within the same day.

While in Lebanon, I found myself engaging often in a form of self-editing – tailoring aspects of my personality, my appearance, and my behaviour to respond to social indicators and strategically adapt. Adhering to social norms in my self-presentation was intended as a sign of respect, but it also constituted a way for me to counterbalance my conspicuousness in Lebanese society. Modest dress was an important part of my perception of comfort and safety in Lebanon, particularly when I was alone in public, though generally Lebanon has low street-level crime and harassment. In interviews, I found my body language and conversational style responsive to the attitudes and body language of participants. I found myself “tolerat[ing] certain behaviours [...] which [I] would challenge if they occurred elsewhere” as a result of negotiating my otherness, abiding by cultural norms, eliciting cooperation, and more generally as a reflection of my dependence on participants for information and thus, my relative power disadvantage in many

interviews (Cassell, 2005, p. 174). This is indicative of the co-construction of identity that occurs in interview settings (Abell et al., 2006; Cassell, 2005; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

In all interviews I retained a base-line level of self-disclosure, placing myself as a Canadian Ph.D. student, researching the connections between UN peacekeepers and people living in south Lebanon. It was often disclosed that I lived in Tyre, had been in Lebanon for many months, and had traveled around many parts of the country, including the south. As Abell et al. (2006) note, “self-disclosure may prompt reciprocal talk” (p. 223), which emerged in some interviews, when participants sought to place me politically and gauge my perspective on the situation in south Lebanon. This most often arose during discussion about the prospects for peace with Israel.

3. 5. 3 Ethical Research Conduct

In using snowball sampling, participants often had relationships to the people they were recommending or introducing to me, such as friendships and family-bonds. To ensure that coercion was not a part of these connections, I accepted the introduction from the participant, but always approached new contacts independently, communicated the nature of the research directly to them with the help of my translator, and gauged their interest in participating apart from the introducing party.

This research engaged with potentially sensitive subject matter related to personal identity and expression. In Lebanon, it is considered rude to explicitly ask people about their religion or politics, instead people typically use surnames and hometowns to locate one another religiously and politically. This convention required tact in interviews, asking questions generally about religious practice (e.g. Have you ever seen UNIFIL at mosques or churches?),

allowing the interviewee to either maintain a general answer or ascribe themselves to a particular location or form of practice.

Though Lebanese people talk about politics frequently in social settings with friends, talking about politics with strangers is typically avoided or considered divisive. As such, an individual's political position was either implicit in their reflections and responses, or discerned after the fact in conversation with my translator. Many Lebanese participants were curious about my translator and would ask him during introductions about his surname and where he was from, thereby locating him religiously and politically. In our interview debriefs, my translator would subsequently interpret what he learned from these side conversations for me, helping me to place our participants religiously and politically.

For participants living and working in south Lebanon, within the social and political context of this region, there was the possibility that connections and relationships with UNIFIL personnel could be negatively perceived by others or by the political groups that operate in the south. Participants chose the locations of interviews and were explicitly informed that they had the freedom to decline to answer any questions without recourse. By and large, the ubiquity of UNIFIL in south Lebanon over the past four decades makes this risk minor in most communities. Though UNIFIL is not always perceived as neutral, their benefit to the south Lebanese economy is widely acknowledged, and as such association or connection with personnel personally or professionally is common.

For UNIFIL veterans, their temporal and physical distance from the topic of conversation reduced many of the potential risks of participating in research of this sort, such as fear of discrimination or stigma based on their practices and relationships while serving. Further, their removal from the institution under study reduced the effects of the “culture of secrecy” that

characterizes many international organizations (Autesserre, 2014b, p. 275). The primary risk for this group of participants was likely negative impacts from reminiscing on potentially difficult or traumatic events while deployed with UNIFIL. The fact that participation was completely elective and the interviews were participant-directed, mitigated these negative impacts. UNIFIL veteran participants had complete narrative control, and were not pushed to divulge beyond their stated and indicated comfort levels.

A challenging ethical dynamic encountered was reciprocation. Several participants envisioned themselves as ambassadors for Lebanon, expressing their clear desire to leave me with a positive social and cultural impression of the country and their culture, implicitly also aiming to disrupt or complicate my assumed bias in favour of Israel. Several also took the opportunity in their interviews to speak to me about Lebanon's many challenges and compel me to bring public attention to the political and economic situation, increase donorship and "spread the word" in Canada and the West more generally. Though I was a consumer and an employer during my time in Lebanon, hosted several international friends and family as tourists, and have undoubtedly become a great advocate for Lebanon in my personal circles, my ability to offer such reciprocation was limited. The greatest service I could offer participants was likely in "being an engaged listener to the stories others share," inquiring about their personal experiences living amongst tangible manifestations of international politics (Hennings, 2018;-p. 648). It is my hope that this offered a level of "seeing" them and their experiences as important amongst the systems at work in their communities.

I also prepared to contend with the potentially controversial findings of this research, which may cause participants to feel that they have been objectified or exposed should the broader conclusions not mirror their own individual experiences (Autesserre, 2014b). I have

addressed this challenge by being diligent in coding and processing data so as to prevent bias emerging in my analysis, and was open and honest with participants about the collection of multiple experiences and opinions so as to manage expectations about the findings of the project. In interviews, I often articulated my understanding of participant's answers and experiences, enabling real-time verification.

Confidentiality has been maintained for all but official and/or high profile participants for whom obscuring their identities would not be possible. Unique codes were assigned to each participant in place of using names in data collection. In this dissertation, general phrases such as "one participant" are used, and quotations are marked by the participant's unique identification code, so as to signal to the reader the presence of multiple voices and opinions. Every effort has been made to ensure that no combination of identifiers can expose a participant inadvertently.

Conclusion

In this political ethnography of the interactions and relationships between UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals, I conduct a qualitative single case study analysis (3.1) based on ethno-biographical interviews and participant and field observation in the south of Lebanon (3.3). In this chapter, I recount the access and recruitment strategies I undertook to carry out this fieldwork (3.2), as well as the data analysis methods (3. 4) used, so as to demonstrate the credibility and validity of the empirical data on which the ensuing dissertation is based. The final section discussed my own positionality and the measures taken to ensure ethical research conduct (3.5). In the chapters that follow, I will speak, or write, for others, stitching together individual, personal experiences and narratives into a coherent, collective analysis. In so doing, there is an inevitable violence and power exercised in appropriating and rearticulating the

stories of research participants (Spivak, 1993). I acknowledge this reality of speaking for others, and take every effort to respectfully and loyally represent the experiences of participants, as often as possible, in their own words. As such, the chapters that follow use quotations liberally so as to make space for participants to speak for themselves in this dissertation.

Chapter 4: What connects UN peacekeepers and locals?

Hybridized Spaces and the Culture of Hospitality

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, this research adopts an interactionist approach to cultural peacebuilding and hybridity in order to study connections between UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals. In this chapter, I address the first of my research questions: Does religion foster or mediate interactions and relationships between UN peacekeepers and individuals in host communities? If so, how? And if not, do other types or elements of culture mediate relationships? The first section of this chapter addresses the minimal relevance of religion in creating “interfaces and interchanges” (MacGinty & Sanghera, 2012, p. 4) between these groups in south Lebanon (4.1). In the second section, I discuss the role of commercial, event-based and service-based spaces in making UNIFIL and Lebanese people accessible to one another, enabling encounters, or interfaces, despite social and physical barriers (4.2). From the social platforms of superficial, or ‘thin,’⁶² interfaces, the Lebanese culture of hospitality creates emergent opportunities, not previously available or accessible to UNIFIL, for more substantive, ‘thick’ connections and relationships to develop (4.3). Lebanese hospitality is thus the keystone in the social and relational bridge between UNIFIL peacekeepers and local people and communities. The final section explores the agency and motivations of participants in forging meaningful connections between these divergent social networks (4.4).

⁶² The now common practice in cultural anthropology and sociology of distinguishing between “thin” and “thick” description originates with the work of Clifford Geertz (1973). Geertz used these terms to differentiate between the reporting of facts devoid of context (thin), and the interpretation of events and their meaning, rooted in the culture of the context in question (thick). These rhetorical indicators have since evolved to denote the depth of cultural representation and contextualization that is delivered in a particular study or text (for example, Avruch & Black, 1991). Other scholars, such as Taha and Hawker (2020) have applied this language to distinguish between superficial, whittled-down, or depoliticized identity performance, and substantial, holistic, and political identity enactments. I follow this final usage in this dissertation.

4.1 Does religion connect UN peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals?

Based on insights from the religious peacebuilding literature (as discussed in Chapter 1, section 2), this project set out to investigate whether religion provides the social and physical contexts for interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals. Despite the theoretical potential, in the context of UNIFIL and south Lebanon religion did not emerge as a significant factor in mediating or motivating individuals to connect and interact across the international-local divide.

4. 1. 1 Low Religious Practice and Formalized Religious Engagement

Reflective of declining religiosity and institutional religious practice in Western Europe⁶³ (Tromp et al., 2022), as well as the ambivalent relationship between military culture and religion (Benham Rennick, 2011; Michalowski, 2015), UNIFIL participants testify to a general lack of outward or practiced faith among personnel.⁶⁴ Irish, Dutch, Norwegian, and Swedish UNIFIL veterans speak of minimal daily religious practice and discourse among their contingents, and confine religious or spiritual beliefs to private observance. For other nationalities, such as the Spanish, Italian, Korean, Indonesia and Malaysian contingents, public religious practice is more common and observed by other UNIFIL and Lebanese communities. Similarly, Lebanese people and communities have varying levels of religious practice and observance. Though Lebanon is understood to be a deeply religious society – “the loyalty is for religion, and everyone sees Lebanon this way” (Local Community [LC]-20)⁶⁵ – where sectarian affiliation defines personal

⁶³ Western Europe is the referent here due to the composition of the UNIFIL participants interviewed in this research. As report in Chapter 3, I interviewed 22 UNIFIL veterans and civilian alumni from Turkey (1), Norway (1), Ireland (6), Sweden (5), the Netherlands (6), Denmark (1), France (1), and Indonesia (1).

⁶⁴ Nonetheless, chaplaincy services and basic religious accommodation are made available to most, if not all UNIFIL personnel, primarily on bases and provided by their own contingents (Last & Kay, 1999).

⁶⁵ Participant codes identify the group to which interviewees belong, including “LC” referring to Local Community members, “CS” denoting Lebanese civil society participants, “AL” identifying UNIFIL alumni or veterans, “LS” to

and political identities for many (Makdisi, 2014), my conversations with Lebanese individuals, as well as my observations in south Lebanon, indicate that daily practice and religious observance is minimal for many individuals. This mutual lack of regular religious practice reduces opportunities for engagement and connection in religious spaces, such as churches or mosques.

A key barrier to such interfaces is UNIFIL's impartiality, which manifests as operational distance or caution regarding religious and political topics.⁶⁶ UNIFIL's engagement with religious leaders and communities is formalized and scripted. Local religious leaders are regularly invited to attend events with UNIFIL, where they may converse or offer blessings, but invitations are extended and engagement is conducted according to a principle of inclusion and performative interfaith cooperation (UNIFIL, 22 Jan 2016; UN PKO, 20 May 2022; UN PKO, 20 Sept 2018; UNIFIL, 12 Nov 2016).

For example, during my research in south Lebanon I was invited to attend a welcome breakfast for a new Korean UNIFIL commander. The municipality of Tyre invited this commander, along with 30 of his fellow soldiers, to have *foul* (a slow cooked bean dish) and *hummus* (a dish of cooked and blended chickpeas) in the Tyre *souq* (market), alongside select members of the Tyre and Abassiyeh communities – Abbassiyeh is in the Korean catchment area, Tyre is not.⁶⁷ The purpose of this event was described as welcoming the new commander, helping him and his soldiers feel comfortable in Tyre, and providing an opportunity for

indicate UNIFIL local staff, and “MM” to capture Lebanese municipality representatives. Two unique codes identify the Civil Affairs “CA” and Political Affairs “PA” officers with which I spoke.

⁶⁶ In the context of Afghanistan, Huda (2012) argues that the “ambivalence” of analysts toward religion “is only contributing to misunderstanding and continued miscalculations in conflict analysis” (p. 3). A similar danger exists with UNIFIL's policy of distance or caution from religious topics and religious engagement.

⁶⁷ The invitation was extended by the Tyre municipality, because it functions as a key hub in the south of Lebanon and is considered a “safe zone” for UNIFIL. As such, it is the centre of leisure time and commercial activity for UNIFIL.

introductions between select members of the Lebanese community, including religious leaders, and UNIFIL. One municipality member commented that if he was going to invite one religious leader, he had to invite them all. Polite chit chat and conversation was had at the breakfast table, hands were shaken with the owner of the *foul* shop, and then the group was escorted on a short walk through the winding, narrow streets of the Haraa, the Christian quarter of Tyre. The event concluded with group photos on the steps of the local church.



FIGURES 4.1 AND 4.2 WELCOME BREAKFAST FOR KOREAN COMMANDER, TYRE, 2018

Source: Tyre municipality

This formalized and performative approach to engaging with religion is reflective of the highly “sensitive” and political nature of religion and religious debates in Lebanon. As former UNIFIL spokesperson, Timur Göksel noted, “UNIFIL – they stay away from these debates and discussions” (UNIFIL alumni [AL]-1).

4. 1. 2 Shared UNIFIL-Lebanese Religious Practice

Outside the context of events, few UNIFIL personnel or Lebanese individuals shared stories of interactions or conversations in which religion featured prominently or constructively. Among participants in this study, only three (two UNIFIL and one Lebanese) spoke of occasions

in which they had open, positive and informative discussions about religion. Otherwise, such conversations were considered highly sensitive, limited or were avoided altogether.

It's sooo sensitive. It should be under control. [...] because here the mosques are mainly related to parties, like Harekit Amal, or Hezbollah, or whoever. So definitely whenever a UNIFIL tries to attend, maybe if he is Muslim they would let him in, but only under a certain control, they would have to check about him, like why is he coming. If he is not Muslim, yea, they might be questioning this and they might not let him in, because maybe he is coming to take photos, or spying or monitoring, whatever. So yea, I would doubt this to happen (LC-18).

Inappropriate or over-eager engagement with religious communities can be perceived as disingenuous, as spying or as favouritism toward one community over others. The party line for many UNIFIL is “we didn't know what their religious inclinations were, and we didn't care” (AL-8). Pursuant to this policy of tactical avoidance, UNIFIL cautions personnel about the sensitivity of certain visible religious symbols (e.g. Star of David, Hebrew writing, etc.),⁶⁸ restricts and regulates attendance to religious services or ceremonies off-base, maintains respectful distance from significant or sensitive religious celebrations (such as Ashura),⁶⁹ and is conscious of partnerships with religiously-affiliated local non-governmental or civil society organizations, collaborating only with those that serve the wider community.⁷⁰

Similarly, research participants reported few opportunities for shared religious practice and observance. When asked about whether they knew of UNIFIL attendance at religious services or events in local communities, participants were split as to their experience (13

⁶⁸ Several UNIFIL veterans noted this policy during our interviews, as did a UNIFIL local staff member who works in cultural awareness training for UNIFIL.

⁶⁹ Ashura comes up in several Security Council incident reports, such as S/2018/1029 (UNSC, 15 Nov 2018), and S/2019/889 (UNSC, 18 Nov 2019). During these periods of Shia religious celebration, there is often an increase in armed individuals, sensitivity around UNIFIL patrolling or driving near mosques, and blocked roadways.

⁷⁰ The UN Civil Affairs Handbook stipulates the following guidance on selecting projects to support: “Look at the potential intended and unintended impact of the project. Assess the risks to practical aspects of the project implementation (e.g. risk of delay, reliability of implementing partner) and the risk of generating or exacerbating conflict. Apply ‘conflict-sensitive’ and ‘Do No Harm’ principles, including, for example, avoiding being seen to favour one group or section of the community above others or supporting projects that could be used to further political, ideological and religious objectives” (UN PKO/DFS, 2012, p. 228).

participants said yes, 18 said no). Several noted that such attendance was not allowed or would not have been relevant given the difference between the predominant religion of the contingent and that of the surrounding local community. However, the Indonesian and Malaysian contingents are known to attend Friday prayers in community mosques, while the Ghanaian, Italian and Spanish contingents attend Sunday service at local churches. Otherwise, community religious services and events are accessed by UNIFIL only on special occasions, such as Christmas, Eid, and for funerals or weddings (mentioned by 31 participants).

There are some exceptions to this largely divided religious practice, such as contingents with minority religious communities in their ranks. Some groups, such as Indonesian Christians, access religious services in the local community, while others, such as Korean Catholics, hire local priests to deliver services on-base. There are several examples of UNIFIL contingents with Catholic troops accessing local Maronite priests for delivery of the sacraments.⁷¹ Where religious spaces and services were noted as an interface between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals, these interactions were perceived as largely formal, regulated, superficial or insignificant – “it’s normal, it’s just like any other thing” (Lebanese civil society [CS]-14).

4. 1. 3 Perceptions of Religion in South Lebanon

While religion and religious spaces did not emerge as significant sites of relational encounter and social hybridization, they were relevant in influencing the perceptions and experiences of UNIFIL in Lebanese communities. Shared religion between UNIFIL contingents and Lebanese communities was linked to good or easier relations. For UNIFIL of European origins, Christian communities were perceived to be friendlier, less conservative, more

⁷¹ In the 1980s, Irish UNIFIL would hire a local Maronite priest to travel to the Irish outposts to hear confession. The Spanish contingent has also been known to receive the Sacraments from local Maronite religious leaders (Arzobispado Castrense de Espana, 8 May 2018).

welcoming, and socially more accepting, creating a permissive environment in which to build connections and embed in local life.

A common example is the Norwegian deployment in Ebl el Saqi, a community that is roughly half Druze and half Christian. In the early 1980s, the Norwegians lived in abandoned or rented houses in the Christian part of the village, where their geographic isolation from Naqoura (UNIFIL Headquarters (HQ)) and their relative lack of operating procedures and oversight (Göksel, 2007)⁷² worked alongside the social compatibility of the Christian community, leading to significant embeddedness amongst locals. “Up there I think they were Christian, it was a Christian area, and the Norwegians, they really went native so to speak haha” (AL-10).

One Shia Lebanese participant reflected on historical factors that contextualize these perceptions and experiences of conviviality between European UNIFIL and Lebanese Christians:

[T]he Christians in Lebanon are more like Lebanese, they have more relation to Lebanon than the Muslims, and they have reasons for this. It is not because they are better than us [Muslims]. We are talking history now. It was Lebanon, and some Christians are living in Lebanon, and around them [are] Syria and Palestine, then Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, and Turkey – the Ottomans. So for Christians, they were a small Christian group living between huge Muslim groups. Like 300 million Muslims, and it's like 1 million Christians living between them. So surely, they were not happy with this situation. So they were pushed to have relations with Europe, the Christians, and for this they were trying to protect Lebanon as a country, because in Lebanon they are a big group. But if no borders, and Lebanon were open to those other countries, there would be none [Christians] to be mentioned. It would have been 1 million Christians among 300 million Muslims, but here they are 1 million Christians and 1 million Muslims. So they loved Lebanon (LC-20).

The minority position of the Christians in Lebanon was a factor during the French colonial period, where Lebanese Christians were systematically favoured for political leadership, generating both loyalty and dependence to France (Fisk, 2002). Taken together, these historical

⁷² “When the old UNIFIL deployed in the south in 1978, we didn’t ask anybody for anything because there was nobody to ask, so we did what we wanted – within the ‘rules of the south,’ of course, the local customs and practice, and with a healthy dose of realism” (Göksel, 2007, p. 52).

and political dynamics foster a heightened sense of attachment and common culture between European UNIFIL and Lebanese-Christian communities – “some of them [the Lebanese], they feel like they are French” (LC-4).

In contrast, UNIFIL participants of European origins felt more divided from majority-Muslim communities. Perceived by some as more conservative, less open, and more political than Christian villages, UNIFIL experienced less socialization with Lebanese locals in these contexts, and felt a greater sense of suspicion or animosity directed towards them. For UNIFIL contingents who have a shared Muslim identity however, such as Indonesians or Malaysians, these experiences may be less prevalent. As one Shia Lebanese participant notes:

[T]he Indonesians [...] they are very nice people by the way [...] they come to the mosque and they have the Friday *salah*, the prayer, and when they finish they go to the... um what do you call it, the place where we bury people... the cemetery, and with water they wash the stones. They did something that people liked. [...] I would say that people appreciate this. But it happened that they are Muslims. I mean the Spanish troops they did not do this because they are not Muslims (CS-1).

Though all but one of the UNIFIL participants in this study were of European origins, stories such as these are indicative of a link between shared religion and positive social relations between UNIFIL and Lebanese people of both Christian and Muslim origins.

In the context of south Lebanon and under the parameters of this study, the evidence for religion playing a significant role in either fostering or impeding connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese locals is thin. Despite asking every participant explicitly about religion, most participants dismissed it as irrelevant in these interactions. While theoretically, religion can provide a space for relationship building and unity between socially and spatially divided people (Lederach, 1997; Gopin, 2009; Moore, 2013), in the cultural, political and historical context of Lebanon, religion instead is something divisive, sensitive and publicly avoided by both groups. However, religion is deeply embedded in Lebanese culture, politics, and identity (Fisk, 2002;

Makdisi, 2014; Faour, 2007; Entelis, 1985), and as such it cannot be meaningfully extracted away from the broader dynamics of daily life and social interaction in Lebanon.

Yesterday, we were talking me and my wife [...] I asked her, we are Lebanese and Shia, you are Shia more or Lebanese more? She said, 'Shia'. I'm not talking about just [the] Shia. All people here they belong to their religion more than their country – their religion comes first (LC-20).

While religion did not emerge as expected in this research, or according to insights from the religious peacebuilding literature, it is woven through the analysis that follows in this chapter and chapters 5 and 6, as a defining feature of identity groups and social networks in south Lebanon. Religion, as a part of culture, informs or structures the patterns and strategies of action available to individuals as they navigate social life (Swidler, 1986). These actions, and the “habits, moods, sensibilities, and views of the world” (Swidler, 1986, p. 277) that underpin them, are the subject of this inquiry, as I explore what does mediate or motivate connections between UN peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals in the cultural contexts of south Lebanon and its peacekeeping society.

4. 2 What does connect UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals? – Interfaces

In this section I discuss the primary “entry points” (Anderson & Olson, 2003, p. 49) through which UNIFIL and Lebanese people are made accessible to each other, allowing for

encounters and repeat interactions.⁷³ I argue that these interfaces,⁷⁴ while performative⁷⁵ and ‘thin,’ constitute platforms of engagement from which new possibilities and opportunities for connection emerge.

4. 2. 1 Accessibility, Entry points and Repeat Interaction

Accessibility is a binding constraint⁷⁶ of connection. For two groups or two individuals to encounter one another and interact, they must have access to one another and spaces or contexts in which to engage one another. In the context of south Lebanon, the accessibility of UNIFIL to Lebanese communities has varied over time, revealing both the circumstances and conditions

⁷³ Interactionist theory emphasizes the importance of everyday, informal, repeat interactions for “knowledge formation and transfer” (Distler, 2016, p. 326). It further links such knowledge to “social action” (Distler, 2016, p. 332). A similar insight emerges from institutional theory, though from a different ontological orientation. North (1990) notes that “we usually observe cooperative behavior when individuals repeatedly interact, when they have a great deal of information about each other, and when small numbers characterize the group” (p. 12). This insight addresses how institutions assist individuals in dealing with incomplete or asymmetrical information when making choices. While institutional theory is rooted in a rational-choice model of human decision making that does not directly align with the theoretical approach of this research, this insight about repeat interaction and information acquisition echoes interactionist theory.

⁷⁴ Schia and Karlsrud (2013) use the language of “friction sites” to describe the interface of international and local actors and the ways in which international efforts and initiatives are actively adapted and contextualized to local realities by local actors (p. 234).

⁷⁵ Bliesemann de Guevara (2017) discusses the travel of members of parliament (MPs) to conflict-affected settings as a performative type of “symbolic action” (p. 74) aimed at the acquisition of, and claim to possess, “authentic knowledge” (p. 73), which elevates them amongst their peers in policymaking. These encounters between internationals (MPs) and host communities do not generate “authentic knowledge” of the realities in conflict-affected environments, but rather reflect the pre-existing knowledges, beliefs and politics of the MPs. This is a result of the goal of the travel, which is likely to be “legitimation, not scrutiny” of their political decisions around intervention (Bliesemann de Guevara, 2017, p. 71). A similar argument could be made for the performative quality of the interfaces described in this section, particularly those occurring in the events and service/project based spaces. These are “symbolic actions” that have little “authentic” impact in terms of knowledge or interaction, as they are more likely to reflect that objectives and goals of UNIFIL in constructing such an encounter and demonstrating local support and partnership.

⁷⁶ The concept of a binding constraint emerges from mathematics and linear programming, but it has been used as a metaphor in institutional theory and development economics (Rodrik, 2007) to evoke the relevance of a particular factor or property to achieving an optimal solution or state. This research takes insights from the writing of Douglas North (1990) on institutions as “the rules of the game in a society or more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interactions” (p. 3). Institutions shape the permissibility and conditions of individual actions and choices. The institution of UNIFIL produces and perpetuates numerous rules and constraints on human interactions in the interest of security (Lebanon’s and its own), stability and negative peace (Galtung, 1996). The most relevant for this discussion are the constraints UNIFIL imposes on interactions with Lebanese people. My research suggests that accessibility is a constraint for optimizing connections between these groups, and as such it is referred to here as a “binding constraint.” A non-binding constrain would have no impact on the achievement of an optimal state.

that foster or enable connections, as well as the barriers and constraints that inhibit them (for a discussion of barriers inhibiting accessibility and connections, see Chapter 7). The difference between enabling and inhibiting conditions is social and physical accessibility.

Physical accessibility has both a passive and an active dimension in the context of a peacekeeping mission. Passive physical accessibility refers to the proximity of UN bases to local communities – how close bases are to where Lebanese people live. Active physical accessibility refers to the intentional efforts made by the UNIFIL mission and personnel to be physically present in local communities, in the spaces where people spend time and go about their daily lives. This physical presence is often enabled by operational or job-related tasks, but is bolstered if bases are proximate, allowing for physical presence to occur during free-time and in informal contexts. Social accessibility, by contrast, is attitudinal and refers to the openness, friendliness, and approachability of the UN mission and personnel. A UN mission generates social accessibility by creating or enabling permissive environments for interaction, which requires both purposeful contexts and adequate time to engage with local people.

In south Lebanon, UNIFIL becomes accessible to Lebanese people, and vice versa, through three primary entry points or interfaces: commercial, events-based and services/projects-based. These entry points constitute contexts and spaces for encounters.

4. 2. 2 Commercial Interfaces

Evoking Kathleen Jennings's thesis on local experiences of UN interventions as "peacekeeping-as-enterprise" (2015, p. 296), the most prominent contexts in which UNIFIL and Lebanese locals engage and interact are commercial in nature.⁷⁷ These commercial interfaces

⁷⁷ Jennings (2015) argues that "for many people living alongside a peacekeeping mission, this is the extent of their contact with the operation [...] Most peacekeepers do not have much social contact with locals, but they still commercially engage with locals and expatriates in the course of fulfilling their day-to-day needs and wants" (p.

include local businesses, contractors, employees, producers, and landlords. Since the beginning of the mission in 1978, a constellation of economic activity has been sustained by and created as a result of the presence of UNIFIL (Göksel, 2007). UNIFIL currently has an annual budget of over \$500 million United States Dollars (USD).⁷⁸ A significant proportion of that impact comes from UNIFIL's procurement budget for attaining goods and services, delivered through contracts with Lebanese businesses and individuals (Wood, 2010). Over the period of July 2017 to June 2020, UNIFIL's purchase orders totaled \$145,113,684 USD, which is money injected into the Lebanese economy (Internal Audit Division, 2020).⁷⁹

Until the early 2000s, UNIFIL sourced many of its goods and products from outside of Lebanon, particularly Israel (Göksel, 2007),⁸⁰ however, UNIFIL personnel regularly established informal relationships with local producers and businesses as part of the “backstage action”⁸¹

298-299). This thesis would resonate with many in the context of south Lebanon, however this research focuses on the ways in which such contacts can become more meaningful connections. Though this evolution from contact to connections may be experienced by a minority of people who interface with peacekeeping missions, it can be impactful, as this study demonstrates.

⁷⁸ As passed in resolution A/RES/75/250 B, the current budget for the period of July 2021 to June 2022 is \$519,251,500 USD. This amount is generally allocated as \$476,842,000 USD for “the maintenance of the Force”; \$28,203,700 USD for “the support account for peacekeeping operations”; and \$5,205,800 USD for the UN Logistics Base in Italy (UN General Assembly, 30 June 2021).

⁷⁹ In its 2020 Audit of procurement and contracts management activities in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services noted the lack of “reliable monitoring” of UNIFIL's budget implementation and procurement processes (Internal Audit Division, 2020, p. 5). This accounts for the lack of nuanced, disaggregated data on UNIFIL's spending patterns and budget allotment. Some historical examples exist, however, to illustrate UNIFIL's economic impact in south Lebanon. In a 2011 radio interview, a construction project within the UNIFIL HQ at Naqoura was quoted to cost 1.2 million dollars and employ 50 people (UNIFIL, 3 Nov 2011). In the same interview, UNIFIL was said to have awarded contracts to 104 Lebanese vendors, totaling approximately 34 million dollars within the 2010 fiscal year (UNIFIL, 3 Nov 2011). These examples point to the significant economic impact of UNIFIL in south Lebanon.

⁸⁰ Göksel (2007) has linked both the purchasing and housing procedures of UNIFIL in the pre-2000 period to preserving Israeli support for the mission. As long as Israel was profiting from UNIFIL, it would remain cooperative.

⁸¹ While such informal enterprises are “backstage action” from the perspective of the international community, Jennings argues that in fact they are “frontstage” from the perspective of local communities, which generates her thesis of “peacekeeping-as-enterprise” (2015, p. 307). Local people, she argues, realize very quickly that despite rhetoric around protection, development and security, peacekeeping is just like everything else – “it is about the money” (p. 307).

that enabled the peacekeeping mission to function in the early years of its deployment (Jennings, 2015, p. 297).

[W]hen I was up in Jouayya, we were supplied with foods from Israel. So we were sitting up there eating this bad bread and so on. So a friend said, you know, it's incredible, we are eating bread from Israel when I'm sure we have bakeries around the corner. And this friend, his father had a bakery in Sweden. So we went down to Tyre to negotiate with the guy to bake bread for us (AL-10).

During UNIFIL I,⁸² many UNIFIL civilian staff would cross the border daily into Israel at Ras al-Naqoura, where they kept apartments, channeling this portion of the peacekeeping economy toward Israel's benefit (Jennings, 2015; Göksel, 2007).⁸³

Back then, they used to sleep over in Palestine and Israel. So they used to go there when they finished their mission. So the Prime Minister Rafik Hariri,⁸⁴ before he died years ago [2005], he took the decision that they have to live inside the cities in Lebanon. So they had to rent some apartments, inside the city, especially in Haraa [neighbourhood of Tyre], [and] this raised up the rate of renting. And they had to sleep here, so that means they have to go to the markets here, to the restaurants, to the pubs, everywhere, so this really helped the economy of the area (Lebanese municipality [MM]-6).

Sourcing products, goods and accommodations in Lebanon has become standard practice for UNIFIL, providing countless opportunities for commercial interfaces with local communities and business-people. Whether informal or formal, the commercial connections that arise from peacekeeping supply chains and procurement behaviours are important for maintaining positive relationships with Lebanese communities. Further, they generate contexts for everyday exchanges and repeat encounters between UNIFIL personnel and Lebanese people.

⁸² While UNIFIL has been a continuous mission in south Lebanon since 1978, it is functionally divided into two phases – UNIFIL I, based on Resolutions 425 and 426, with a limited stabilization mandate, operating between 1978 and 2005; and UNIFIL II, based on Resolution 1701, with a more robust engagement and fortified force strength, operating from 2006 until today (Elron, 2007; Murphy, 2008).

⁸³ Göksel (2007) has described the decision to “have the UNIFIL civilian employees and staff officers living in Israel” as a mistake, that “made [them] hostages of Israel and its proxy, Haddad’s South Lebanon Army” (p. 53). Israel and the SLA retained control of border crossings, enabling them to shut UNIFIL staff out of their work at will.

⁸⁴ The attribution of this policy shift to Rafik Hariri is unsubstantiated. I was not able to find a news or academic source that confirmed the exact year of this policy change, or that it was championed by Hariri. Importantly in this historical telling, however, is that this participant firmly understands the policy shift to be a result of Lebanese initiative, and not the efforts of UNIFIL or the international community.

In contrast to the more recent efforts at local procurement, UNIFIL has been employing local people as staff and contractors since 1978.⁸⁵ In the initial years of the deployment (particularly pre-1990), minimal infrastructure led many UNIFIL personnel to outsource laundry, cleaning, tailoring and barbering services to neighbouring locals.

We would go to the local tailor to repair your uniform, or all kinds of things like that - small everyday things that are meaningful for those who don't necessarily have the big positions in the society. They can still make a living out of these small jobs (AL-2).

On my last tour in Lebanon with UNIFIL in 1991/92 [...] I was the commander in charge of a group living in a house in the village, and during that time we employed a local, he was a 16 year old teenager, who would work for us after school cleaning and preparing dinner and cleaning the kitchen area, we paid him every week from our own money. We would also pay his mother and sisters for our laundry every week, and in doing so we would have hoped that the money we paid were helping to pay for his education, and also help feed his family (AL-17).

Today, such positions are staffed by local workers on UNIFIL bases. These positions provide an essential source of job vacancies and salaries for individuals in south Lebanon,⁸⁶ and are an important form of interface between UNIFIL personnel and Lebanese individuals. Ample opportunities for interaction exist on UNIFIL bases, enabling substantive, personal relationships to develop. Several participants note that local staff have invited them to their homes for dinner, to socialize or to meet their families, exemplifying how these business-related interfaces can develop into more meaningful connections (the development of a more substantial relationship was recounted by participants in approximately 20% of cases).

⁸⁵ “UNIFIL became the biggest employer in the south, and created a lot of opportunities for contractors and subcontractors. Our presence gave a big impetus to the famous Lebanese entrepreneurship” (Göksel, 2007, p. 77).

⁸⁶ Jennings (2015) documents several adverse effects that come with UN employment for national staff, including high family pressures as a result of having a stable, well-paying position, as well as increased criminality due to their relative economic status in their communities. In none of my interviews were such adverse effects noted as a result of UN employment. Participants universally observed the positive effects of job vacancies and higher salaries for individuals in south Lebanon.

Aside from the formal aspects of the peacekeeping economy in south Lebanon (procurement and local staffing), informal commercial interfaces proliferate as result of the 10,000 or more internationals living and working south of the Litani river.⁸⁷ The presence of thousands of UNIFIL over the course of the past four decades has consistently driven entrepreneurial Lebanese people, or “mingey men,”⁸⁸ to open markets, shops, and services targeting a foreign clientele with extra money to spend.⁸⁹

We were generally popular because we left a lot of money – we spent money. We were relatively okay-paid, so we had dollars, and we spent dollars on food, and drinks, and clothes, and gadgets, and souvenirs and cassettes and CDs and things like that. There were always small shops popping up (AL-2).

Retail shops, “freelance trad[ers]” (LC-15), grocers, bakeries, mini markets (*dekkaneh*), cafés, and restaurants feature prominently in the stories told by both Lebanese people and UNIFIL veterans, coming up in 77 of the 82 interviews conducted.

⁸⁷ This refers to the UNIFIL area of operations, which extends from the Blue Line between Lebanon and Israel north to the Litani river.

⁸⁸ The term “mingey men” originates with the Irish armed forces as a term of both derogation and endearment for the individuals that open shops catering to the local military installation. These shops often sell knock-off products, like watches, electronics and clothing. They are a staple of many peacekeeping operations, including UNIFIL. “The word Mingey comes from the first Irish soldiers who served with the UN in the Congo during the 60s and is pronounced min-gee. It may have been an African word, and can have several meanings, for example you could show me your new Rolex watch, and I may say that’s a Mingey watch – which would mean that it’s a fake, not real, or a poor imitation, another use of the word could be if I asked a fellow soldier who had just returned from a UN mission – ‘Did you bring back any Mingey’s?’ Which in that case would mean souvenirs – and that is why all local Lebanese shops selling souvenirs were called Mingey shops by Irish UNIFIL soldiers and the owners were called Mingey Men. Even the locals calling to outposts in their cars to sell goods would have been called Mingey Men” (AL-17).

⁸⁹ Göksel (2007) also makes this point.



FIGURES 4.3 AND 4.4 SOUVENIR “MINGEY” SHOPS, NAQOURA

Source: K. Cassin, personal photographs

UNIFIL often visit village *souqs* (markets) and market days, as well as conduct “village patrols” (AL-9), “social patrols” (AL-16), or “market walks” (UNSC, 4 November 2016, p. 5), which place uniformed personnel in the commercial everyday life of Lebanese communities, showing presence and engaging locals in casual spaces. Particularly in Tyre, which constitutes a social and economic centre for UNIFIL and south Lebanon in general, civilian staff rent houses and live and socialize in the community, attending local gyms, shopping, and dining in Lebanese commercial spaces. These informal aspects of the peacekeeping economy in south Lebanon are the most common way in which UNIFIL interacts with “regular”⁹⁰ Lebanese individuals.⁹¹

Commercial interfaces, both formal and informal, constitute entry points for UNIFIL to interact with Lebanese communities – “the direct contact comes from buying or selling,” “this is a peaceful way that [one] can enter the social of another community” (LC-17). Such spaces are

⁹⁰ By “regular,” I mean those who are unaffiliated with any aspect of the hybrid sociopolitical order in the south, such as local civil society organizations, the non-governmental sector, municipalities, the Lebanese Armed Forces or UNIFIL itself.

⁹¹ Commercial, as well as events-based and services-based, interfaces would not be unique to UNIFIL. Many UN peace operations would likely interface with local communities through similar relational contexts. What would be unique to UNIFIL is the way in which interfaces become interchanges and the impacts of those more substantive interactions. This will be discussed further in the conclusion to this chapter.

purposeful, non-political and “safe” contexts (Taha & Hawker, 2020)⁹² in which to develop relationships, show community presence, contribute to local livelihoods, and cultivate acceptance from the local community.

How do you build a relationship? They won’t come in for someone and say, “hello, we are going to build a relationship.” The relationship comes from some incidences, like business, or some services, it depends. [...] So if they can interact with the community through the business, they can enter the restaurants, say hello, share food... if you are a customer and you eat there every week, then you can build the relationship, they can see you regularly. Clothes shop, electronics shop, it depends. But if you are not coming to their places to visit... in what way are you coming to their places? “Hello, we are going to drink some coffee!” They won’t do it (LC-17).

These commercial spaces make UNIFIL and Lebanese people accessible to one another, providing entry points for encounters and repeat engagement between these groups. They constitute interactional platforms from which additional opportunities can emerge to develop more substantive relationships that were not available or accessible prior to the initial interface.

4. 2. 3 Events-based Interfaces

A secondary, but significant source of interfaces between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals are special events and occasions hosted by either UNIFIL or local communities (mentioned in 49 of 82 interviews). Like commercial spaces, these constitute entry points for interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals, by rendering these groups socially and physically accessible to one another. While such activities are not an explicit part of UNIFIL’s

⁹² Taha and Hawker (2020) discuss shopping malls in Israel/Palestine as depoliticized and securitized “non-places” in which “one can shed the thick identity and become an anonymous, albeit consumerist, individual, free from ethnic and other political identities. Malls are fundamentally pacifying spaces, providing an opportunity for ‘thin’ freedom and peace” (p. 296). In contrast to shopping malls, I argue that markets and private businesses in south Lebanon are embedded in Lebanese cultural identities, such that identities are not depoliticized nor anonymized, but rather temporarily couched in the course of consumerist interactions. This non-political, rather than depoliticized, space, allows for initial encounter and interaction, which in some cases can provide a platform for more substantial interactions in the future, where thicker identities can be relationally enacted.

mandate, they are an official part of its “civil interaction” activities in south Lebanon,⁹³ targeted toward encouraging positive relations with Lebanese communities (UNIFIL, n.d.b; UN PKO/DFS, 2012)

Municipal events, national celebrations (e.g. Independence Day), and international issue days (UNIFIL, 4 May 2018) (e.g. International Day of Peace [UN PKO, 21 Sept 2021], International Women’s Day [UNIFIL, 10 March 2022], Earth Day [UNIFIL, 5 June 2015], etc.), all offer opportunities for contact and it is common practice for municipalities to extend invitations to UNIFIL, and vice versa.

I remember that one time, we invited them to the celebration of Independence Day, November 22, and the Korean contingent presented a nice show on the drums (CS-18).

Yea, they always do parties where they introduce their culture, their dances, their folklore (LC-9).

Some battalions have among their soldiers, folkloric band, musical band, dance band whatever, so they perform in front of the people, okay? In the international days of peace, water, environment whatever, also we organize festivals (UNIFIL Civil Affairs [CA]-1).

While Lebanese participants largely remark that these interfaces are pleasant, but formal in nature, indicating minimal substantive interactions or conversations with UNIFIL personnel on such occasions, they are important sites of cultural exchange and communal socialization.

UNIFIL describes such “cultural events” and their purpose as “building relationships” and “creating diverse communities that are powerful enough to achieve significant goals” (UNIFIL, n.d.b). Though such events offer performative and ‘thin’ displays of cultural identities, they are

⁹³ “UNIFIL attaches great importance to relations with the local population among whom the peacekeepers operate. There are several facets to this relationship: these include informing the people of south Lebanon about UNIFIL’s mandate and activities; providing or facilitating limited assistance to the extent possible; respecting and sharing in the local culture, customs and concerns; participating in community events and ensuring minimum disturbance to normal daily life from UNIFIL’s operations in the area. To this end, interactions with the communities are regularly conducted at every level” (UNIFIL, n.d.b).

nonetheless entry points for UNIFIL and Lebanese people to encounter one another and gain exposure to each other's cultures.

UNIFIL are particularly engaged with schools, participating in various events, camps, graduations, awareness campaigns, and enrichment programs, such as martial arts (UNIFIL, 2 May 2018), sports, and theatre.

We go to schools, we culture about UNIFIL, we lecture about UNIFIL, and we receive students in our camp here. So many schools send us 50-60 students to explain to them our work, what UNIFIL is doing here, why the UNIFIL is here, and those are not only secondary school students, but also university students (CA-1).

[T]hey focus on the children, not on us. How's that? My brother, he is 12 years old, they open kung-fu class... the Koreans. They invite all the children there, they give them the white and the black [outfits]. This kind of builds the relation between parents and children and UNIFIL. 'Look, our children are so so lucky with them, so happy with them, they have a good time with them, they development them, they develop their minds.' This builds the relation between them [UNIFIL] and their parents so that they trust them (CS-3).

UNIFIL participation and engagement with schools through events or special programming offer entry points for interaction not only with Lebanese children, but also with their parents. They are opportunities for UNIFIL to communicate with Lebanese families and foster multi-generational understanding of their mission and their purpose in Lebanon. They are also humanizing affairs through which professional soldiers, who are often divided from Lebanese communities by uniforms, weapons and armoured vehicles, are able to play, dance and perform with and for children and their families. These events thus constitute opportunities for informal socialization and inter-cultural exchange, which contribute to building trust and a sense of shared community.

In the period of 2006 to 2019, UNIFIL spent \$50 million USD on civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) projects, undertaking approximately 16,400 such activities per year (UNIFIL, n.d.a). Often in the form of quick impact projects (QIPs), these activities are a part of the UN peacekeeping "Civil Affairs" package, and are undertaken in the interest of building

“confidence in the mission, the mandate or the peace process” (UN PKO/DFS, 2012, p. 224).

They are non-operational activities that are complementary to the mandates of UN peacekeeping operations, such as UNIFIL. In order to promote a positive, helping image and encourage local support for the mission, UNIFIL places significant emphasis on inaugural ceremonies⁹⁴ for the quick impact projects they fund in south Lebanon (Kassem, 2017).⁹⁵

First of all, they need to show this for the community here, that UNIFIL is being helpful. So whenever they help in anything, this happens through an event that they organize, and they invite the parties of the community, UNIFIL, the Colonel, the municipality, the schools, whatever, whoever is concerned, and they exchange gifts or awards, and kind of have an opening celebration (CS-4).

Research participants consistently describe these events as formal, ceremonial affairs in which there is little engagement and interaction between UNIFIL personnel and Lebanese attendees.

These events primarily generate interfaces between municipality leaders and UNIFIL commanders, who shake hands, offer appreciation to one another, pose for photos and unveil plaques acknowledging UNIFIL’s contribution to development in Lebanon.

⁹⁴ It should be noted that inaugural ceremonies and publicity for quick impact projects are understood by UN peacekeeping to “extend their confidence-building impact” (UN PKO/DFS, 2012, p. 234).

⁹⁵ In her 2017 discussion of UNIFIL Quick Impact Projects as pacification tools in south Lebanon, Kassem notes her own observations of such inauguration events to be poorly attended. She references a village deputy mayor who indicated that “the municipality sends only specific people to UNIFIL events to purposely prevent UNIFIL from building its desired relations with their villagers outside the authorities’ supervision” (Kassem, 2017, p. 468). In the course of this research, I received no such indication of efforts to intentionally impede interactions. Rather, I observed a system of social networking that facilitates superior access for some Lebanese people to such events, because they have the ‘right’ connections to be consistently invited.



FIGURES 4.5 AND 4.6 COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES FOR QIPS, HALTA AND BAZOURIEH, RESPECTIVELY

Source: K. Cassin, personal photographs

These ceremonies and plaques are symbols of the “liaison and coordination” activities that UNIFIL undertakes outside of its mandate, but in support of “relationship building,” which is essential to its capacity to fulfill its mandated activities. UNIFIL understands these complementary functions as “collaborative activities for the benefit of the southern community” (UNIFIL, n.d.b).

Despite their formality, events such as these are spaces of repeat interactions and encounters between UNIFIL personnel and Lebanese individuals involved in the municipalities and recipient civil society organizations, who will often invite members of the community that will directly benefit from the project. As such, they are opportunities for ‘thin’ encounters and interfaces.

While conducting fieldwork in south Lebanon, I was invited to attend and observe another category of event that generates interfaces between Lebanese people and UNIFIL personnel – Change of Command and Battalion Departure events.



FIGURES 4.7 AND 4.8 ITALIAN BATTALION CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY, MANSOURIEH

Source: K. Cassin, personal photographs

These are military parades or ceremonies conducted on UNIFIL bases to acknowledge personnel shifts within contingents.

They used to exchange events with the community, attend events of each other. They used to invite them, and still until now, they invite them whenever they have any event [...] There's this event that happens once a year when they get [...] the ring, like when they put the ring for those people who serve in Lebanon and they have to leave to Fiji [gesturing to the rope ring that gets placed over the arm of soldiers]. They have a festival and celebration for the ring, so they invite us. They invite the entire village from the very young person to the very old guy to all attend this festival. Even the schools used to perform dances by the children in the festivals done by the UNIFIL (LC-1).

This individual depicts a wide inclusion of Lebanese people in such events, as she reminisces on the Fijian soldiers in her community of Qana from 1978 until 2002 (UN PKO, 22 Dec 2018).

From my observations in 2018, however, these events are not open to the public and thus not inclusive of the local community. Requiring security clearances to attend, UNIFIL invite a small group of select local contacts, including municipality leaders, civil society partners and certain

known individuals or “friends” from the local community.⁹⁶ Following the event, there is a cocktail hour, with food and beverages, providing an opportunity for casual socialization amongst Lebanese and UNIFIL individuals in attendance. While these events may not be inclusive, they do generate a context for encounters and repeat interactions between UNIFIL and the Lebanese people invited. Attendees, both UNIFIL and Lebanese, can be considered leaders in their communities, as their invitation itself hinges on their social positions or their social networks. As such, their experiences interacting and traversing the social and physical divides between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities have the potential to generate wider reaching impacts through their networks (for further discussion see Chapter 5).

While the extent to which events-based interfaces generate opportunities for substantive connection and relationship-building is contested, they do provide contexts for communication and repeat interaction between UNIFIL personnel and Lebanese individuals.

So in general, there is a sort of communication through the events happening in schools, municipalities, organizations – this is how this connection happens (MM-7).

This happens always through the events. Whenever they invite them or the other way around, there is this... it’s considered to be a cultural exchange (CS-17).

As such, events are contexts through which these communities become accessible to one another, socially and physically. From these formal, or ‘thin’ encounters, new opportunities for more substantive connections and relationship-building become available.

⁹⁶ These “friends” are discussed further in section 4. 4. 2. These individuals gain invitations to such events through their social networks with other Lebanese people who are officially affiliated with UNIFIL, such as civil society leaders, municipality leaders, or local staff.

4. 2. 4 Service/Project-based Interfaces

A tertiary category of interface or entry point between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals emerges through the services and projects that UNIFIL delivers in south Lebanon (mentioned in 30 of 82 interviews). Like events, these activities are tangential to, but in support of the mandate (UNIFIL, n.d.b).⁹⁷ The widest reaching of these services are medical and veterinary clinics, alongside practitioners who travel within the area of operations to deliver their services.

I would go out as a medic, though I wasn't supposed to, I would go out to the houses, have a cup of tea and chat, and then if there were any minor accidents, cuts and scrapes and bruises, especially around kids, that I could look after (AL-15).

In these spaces, Lebanese individuals interact with uniformed UNIFIL doctors, veterinarians, nurses and assistants, communicating directly or with the help of translators.⁹⁸ While these encounters are often formal and professional in nature, they generate a significant sense of appreciation from local communities, where medical and veterinary assistance is often expensive or difficult to access. These services provide regular contexts for encounters and repeat interaction between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals who may not otherwise be accessible through the aforementioned interfaces.

A different interactional context emerges through UNIFIL infrastructure projects, such as road and building (re)construction or renovation.

⁹⁷ “UNIFIL battalions deliver a range of basic services to communities using the skills and technical expertise of peacekeepers, as well as through limited employment of UNIFIL’s engineering and other operational resources in support of the local population. UNIFIL contingents provide free medical, dental, veterinary and other such services to the local population. UNIFIL contingents have been conducting various training programmes for different sections of the local community in fields such as computers, languages, cooking, yoga, martial arts, etc.” (UN, n.d.b).

⁹⁸ Rubinstein and Kohli (2010) similarly observe the ability of health professionals to “access patients across boundaries” and collaborate with their counterparts across social and physical divisions (p. 2). Their research on the role of health professionals in peacebuilding in Israel and Palestine suggests their bridging capacity despite political and conflict divisions. They argue that health workers can “pursue goals beyond health such as extending solidarity, broadening the concept of altruism, humanizing the enemy, foster dissent against unjust policies, and encouraging or supporting diplomatic efforts toward resolution” (Rubinstein & Kohli, 2010, p. 2). These outcomes mirror those I attribute to UNIFIL peacekeepers in this dissertation, particularly in Chapter 6.

Yea, it's the best communication ever, they eat together, have their lunch, they work together, they arrange... They even have some fun together while working, so it's never formal. So even when the project was terminated, they invited the UNIFIL to like have some kind of dinner and some *manakeesh* (Lebanese flatbread), to have some event/party together, and even the UNIFIL they provided something from their own food for the event, and they celebrated (CS-14).

In these contexts, UNIFIL personnel often work alongside local contractors, communicating directly as co-workers on a shared project, funded by UNIFIL. Particularly in the aftermath of the Israeli invasions and bombardments, UNIFIL contributed to clean up, mine clearing and reconstruction efforts alongside Lebanese communities, NGOs and civil society partners. These contexts generate ample opportunities for encounter and repeat interactions, in casual non-militarized spaces, connecting UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals through a common purpose and joint working environment.

Unlike medical services or infrastructure projects in which encounters occur in professional contexts, UNIFIL also runs vocational training programs on base (e.g. for students in mechanical trades), as well as outreach workshops for local adults to learn languages, cooking styles, or artisan crafts (UNIFIL, 23 April 2018; UNIFIL, 26 April 2018).

[T]hey get as many people as possible [...] to discover something new, you know? It's really good! I like it, I like the principle of the whole UNIFIL. Because it's not only keeping the peace, it's also getting the people together with the foreigners. [...] It's enriching for the country *ya3nee* [I mean/you know]— cross-cultural (UNIFIL local staff [LS]-5).

These services constitute educational, and in some cases cultural, contexts in which UNIFIL personnel and Lebanese individuals interact and communicate. These programs are often multi-day or multi-week affairs, generating opportunities for repeat interactions and encounters, making UNIFIL and Lebanese participants socially and physically accessible to one another in informal spaces and contexts.

Several Lebanese participants noted the role of services and projects in winning support for the mission and forging connections with local individuals.⁹⁹

I think the contingent here are doing good work with the local community, they are contributing with helping building roads, construction of the new computer lab in the municipality, the city, the schools, private and public schools, etc. Because they are also contributing to help, to support the community. Yes, I think these two help a lot to bring the UNIFIL together [with the Lebanese], you know? (CS-18).

Like commercial and events-based interfaces, however, the significance or substance of service or project-based contexts for relationship-building is contested by participants.

When I talk of my relations with people, even I forget their names, *ya3nee* [I mean/you know], I'm proud of the experience of these people. Not of one person, *ya3nee*, nothing especially between me and any of them, believe me, I forget all of their names, but I remember the event, I remember the day, I remember what they do for me. This doctor, I don't remember his name, this engineer who came for service, I don't remember his name, but I remember that service, the good manner, I remember the... this is what I remember. And the impact is I am proud, I can talk about them always. Every time it gives me positive reasons to try again, and ask again, and communicate again (LC-21).

Through such services and projects, Lebanese people and UNIFIL personnel have occasion to interact directly and encounter one another in a reversal of the dynamics underpinning commercial interfaces. While Lebanese people are rendering services to UNIFIL through commercial activities, through projects UNIFIL renders services to Lebanese people. In both spaces, these actors become accessible to one another and encounters occur, generating a platform from which other opportunities for interaction become available.

⁹⁹ Gordon and Young (2017) discuss the engagement of local individuals with peacekeepers in Haiti through three main interfaces – security activities, relief activities and abuse. They argue that exposure to security or relief activities facilitates connection with local people and their cooperation with the work of peacekeepers. They argue that “interactions with peacekeepers serve as signals about their interests, capacity, and abusiveness that lead civilians to update their beliefs and thus influence their decisions to cooperate with peacekeepers” (Gordon & Young, 2017, p. 76). Their findings suggest that in order to encourage public cooperation, peacekeeper efforts should be oriented toward delivery of services and the prevention of abuse.

While accessibility is essential to creating contexts for interfaces between socially and spatially divided groups, it is insufficient to transform those encounters into more meaningful connections and relationships. However, enabled through, and in some cases embedded in, these three entry points for ‘thin’ engagement and repeat interaction – commercial spaces, events and services – are opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and relationship-building. Social and physical accessibility through these interfaces creates a platform from which new opportunities for connections and relationships become available – they generate “adjacent possibil[ities]” for interaction (Hendrick, 2009; Redekop, 2015). These new opportunities emerge as a result of Lebanese hospitality culture.

4. 3 Hospitality Culture and the Transformation of Encounters into Relationships

The implicit, though foundational, question that underpins this thesis is what transforms an “interface” into an “*interchange*” (MacGinty & Sanghera, 2012, p.4; emphasis mine)? How does a meeting, an encounter or a conversation become a connection or a relationship that impacts the individuals involved?

Cultural peacebuilding posits that cross-cultural interactions and exchanges have the potential to transform identities and alter relationships – group and personal identities, perceptions and experiences are relationally constructed (Boege, 2019). By this logic, interfaces that provide opportunities for intercultural exchange, thereby generate the potential for identity transformation, evolution and co-constitution. Do the commercial, event-based and service/project-based interfaces between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals generate such opportunities for cultural exchange?

In many ways, Lebanon is an ideologically and structurally divided country. With eighteen recognized religious groups,¹⁰⁰ a political system structured on power sharing between sectarian parties (Makdisi, 2014), a geographic patchwork of villages and neighbourhoods with predominant sectarian identities, and a variety of external political pressures that interweave with internal religio-political dynamics, a national Lebanese identity is elusive and ill-defined (Fisk, 2002). Transcending these religious and political divisions, however, Lebanon is united by a highly social lifestyle and a strong culture of hospitality and welcoming.

We as Lebanese, as southern Lebanese, we have this sense of social... we love the social life, and we get to interact with them, to love them, and to welcome them (CS-17).

Lebanese hospitality emerged as a central theme in conversations about the connections and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals (referenced in 50 of 82 interviews). In the context of south Lebanon, the culture of hospitality is the keystone in the bridge between UNIFIL and Lebanese locals, as it generates contexts through which superficial encounters can become substantive connections.

As Swidler (1986) argues, culture shapes the tools through which individuals engage in social action. Culture shapes the habits, practices, and scripts people use to engage in social interactions. In Lebanon, hospitality, or what Derrida (1997) described as a relational practice involving “welcoming of the other; the invitation to the stranger” (1997, p. 110; see also Derrida, 1999), is a culture that inspires various practices among Lebanese people, including inviting,

¹⁰⁰ Due to the tightly interwoven religious and political dynamics in Lebanon, an official census has not been conducted since 1932. As such, the relative proportions of different religious groups in Lebanon is not precisely known (Fisk, 2002). According to the U.S. Department of State, “There are 18 officially recognized religious groups. According to the government, these include five Muslim groups (Shia, Sunni, Druze, Alawite, and Ismaili), 12 Christian groups (Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholic, Assyrian, Chaldean, Copt, Evangelical Protestant, and Roman Catholic), and Jews. Groups the government does not recognize include Baha’is, Buddhists, Hindus, several Protestant groups, and the Church of Jesus Christ” (Office of International Religious Freedom, 2019, p. 4).

offering, sharing, and conversing. The invitation is a social act of recognition through which two strangers take on new roles, with new norms – that of host and guest (Hultin et al., 2021). Importantly for this study, in this conception of hospitality the social and physical “boundar[ies]” between two groups or actors and the “invitation” to traverse those boundaries and engage, are “co-constitutive” (Hultin et al., 2021; p. 6), meaning that the boundary does not exist without the invitation, and the invitation in fact reinscribes the boundary by demarcating ownership of a space (Derrida, 2000). As such, through hospitality, agency is enacted in claiming legitimate authority of a space and the interactions within it. These insights align with the central argument of this chapter – that through the Lebanese culture of hospitality, interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals are transformed into opportunities for intercultural exchange, and thereby hybridization. Through invitations, Lebanese people exert agency in altering the contexts, spaces and content of their interactions with UNIFIL.

Hospitality has also been linked to public diplomacy through the literature on culinary or gastro diplomacy (Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Chapple-Sokol, 2013; Rockower, 2012). Understood as a form of “soft power”¹⁰¹ (Nye, 1990; Zhang, 2015), food is considered a part of the toolkit of “culture, values and policies” (Nye, 2008, p. 94) on which people can draw in the practice of diplomacy. Chapple-Sokol (2013) defines culinary diplomacy as the “use of food or a cuisine as a tool to create a cross-cultural understanding in the hopes of improving interactions and cooperation” (p. 161; see also Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Rockower, 2012). The diplomatic function of hospitality inscribed in the culinary and gastro diplomacy concepts aligns well with its role in mediating the connections and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals.

¹⁰¹ “Soft power” refers to the non-military, and often non-tangible, means through which diplomats can work to compel and convince other actors and publics toward their policy goals (Nye, 1990).

For many research participants, both internationals and locals, Lebanese hospitality, kindness and generosity were cited as transforming commercial, event-based, or service/project-based interfaces into connections and relationships.

But of course they then felt that we were like customers and they wanted to take care of us. So, they invited us for a fish dinner, and I remember so much how important it was for them to have us for fish, because for them, fish is like the best meat (AL-10).

Or even when they came here to the church to give them the Italian language, it was supposed to be just the class, but the Lebanese would never accept that – like we will definitely have some food together, some coffee, some chatting together, it has to go this way – the Lebanese way. So that made the connection (CS-13).

These quotations make clear the link between the aforementioned interfaces, Lebanese hospitality, and the formation of more substantive relationships. These invitations are “the Lebanese way.”

Hospitality is linked to other attributes of Lebanese culture, such as a culture of sharing.¹⁰² Food is often served in the form of *mezze*, or small plates, laid centre-table and passed around. Even in a context of scarcity, this culture of sharing persists and hospitality is maintained.

On one such occasion I was invited into the home of a local family, along with several other members of my unit, the family consisted of a husband, wife, and two small children, they lived beside our checkpoint near Tibnin bridge. We had a lovely Lebanese meal together to mark the end of our tour in Lebanon. We all knew that this family had very little, however they insisted that we join them for dinner. During this meal which included some salad, I had noticed that the family only had two boiled eggs to share and chose to cut them, and divide them between our unit and go without eggs themselves – I always remember that simple gesture to this day as a humble example of the genuine hospitality of the Lebanese people (AL-17).

¹⁰² Boege (2019) observes a similar “culture of sharing” in Bougainville, where eating together “exemplifies the cultural-relational dimension of internationally supported peacebuilding” and is a central, cultural aspect of relationships in Melanesian society (p. 6).

While this anecdote evokes the roles of host and guest as enacted through a gesture of generosity and “going without,” it neglects the agency and sense of pride enacted through this family’s ‘insistence’ that the UNIFIL soldiers join them in their own space, under the norms of their culture. Hospitality is often an expression of pride and a chance to share what many Lebanese people consider to be the best cuisine in the world – “the Lebanese kitchen is bigger and more tasty than other kitchens” (LC-17). Pride is itself a cultural attribute that extends well beyond the kitchen into many aspects of Lebanese social and political life, including the resilience of Lebanon amidst numerous domestic, regional and international pressures.

Hospitality is also connected to the flexible relationship Lebanese people have with time. Through invitations to enter their spaces, Lebanese people exert agency on a highly regimented and orderly military entity that often demands punctuality, contra Lebanese cultural norms, in encounters like the interfaces previously described.

You know, they are picky! They kill me! They come first time, to take measures for the parking, how many cars we can put in the parking, how many doors we have here, how much they need from me... this is the UN way. [...] Opening time, closing time... they are too much professional. I like to work, I mean sometimes we need this [...] If he tells me 12, he will be at 12. I know it’s 12 just when I look from this window and he is here. [...] me I am a person who respects the time, respects the date, who respects my meetings, but maybe, they are not ah... they don’t have this option with other people. Lebanese don’t have... they stick more to our late by 2 hours.... If my friend tell me she is coming for a visit at 4 o’clock, she will come at 6 o’clock, no sorry, no worry, no... *khallas* [stop], she will come 6 o’clock! (LC-21).

Meals are lengthy, multi-course affairs, and on special occasions can take 3 or 4 hours. Small talk and polite conversation is expected before substantive conversations, new friends or acquaintances are regularly introduced into the conversation, and it is considered impolite to refuse invitations or what is offered to you.

It was stressed that when you had to engage with the local men, you didn’t rush the conversation, that wasn’t done. You sat down, and had a cup of coffee, talk about anything, how things are going, nothing political, just general chatting. [...]

One of our lads, a very funny one, he didn't like this Turkish coffee, the Arabic coffee at all, and when no one was looking he was dumping it in a plant in a pot alongside of him. So every time that his cup was empty, the lady of the house was called, and she filled it up again – this happened 3 times anyway. In the meantime, the sun had moved, so we had to move in the shade away from the plant, so for his fourth cup of coffee, he had to drink it (AL-4).

These are all characteristics of everyday Lebanese culture and social life that are embedded in Lebanese hospitality and are foundational to creating a context for cross-cultural exchange and relationship-building. Through invitations, Lebanese people demand more time than allowed by the fleeting, 'thin' exchanges that occur in commercial, events-based, and service-based interfaces. In so doing, they exert agency in shaping their interactions with UNIFIL personnel, creating the physical and temporal space for 'thick' relationships to develop.

Invitations to share coffee, tea, or food; welcoming individuals to join one's table, sit and stay a while in one's business, or enter one's home as a guest (noted by 37 participants); these constitute invitations to partake in conversation, intercultural interaction and relationship-building.¹⁰³ Through these invitations, Lebanese people exercise agency, relocating interfaces from formal to informal spaces, inverting power relations and reorienting the sphere of engagement from the commercial or performative, into the cultural. In so doing, they create what I term 'hybridized spaces' through their relations. By 'hybridized spaces' I mean to denote contexts, both physical and social, in which the agency and power of UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals are brought into greater balance than in interfaces, by virtue of the content, intentions, and impacts of the interactions that occur within them. I argue that the Lebanese culture of hospitality transforms interfaces between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals into

¹⁰³ Writing about peacebuilding in Bougainville, Boege similarly notes: "Sharing of food, performing the haka, and coming together in kava ceremonies obviously do not figure prominently in the design of international peacebuilding interventions, but in the specific social-cultural context of Bougainville these expressions of culture and cultural exchange clearly contributed to establishing everyday relationships that were important to peacebuilding" (Boege, 2019, p. 8).

interchanges, wherein the participating parties are themselves transformed through cultural exchange (see Chapter 5 for further discussion of the impacts of these connections).

4. 4 Motivations and Strategies to Connect

I argue that the Lebanese culture of hospitality is an expression of Lebanese agency in transforming interfaces with UNIFIL personnel into opportunities for interchange, or relational co-evolution (Boege, 2019). However, not all interfaces become interchanges, nor do all Lebanese people readily extend invitations to join their tables, enter their homes, or share a cup of tea inside their businesses. What motivates some individuals to seek out substantive connections? Who initiates encounters – who does the ‘reaching out’ that provides a platform from which relationships can be built?

4. 4. 1 Agency and Initiative in Forging Connections – The Way People Reach

There is a pervasive perception that Lebanese people exercise more initiative in reaching out and building connections than UNIFIL personnel. Though UNIFIL are physically present in communities and interface spaces, socially they are perceived as reserved, isolated and professional. This is connected to protocol and restrictions on UNIFIL’s independence and mobility.¹⁰⁴

Stories about UNIFIL personnel reaching out to local individuals and taking initiative to build connections are largely exceptional and historical. In the pre-1990 period (also during the 1990s, but to a lesser extent), protocol, restrictions and oversight were minimal, making the environment for individual initiative more permissive.¹⁰⁵ Several participants, both Lebanese and

¹⁰⁴ There are a variety of institutional and securitization barriers that restrict UNIFIL personnel’s independence and mobility while deployed in south Lebanon. For a discussion of these barriers, see Chapter 7.

¹⁰⁵ Schia and Karlsrud (2013) discuss the value of “friction sites” between international and local actors in the capital versus those in the peripheries of the intervention. They argue that more friction sites, and thus more

UNIFIL, have anecdotes of exceptional and generous gestures from UNIFIL,¹⁰⁶ which bridged these two communities and initiated meaningful relationships.

So every time the shelling used to start, some Irish senior sergeants, old-timers, they used to grab their guitars, and go around to the orphanage [...] and entertain the children during the shelling, so they would not be scared. I mean where are you going to get that kind of service? [...] So I mean, those sorts of things made you very close with the people (AL-1).

I was aware of the hardship most young men had gone through in an important phase of their lives. I brought back the 'latest European fashion' shirts from Holland for some young men, which was very well received. That finally broke the ice and relationships were strengthened (AL-19).

More commonly, however, UNIFIL initiate contact or reach out to locals to build relationships through their purchasing habits and daily lives in the community, reflecting the primacy of commercial interfaces in generating contexts for interaction.

I mentioned that there were a couple of shops that sprang up around the various company headquarters, but there was a poor old fellow, God help him, that had a small old shop that no one really went [to], because all the young fellows went to the bigger shops near the checkpoint. He was about 150 yards up the road, so [...] myself and two of the other lads, strolled down every night, saw his family, chatted (AL-15).

“Chat,” “chit chat,” “small talk” and “everyday talk” are common phrases used to describe such interactions, wherein UNIFIL and Lebanese people inquire about each other’s days, talk about the weather, shake hands, wave hello, or in some cases take a picture. These interactions are brief, fleeting, and polite, but lack substance and lasting meaning. Several UNIFIL adopted the tactic of talking about, and sometimes playing, football to connect with local people.

contextualization and localization of international efforts, occurs in the peripheries, where policies and mandates can be more “flexibly interpreted and manipulated (or contextualized) [...] in order to fit with practicalities and needs on the ground” (p. 244). Newby (2017) also points to the value of flexibility regarding the mandate in order to achieve realistic goals and be responsive to local partners – in Lebanon, this is particularly the Lebanese Armed Forces.

¹⁰⁶ “But we would play with the kids, playing football, jumping ropes, you know? I little hard with an AK-47 on your back you know, but what the hell to do? Hahaha. The basic thing is, if I looked around our units, I could see the Swedish units always trying to make some extra stuff for the people there, out of our duty time you know. If we have some spare time, and we have some good machines, we could make a football field, hell we’d make a football field for the kids you know” (AL-5).

It wasn't always possible to have deep, meaningful conversations. Maybe other guys have other experiences. But all the men and boys knew Johan Cruyff, the famous Dutch soccer player. Soccer is more binding than you can imagine and I think that there has been some soccer matches between locals and the Dutch (AL-22).

Several UNIFIL noted a concern about intruding on Lebanese people or annoying them in the course of their daily lives, which inhibited them from taking the initiative to socialize and build relationships.

The initiative was mostly from the local people. From my point of view, I did not want to interfere with people's lives, creating an expectation that they had to talk to me or spend time with me (AL-19).

For many UNIFIL personnel, the approach to engaging with local individuals is one of passive presence – make oneself available and accessible through interfaces, such as those previously described, be friendly and kind, and hope that a Lebanese individual will reach out.

By contrast, Lebanese individuals, with few institutional restrictions on their social lives,¹⁰⁷ and a cultural tradition of hospitality and welcoming, bear the responsibility for initiating connections and relationships beyond the initial interfaces of commercial spaces, events, and services or projects.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Some communities in south Lebanon are more socially conservative than others. In certain areas, cultural and religious norms of propriety may constitute a restriction on the ability of Lebanese people to interact and engage with UNIFIL personnel. Further, political affiliations in certain villages may also constitute a barrier to friendly social relationships, due to a deeply held skepticism of UNIFIL as pro-Israeli spies or agents (Fisk, 2002).

¹⁰⁸ Aside from religion, by and large in this dissertation I choose not to disaggregate the analysis by demographic features such as village/nationality, age or gender. With respect to a village-based disaggregation, this would not be possible as most villages are represented by 1-3 participants. This does not constitute a large enough sample size to analyze differences in experience between villages in a meaningful way. With respect to ages, participants were not asked to give their ages, but the vast majority of Lebanese participants and all UNIFIL participants were middle-aged. This means there was not sufficient variability in the data set to meaningfully distinguish between age categories and experiences connecting across the UNIFIL-Lebanese divide. For UNIFIL, all participants were men aside from one international civilian staff member. In contrast, I interviewed 33 male and 23 female Lebanese participants, allowing for some reflection on gender disaggregated experiences with connections. With respect to cultural exchange through interactions, male and female Lebanese participants reported in near-equal proportions (72% and 69%, respectively). This suggests that gender is not a significant factor in determining whether or not cultural exchange occurs in interactions across the international-local divide. Regarding substantial connections, some variation emerged, with 42% of male Lebanese participants and 26% of female participants indicating they had developed substantial connections with UNIFIL personnel. This could be indicative of a greater degree of ease or social mobility between men and UNIFIL, than between women and UNIFIL (as UNIFIL is male dominated – currently

If they [UNIFIL] were ever invited [by Lebanese people], they would attend, but I don't feel like ever they would try to come up with some idea that would make them in contact with the people (CS-19).

Since the beginning of the UNIFIL mission, many Lebanese people throughout the south have undertaken language training, often offered by the local contingent, developing their own capacity to reach out and connect with UNIFIL – “I can speak English and French from school, but I learned Italian from my shop, and Indonesian and Malaysian” (LC-9).

For Lebanese people, UNIFIL is seen to do the minimum required to have a presence and make ‘thin’ contact with the local community. They are available upon request, and gladly accept invitations, but they take little initiative to reach out to Lebanese individuals or organizations for substantial connections and relationships – “all the time they are waiting for us to contact them, they are never doing any action, it's reaction” (CS-19).

4. 4. 2 Motivations to Connect – Why People Reach

While motivations to build connections across social and physical divides are both personal and individual, several common narratives emerged in the course of this research. These can be summarized as social, informational, and financial motivations to build relationships. In line with Outcome Mapping (Earl, 2001 as discussed in Chapter 3), tracing the intentions and motivations behind the social actions individuals take to build relationships is an important part of understanding the contexts in which people interact across social and physical divides, as well as the meaning of those connections to the individuals involved and to their communities.

5% of the UNIFIL military force is female [UNIFIL, n.d.a]). This could also be attributable to cultural conventions around gender relations, particularly for Muslims. A final notable indicator, through with less variation between genders, is Lebanese perceptions of appreciation and respect for UNIFIL (indicated by 72% of male respondents and 78% of female respondents). In general, the variability between genders is not clearly patterned or consistent in this research, and as such it has not been included as a primary point of analysis in this project. A gendered analysis of this topic would be a fruitful area for future research, as would a non-binary approach to such an analysis.

Social Motivations

Despite both social and spatial divisions, UNIFIL and Lebanese people work and live in the same communities, which generates a common incentive to embrace and acknowledge each other as neighbours – “they [UNIFIL] already became a part of the community” (CS-11) (mentioned by 21 Lebanese participants).

[W]hat brings them together is like it has to happen because they are here on a mission and we are living here, so it's just the social life and we are set to be together (LC-12).

So we mingled. There were so many people outside connecting with the locals. It was like we lived in their village, as members of their village, so to speak (AL-3).

Civilian UNIFIL send their children to local schools, they grocery shop at the same stores, they dine at the same restaurants as Lebanese people – “I think it's normal, like neighbourhoods – like neighbours” (LC-23). This interconnectedness, which extended to military UNIFIL in the earlier years of the mission,¹⁰⁹ generates circumstantial and social incentives to interact and forge relationships.

As neighbours within a shared community, services and sacrifices have been made by both sides over the course of the conflict in Lebanon (Göksel, 2007). These create a sense of shared history, shared loss, and reciprocity that underpins a feeling of community.

So the people, after this massacre, the people of the area said that our blood was mixed together, UNIFIL soldiers and Lebanese civilians, were killed together at the same place. [So] from, you know, 1996,¹¹⁰ the relations were excellent (LC-6).

¹⁰⁹ Prior to 2000 and the conclusion of the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon, UNIFIL were often stationed within villages, renting or occupying abandoned houses. As such, they, like UNIFIL civilians today, lived amongst Lebanese communities. Today however, military UNIFIL are stationed in secure bases outside of villages, cutting off this communal living experience. The spatial barriers to connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese people will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

¹¹⁰ In April 1996, Israeli Defense Forces launched ‘Operation Grapes of Wrath’ in Lebanon. This was a bombardment campaign against Hezbollah that left devastation in many parts of south Lebanon. The primary story of this campaign, however, is the bombing of the Fijian UNIFIL base in Qana, where UNIFIL was sheltering local Lebanese villagers (Fisk, 2002). The bombing killed 106 Lebanese civilians, majority Shia Muslim, and injured 116 Lebanese people and 4 Fijian soldiers. As Robert Fisk (2002) writes, this event has “assumed mythic proportions in Lebanon” (p. 673). It was widely cited in the interviews conducted for this research project, by Muslim and

[W]ith time there was definitely this kind of nice interaction between these people, the locals and the internationals, they lived together, and it even reached marriage. They even suffered together because of the war. They married together, they lived together and they even died together (MM-1).

These shared experiences of community and war foster a common desire to show appreciation and care across social divides. Kindness and friendliness are frequently cited in connection with a sense of appreciation or respect for the safety and support that UNIFIL works to provide (mentioned by 42 Lebanese and 20 UNIFIL participants). Similarly, many UNIFIL are motivated to build relations by a desire to communicate support or sympathy for the situation in Lebanon, and appreciation for the welcome they receive from local people.

Curiosity and friendliness characterize many individuals in both groups, driving intentional efforts at socialization in public spaces. Cultural similarity can further generate rapport and inspire integration between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities.¹¹¹

I would love to be in contact with them. I would love so much to visit their camp, to get connected, to know them personally [...] it's something interesting. I love people, especially foreigners, it would be exciting (LC-4).

Christian participants alike, as evidence of the strong, loyal relationship between UNIFIL and the communities of south Lebanon.

¹¹¹ Both UNIFIL and Lebanese people cite variation between countries regarding friendliness and socialization (mentioned by 41 participants), which they attribute to culture and link directly to the potential for interactions and relationship-building. “But we never forget that it [commonality] is not with all the UNIFIL, there is a difference from one UNIFIL to another. Some of them are similar to the Lebanese, but some of them are different” (CS-20). “You can say that with the Fijis, most of them are good personnels, but it’s the culture. For example, the Nepalis, the Indians, they are good people, but they didn’t react in the same way as the Swedes, the Norwegians, the French and the Finnish, so culture plays a role” (LC-17). Lebanese participants commonly compare and rank UNIFIL contingents according to a spectrum of cultural compatibility. Cultures with the highest rank, which are embraced by Lebanese communities and actively sought out for interaction, have cultural similarities with Lebanon in terms of lifestyle and customs (e.g. Italians). Cultures that are less similar, but friendly and sociable, are welcomed and appreciated by Lebanese individuals, who willingly interact when opportunities arise (e.g. Irish). Finally, cultures that are perceived as profoundly different, unrelatable or inferior, are seen as incompatible and experience less acceptance by and interaction with Lebanese communities (e.g. Ghana). This ranking diverges from that observed in Bougainville by Boege (2019). In that context, local ranking of internationals was according to “their understanding of, and willingness to adapt to, Bougainville culture and custom” (p. 6). This finding also contradicts that of Vanessa Newby (2017), who argues that due to their national foreign policy toward Israel and Hezbollah, European Union troop contributing countries are less favoured than other nations perceived to be more neutral. This indicates that there may be a balance of factors that contribute to how local people evaluate UNIFIL contingents and their social connections with them.

Yes I had/have fantastic friends in Lebanon. It was one of my priorities to get to know the locals. To listen to their life story, and to understand their culture (AL-3).

A common refrain from both Lebanese and UNIFIL participants was that the “Lebanese love foreigners” (LC-4) (mentioned by 15 Lebanese and 6 UNIFIL).

[W]e Lebanese, especially us here [in south Lebanon], we love this kind of exposure, and getting introduced to new cultures and having connections with foreigners (CS-13).

This cultural curiosity or openness stems from several political and historical dynamics, including waves of emigration during the Lebanese civil war and Israeli occupation that produced sizeable diasporas around the world (Zgheib & Kowatly, 2011). The French colonial period in Lebanon also contributed to the affinity some Lebanese people have for European cultures (Fisk, 2002). Many people also seek business opportunities abroad, particularly in Africa and other parts of the Middle East (Zgheib & Kowatly, 2011).¹¹² This curiosity or eagerness to interact with UNIFIL was most often rooted in a desire to learn about other cultures and gain exposure through social connections.

Socially motivated by curiosity, friendliness or a sense of community, Lebanese and UNIFIL individuals seek out interactions and connections. These social motivations have a direct

¹¹² The cultural ranking of UNIFIL contingents mentioned in the previous footnote is informed by racism, which is tied to business-related migration and the foreign service worker economy in Lebanon. The economy in south Lebanon is bolstered by individuals who own businesses in West Africa and send money home to Lebanon. These earnings are used to build houses, open businesses in Lebanon, or send their children to universities in Beirut or abroad. “I am not racist, I like African people, but what I noticed, when the Nigerians came, they felt that they had this feeling that Lebanese were racist. So they don’t feel comfortable. [...] Some people are like this, we have racists, we are racist, Lebanese are racist believe me [...] Not all, but we are, like 90%” (LC-21). Though many Lebanese people live and have business interests in Africa, there is a class dynamic that characterizes these connections, and impacts the experiences of some troop contributing countries in south Lebanon. In addition, the Lebanese service and public works sector are both racialized spaces. Housekeepers and childcare workers are primarily from the Philippines and Ethiopia, while public service workers, such as street cleaners and garbage collectors are often from Sri Lanka. “We have castes and they don’t know it, they don’t realize we have castes here. So when you have Sri Lankans at the gate, checking [...] every single car, with the bags, like our bags, women’s purses. And I can’t tell you how much gossip I heard from the Lebanese about this – what?!” (LS-3). These racialized employment sectors foster a racialized class system in Lebanon that impacts the perception and acceptance of some UNIFIL troop contributing countries.

correlation to the gestures of invitation and hospitality that Lebanese people extend to UNIFIL personnel. They also indicate that for many UNIFIL and Lebanese participants, the intentionality behind their social connections is cultural exchange, which provides a foundation for the inter-cultural exchange that occurs in the hybridized spaces created by Lebanese hospitality.

Informational Motivations

Gaining information, or knowledge, is another source of motivation to build connections and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. For both groups, cultural knowledge and understanding are considered vital to learning to work with one another, thereby providing incentives to interact and engage in order to learn about one another's cultures.

[I]f you have to pacify, you have to make contact with the people, because if the people are against you, your operation is lost, you are fighting a lost battle and it costs you a hell of a lot of lives if you don't understand people and if you are not on speaking terms with them (AL-16).

So I was born in a family which has been working in this type of business since 30 years. My dad also used to have a shop and he still has the shop, and he has been working with all kinds of contingents. So I grew up in a family who knows how to deal with them, and how to sell them, and how to make them like you... you know what I mean? So in order to make a good relationship, they have to like you at first, you have to be friendly, you have to understand how they think, because you know they come from different cultures (LC-9).

For UNIFIL, such knowledge is further linked to winning or preserving local support for the mission (discussed further in Chapter 6). Developing cultural understanding and awareness of local needs and concerns motivates UNIFIL to connect, as that knowledge is linked to attaining and retaining Lebanese loyalty and cooperation with UNIFIL operations.

So when they came to Lebanon, they have their plan, how they will get the heart of the people. [...] This project builds relations. So people will look to them like they are peaceful. They love our children, so we should love them. It was a good plan to get their hearts. So now they can go to any village in peace (CS-1).

That cooperation and loyalty aids in producing new connections or strengthening existing ones, which can constitute essential pathways for UNIFIL to attain information from local contacts.

So every year, come September, we provided the oil for their press, to help them. But then, that village becomes attached to you – they become your sources as well (AL-1).

In some cases, information from local contacts has saved UNIFIL from violent incidents and encounters.

[W]ord would get back from the locals, you know, don't stop there tonight, or don't go in there, or you might avoid this spot tonight – for the Irish batts, for our safety, not because they didn't want us to do what we were doing. But messages would get back through the informal conversations, because we built friendships and relationships with the people who didn't want to see us hurt, and it would get back (AL-15).

Quotations such as this point to an underlying link between positive and productive relationships and safety and security for peacekeeping personnel (Bove & Ruggeri, 2019).¹¹³ Cultural knowledge is essential for working effectively across cultural difference for both UNIFIL and Lebanese participants. Being able to communicate effectively, understanding the perspectives of the other, and interacting positively and productively are all tied to cultural knowledge and understanding. These incentives motivate both UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals to seek out encounters and connections across social and physical divides.

Financial Motivations

A central motivation for building connections is attaining personal benefit or advantage. For Lebanese people, many are compelled to have good relations with UNIFIL for monetary reasons, including access to job opportunities and earning customer loyalty for their businesses.

¹¹³ “A productive and trustworthy interaction with the local population is crucial as it provides peacekeepers with vital information about the situation on the ground which can improve operation efficacy in daily practice. At the same time, positive interactions with local communities can undermine support and might stem the flow of resources for radical or insurgent groups. In aggregate, this will likely improve or aid in maintaining security in strategically important environments” (Bove & Ruggeri, 2019, p. 1632-1633).

I always keep connection with the UNIFIL, I would never give that away. I always also am invited to all the events that they do. I would keep this connection for personal but also for career. I never asked for anything and they didn't give it (LC-1).

And what unites them... I think mixing with the community - that's the only way. You are coming to... OK... you're coming to visit my country and the Lebanese, they think, OK, we have to work with you, we have to get benefit from you... this is how they get united (LC-23).

Relatedly, UNIFIL are commonly perceived as reliable and professional employers or business associates, who offer good salaries and fair payment for contracts. As such, many Lebanese people are eager to tie their economic prospects to the peacekeeping mission.

They say that working with them is much better than working with Arabs. Really! Because they are a little bit more working on discipline and rules... they are professional in their work (LC-19).

The perceived and real¹¹⁴ comparative advantage of working with UNIFIL, as opposed to working with Lebanese businesses or companies, drives many to seek opportunities and connections that might help to attain such positions (Jennings, 2015).¹¹⁵ Given the length of the UNIFIL mission and the repeat suffering that has been inflicted as a result of both the civil and interstate wars, many Lebanese people are driven to turn the deployment of over 10,000 foreign

¹¹⁴ As of January 2020, the range of annual, gross, UNIFIL national staff salaries was 113,434,000 Lebanese pounds (LBP) to 227,768,000 LBP, depending on position and level (Office of Human Resources, 2021). Given the current LBP to USD exchange rate (1 LBP = 0.00066 USD), this salary range is \$74,866.44 USD to \$136,660.80 USD. Salary data by region in Lebanon is difficult to acquire, so national-level salary data must be given for comparison. Given the recent economic crisis, salaries in Lebanon have devalued by 84% (Yassine, 2021). The minimum wage in Lebanon is set at 675,000 LBP per week (35,100,000 LBP per year), which in the current exchange rate is \$23,166 USD annually. For an upper-middle class salary example, a professor at a Lebanese University would earn approximately 3,700,000 LBP per week (192,400,000 LBP annually), which at present is \$126,984 USD (Yassine, 2021).

¹¹⁵ Jennings (2015) notes that employment with UN peacekeeping operations as a national staff member enables such individuals to learn the UN system and improve their opportunities to gain employment as international civilian staff at other missions. This was also noted by one of my participants, who recalled his advocacy for his Lebanese national staff in helping them to attain international UN PKO employment. "I [found] jobs for most of my local staff as international staff in other missions, especially in computers, in communications, and in engineering. I transferred all of them to good jobs abroad. They became part of the UN establishment" (AL-1).

soldiers in their communities to their own advantage.¹¹⁶ The “silver lining” of the situation in south Lebanon is that the economy is supported and people have job opportunities despite their insecurity. Taking advantage of these tangential benefits from the peacekeeping mission is a key driver for Lebanese people to connect with UNIFIL.

These incentives are reflected in UNIFIL perceptions of Lebanese people as enterprising or “opportunistic” (AL-22) in their business dealings, often working an angle to maximize their personal benefit from the mission (noted by 12 of 23 UNIFIL veterans interviewed).

I mean, one issue which sometimes made me a bit concerned, especially up in the Muslim areas, you had those small shops, of course I mean the family running these shops, they would put their extremely beautiful 17 or 18 year old girl there in the shop [to lure us in] (AL-10).

They are friendly, happy to see me, greet me, but they know that I have money, and they know I can [spend]... so I think it's a face (AL-2).

This intentionality or strategizing was perceived by several UNIFIL, who had the impression that Lebanese business and shop owners would also use invitations to dine with their families in order to win favour and strengthen the business relationship.

Yeah definitely, especially guys... haha... I won't say they were trying to soften you up, but if we do especially any major deals for various good or services, they would sort of target you to bring you out to their house for a meal (AL-14).

Such impressions point to a level of artifice in the attitudes and relationships displayed through commercial interfaces. They also reinforce the personal benefit motivations that drive some Lebanese people to forge relationships and connections with UNIFIL.

¹¹⁶ Jennings (2015) observes a similar attitude in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which she describes as a “get while the getting is good” attitude (p. 307). She notes, however, that “while the peacekeeping economy creates employment opportunities for local women and men in both the formal and informal sectors, the infrastructure and services it generates are not of the kind intended to have wider gain for the population at large” (p. 307).

Lebanese individuals and organizations commonly believe that relationships with local UNIFIL personnel and contingents yield preferential treatment and access to funds and projects (mentioned by 22 Lebanese participants).

On the level of associations and organizations, they would like to be in contact with the UNIFIL, because they think that probably, they might be offering some kind of help, money, whatever. So whenever they meet together, start to make contact, have their number for a later conversation, so maybe they can get some benefit from them (CS-19).

While UNIFIL today has a clear protocol for access to funding for quick impact projects, mediated through Lebanese municipalities (UN PKO/DFS, 2012), anecdotal evidence suggests that certain benefits do arise from strong relationships and connections.

Because I am going every Sunday to take charge of the Pastoral care of the soldiers and not getting any salary, if I propose any project for the school, like innovation for our computer lab, or innovation of our chemistry or biology lab, in this case they are helping us (CS-18).

So for example, my uncle is in the municipality, so it is very easy to coordinate and to facilitate and to [say] “yes, please call these people, I need to see him in the municipality”. It’s [better] than if you don’t know anyone [...] So it facilitates - it’s the way of communication and the public relations that you know [connections that you have] (CS-12).

This aligns with the Lebanese phenomenon and culture of *wastah*, which in practice refers to social connectedness, nepotism, or knowing the “right people” to get things done (Egan & Tabar, 2016).¹¹⁷ In comparing her organization’s ability to access civil-military co-operation (CIMIC) funding from UNIFIL with that of other local organizations, one Lebanese participant mused “maybe it’s a *wastah* thing with the UNIFIL” (CS-20), pointing to her perception that connections and relationships with UNIFIL factor into funding allocation.

¹¹⁷ Egan & Tabar (2016) describe “wasta” (their spelling) as “an Arabic word referring to the use of connections to obtain scarce goods or services” (p. 249).

Personal benefits can also be accrued through connections with UNIFIL. One Lebanese individual received financial help for her cousin's surgery as a result of her husband's good relationship with the local UNIFIL contingent, which he developed working as a cook on their base (CS-7). That contingent heard of her family's struggles and raised money to donate for her cousin's surgery.

Whether motivated by curiosity, a desire for cultural exchange and learning, or personal financial benefit, knowing the right people, or *wastah*, is considered advantageous for gaining access to UNIFIL. This is exemplified by the formation of informal community groups that consistently gain invitations to UNIFIL events.

Also we have here in Sour [Tyre] a group of people who like this [kind of] event. They invite them any time they have an event. They don't have anything to do with it [...] Weekly we have contact with them.... Weekly. If not me, then through the municipality. You see [this friend], usually she invites me to events with the UN, and other people invite me too... always we are celebrating something done by the UN [...] I have friends who feel jealous, and ask me, please when you have any events with the UN, invite me. People want to be close to UNIFIL (LC-21).

Through Lebanese social networks, individuals navigate pathways to gain access to UNIFIL and gain personal benefit from those connections.

As argued by Mac Ginty and Sanghera (2012), strategies to “solicit patrons and patronage from external actors” constitute “one form of agency” enacted by local people through interactions with interveners (p. 5). Seeking out personal benefit from an international intervention (whether that benefit be cultural, informational or financial), constitutes a form of resistance or co-optation of the intervention and its intended impacts. As such, these motivations are foundational to a process of hybridization, wherein the interests of local individuals, alongside their cultures, shape or inform the social actions they undertake in response to

UNIFIL, which subsequently and relationally determines the experiential realities of the operation and its impacts. Motivated to attain personal benefit or advantage, many Lebanese people reach across the social and spatial divides that separate them from UNIFIL personnel.

These social, informational and financial incentives underpin the disproportionate efforts made by Lebanese people to reach out to UNIFIL and forge meaningful connections. For UNIFIL, incentives are primarily informational and operational, rather than personal and financial. While personal incentives toward cultural exposure and understanding do motivate UNIFIL efforts to build relationships, the extent to which those incentives can influence or impact action and behaviours is constrained by the institutional structure of UN peacekeeping. For Lebanese individuals, their incentives, whether social, informational or financial, are personal and can influence their actions and behaviours, driving them to maneuver and strategize in order to gain connections and build relationships. As argued by Mamiya (2018), understanding what motivates groups or individuals in a given action is necessary for determining entry points for dialogue, designing programs, targeting resources and establishing credibility.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue, that religion does not generate the social and physical contexts for meaningful interactions and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals, due to the cultural customs around public conversation and the avoidance, by both UNIFIL and Lebanese people, of sensitive political discourse (4.1). Rather, religion is engaged primarily through events, which are formal and performative, lacking ‘thick’ identity enactment. Individuals across the UNIFIL-Lebanese divide primarily interact in commercial, events-based and services-based interfaces (4.2). These interactions occur in formalized, international spaces, where the identities

enacted are ‘thin’ and superficial. However, these interfaces provide platforms from which gestures of Lebanese hospitality can emerge to transform the context and substance of interactions (4.3). Through invitations to share coffee, tea or food in Lebanese homes or businesses, Lebanese people exert agency in translocating interactions from formal, international spaces into informal, private, localized spaces, where ‘thick’ identities can be enacted and substantial, transformative interactions can occur. Individuals are motivated to reach across the international-local divide by social, informational and financial incentives (4.4).

The interfaces discussed in this section (commercial, events-based and services-based) are not unique to UNIFIL, and likely exist in a variety of peacekeeping environments. This reality is how the findings of this research project become informative to other contexts. What is unique to Lebanon, is the way in which the Lebanese culture of hospitality transforms those connections into more meaningful relationships and interchanges. In each peacekeeping context, while I would anticipate culture to be a factor in building substantial relationships between peacekeepers and local individuals, how culture materializes and generates those changes would be unique.

Chapter 5: What do relationships mean to those involved? *Hybridized People and the Development of Interlocutors*

Introduction

In Chapter 4, I argue that the spaces and contexts for interaction that emerge through Lebanese hospitality enable connections and relationships to develop that are substantive and impactful, in that they generate “interchange” (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012, p. 4). In this chapter, I present empirical evidence for the ways in which the knowledge and identities of UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals transform and evolve as a result of their interactions and the intercultural exchange that occurs in hybridized spaces. The first section discusses the substance of the connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese people (5. 1), as the meaning derived from an interaction is linked to the substance of that interaction. Substantial interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people generate two main impacts: 1) they hybridize the knowledge of both parties and thereby the social actions they undertake; and 2) these interactions blur the boundaries between internationals and locals, hybridizing the identities of the people involved (5. 2). In some cases, individuals with hybridized identities emerge as interlocutors, who exercise social capital and facilitate the connections of others in their social networks, enacting a bridging function between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities (5. 3).

5. 1 Substance of Connections

The relationship between UNIFIL and south Lebanon is near-universally¹¹⁸ described by participants in positive terms, as one of integration and mutual respect.

¹¹⁸ A small minority of participants describe the relationship in more neutral or ambivalent terms. Very few (2) described the relationship in negative terms. In one case, a participant referred to a level of annoyance Lebanese people have toward the outward displays of socialization enacted by the Indonesian contingent. In the other case, the participant was from Khiyam, which is a village with a complex relationship with UNIFIL, where public opinion is not positive toward the mission. UNIFIL is not uniformly or consistently embraced across the area of operations.

During all of my tours of duty with UNIFIL we have always had a good interaction with the local Lebanese people, and over decades have built a great relationship which is one of mutual respect for one another. Despite our differences in religion, language, and culture we have developed a great relationship that still exists to this day (AL-17).

This positive relationship has been cultivated and earned over the past four decades of UNIFIL deployment in south Lebanon. While their reception was tepid and at times hostile in the first years of the deployment, over time and despite their limitations, UNIFIL has earned acceptance and respect from Lebanese communities through their enduring presence, their public works, their economic impacts, and their shared experience of insecurity in south Lebanon.

[S]ince they came, they suffered a lot because of the people here and because of the conflict, but even the people were not friendly. So they worked for a very long time to achieve a good connection, and they succeeded with this (CS-13).

The question in this chapter, however, is what is the substance and meaning of those good connections? When UNIFIL and Lebanese people interact, what is the content of those conversations, and what do they mean to the individuals involved?

As discussed in Chapter 4, commercial, event-based and service-based interfaces generate interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people that can be described as superficial, meaning formal, polite, friendly, but ‘thin’ in terms of both content and the identities enacted through them. In contrast, when interactions occur in informal spaces with sufficient time, such as those created through Lebanese hospitality, “the politeness and facade [can] quickly g[i]ve way to a real conviviality” (AL-20). The content of these interactions is rooted in the ‘thick’ – meaning personal, political and cultural – identities of the individuals involved. In these interactions people share their opinions, experiences, perspectives and concerns with an openness not possible in public or performative spaces. As will be explored in the next sections,

Certain villages with tighter affiliation to Hezbollah, or more complicated histories with UNIFIL and the Israeli occupation, experience political constraints to acceptance of and connection with UNIFIL.

these interactions have an enduring impact on the individuals involved. As such, the connections developed through Lebanese hospitality can be described as substantive,¹¹⁹ given their content, their longevity and the meaning participants ascribe to them.¹²⁰

5. 1. 1 Content of a Substantive Interaction

In terms of content, substantive interactions between Lebanese people and UNIFIL personnel can be summarized by four main categories, or topics of conversation: about UNIFIL, about politics and the conflict, about personal matters, and about culture.

Several participants recall conversations about UNIFIL's purpose in south Lebanon, the reasons peacekeepers have come to Lebanon and volunteered to join UNIFIL, and the limitations of UNIFIL in their operational scope and capacity.

This is something I really want to emphasize – the fact that we were there voluntarily I think had an overall very positive impact. And also, when you told the Lebanese people that – because sometimes they ask, you know, ‘what the heck are you doing here?’ – but I said, you know I’m here because I believe in this. I think the mere fact that you tell the local people you are here voluntarily, because you have some idea that it is beneficial for them, itself is something very positive (AL-10).

Yes, of course. They were curious [about] what we were doing, but it was a very transparent... down on my level we didn’t know anything top secret or anything, so we were talking about what we knew. We had these briefs in the mornings on what was going on, but none of that was really any high secret. So we were talking about what was going on. And they also knew what was going on locally that we probably didn’t understand because we didn’t understand Arabic, and we

¹¹⁹ The word “substantive” has been chosen to describe these interactions due to its definitional alignment with the distinction between ‘thin’ and ‘thick’ identities. “Substantive” means “real rather than apparent,” “involving matters of major or practical importance” (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Substantive thereby denotes the rooted, holistic, and “real” representations of identities that occur in these interactions, as well as their importance. In some places, this dissertation will also refer to these interactions as “substantial,” which retains the connotation of importance, but lacks the distinction between real and apparent.

¹²⁰ In writing about human rights practitioners, Shonghe (2017) notes the difference between interventions that practice “talking at people, instead of talking to or with people” (p. 451). Shonghe argues that such approaches fail to appreciate that “communities know their needs,” and without substantive and enduring engagement and consultation, such approaches fail to address those needs. What works is “creating space for unusual conversations and relations,” by way of the creative and flexible formation of relational webs (p. 451). The hybridized spaces created through Lebanese hospitality constitute such “creative space[s].”

didn't listen to local radio and news. So they had other information. So there would be a bit of sharing (AL-2).

Such interactions and conversations are rooted in a desire for understanding and a process of information exchange.¹²¹ Lebanese people ask questions about UNIFIL, about information UNIFIL may have, lodge complaints, and inquire about employment opportunities and processes. UNIFIL personnel in turn listen to the concerns of Lebanese people, inquire about information they have regarding ongoing situations, if they have seen anything out of the ordinary, or about damage that has been incurred following an incident or shelling.

Of course the locals, it would be an anxious time for them. You would be aware of that and general talk would be you know: 'how is it? how is your children settling? Everything okay? Any damage done? Noticed anything out of the ordinary?'' (AL-9).

Such conversations are the explicit purview of UNIFIL Civil Affairs officers, who use conversations with local contacts, municipality leaders, and civil society organizations to assess local needs, perspectives and concerns.¹²² However, they are not the exclusive purview of Civil Affairs, according to 12 participants in this study. These conversations are substantial as they have implications for how both UNIFIL and Lebanese people understand UNIFIL and its operational environment. They constitute exchanges through which socially rooted knowledge,

¹²¹ Particularly in the early years of the deployment, many Lebanese people would not have known or understood the purpose, role or political position of UNIFIL. Their access to that information would have been primarily through discussion and conversation within communities and with UNIFIL personnel. Makdisi (2014) notes that the Lebanese government had "long neglected" the majority Shia population of south Lebanon (p.28), and as such infrastructure in the region at the time would have been poor, thereby restricting access to information through media in many communities (see also Fisk, 2002). "Yea, there's internet now, and technology now, you understand more. But before, it's different, it's what you see on the TV and what people tell you. But if you don't see and learn it yourself, you will never know about other countries" (LC-22).

¹²² "But we, when we go to them, we listen to their suffering, we listen to their interests, we listen to what they want and need, and what's important" (CA-1). Schia and Karlsrud (2013) note the role of Civil Affairs Officers in bridging the knowledge gap between UN peace operations and the local political economy and the role of the intervention in it. By gathering information and knowledge about local needs and interests, UNIFIL Civil Affairs Officers similarly assess the role of UNIFIL in the south Lebanese political economy. Da Costa & Karlsrud (2013) describe the role of UN Civil Affairs officers as "putting the peacekeeping-peacebuilding nexus into practice" (p. 302).

in the form of perspectives and understandings that have been socially constructed based on the identity and socialization of the individuals involved, is shared and subsequently transformed and reconstituted through the interaction.

Similarly, several UNIFIL personnel considered connections and relationships with Lebanese people to be a key source of their information about the “situation” (AL-13) in Lebanon, referring to politics and the conflict. Exclusively reported by UNIFIL veterans (6 of 23 participants), some recall open and frank conversations with Lebanese friends about Lebanon’s history, the civil and interstate wars, domestic politics, and global politics.

We spoke about politics, we spoke about religion, [...] we spoke about the history of Lebanon, about the war in Lebanon (AL-15).

I want to know what the people living there, the true Lebanese people, say about their situation. Like whose fault it is, and why it is like this? And of course it depends on who you were talking to (AL-3).

In some cases, connections were such that Lebanese people openly expressed their opinions about the Lebanese government and corruption within the political system.

There was this one guy [...] he used to live in Germany where he was a like a road contractor inspector, or something like that [...] he was offered a job like, you know, it was the same job in Lebanon. [...] he was trying to do it the German way, the European way – he didn't want to approve something that wasn't OK. He was like, ‘this isn't up to standard, it's not OK, I'm not approving it’. And he was told, ‘you were paid to approve things, you were not paid to make comments’ (AL-11).

From my experience in Lebanon, sharing such a story is an indication of a strong relationship of trust and friendship, as most Lebanese people avoid speaking openly on such topics for fear that “someone is listening.” Significantly, these are conversations that only take place in informal, private spaces in Lebanon, and thereby can only occur through an invitation. Several times during interviews I received comments illustrative of both the spatial and social parameters that render such talk acceptable or unacceptable.

I would not like to talk about politics anyway. If you would like to come to my home, I will tell you, but here in [the organization], no. At home I can talk politics haha (CS-13).

But we cannot fully trust them. Yea. *Ya3nee* [I mean], I have never ever and will not talk about politics with them. I wouldn't (LC-9).

Politics is sensitive in Lebanon, and as such, the Lebanese people interviewed universally indicated such topics were not discussed with UNIFIL personnel – “they never work with the political side” (CS-20); “they wouldn't discuss politics with us” (CS-19).¹²³ For the UNIFIL veterans who recounted having conversations about politics and the conflict, these interactions contributed to the development of what Miller and Rudnick (2010) call “situated theories,” wherein the conflict is understood from the perspective of local contexts and experiences. Such interactions were substantial as they enabled UNIFIL personnel to see the conflict and the “situation” in Lebanon through the eyes of their friends, thus contributing to their knowledge development and understanding.

By contrast, Lebanese people, as well as UNIFIL, recalled conversations that were personal in nature, wherein people talked about their lives and their work, shared stories, and spoke about their interests, problems, and experiences.

No, there is a kind of friendship, there is nothing formal. Especially with the Italians, they are the kind of people just like the Lebanese, they like to chat. They always ask about them, what they are doing, how life is treating them, their families, they will ask about everything (LC-12).

¹²³ In line with UNIFIL's tactic to avoid discussions of or engagement with religion, UNIFIL takes a similar stance on discussions of politics. “I mean, whenever you left the camp, you were in your flak jacket and carried your gun, but yea definitely you could talk to people, just as long as you don't get political or anything, as long as you don't show any preferences of any side” (AL-10). Many UNIFIL participants displayed a keen awareness of the sensitivity of politics in south Lebanon and took an approach to tactfully avoid such subjects in the course of interacting with the Lebanese people. This aligns well with Lebanese social conventions on the discussion of politics. Politics is sensitive, emotional and personal for Lebanese people, and thus excluded from conversations with strangers or acquaintances, it would only be discussed with trusted friends. Particularly in a context of a relative power differential, such as that between UNIFIL and regular Lebanese individuals, the topic of politics would often be off-limits and alienating for positive interactions and relations.

There was this connection and friendly thing that they even used to share the news with them, that like, if there is a guy whose wife lives in Fiji and got pregnant, they used to discuss with the people around here what would be the name, how to choose the name for the kid (LC-1).

Often, conversations included sharing personal updates, inquiring about family members, asking about major events, such as home renovations or births, and so forth. Such conversations are indicative of pre-existing knowledge and repeat interaction. The involved parties are known to each other and express care and concern through remembering past conversations and inquiring about their status. Through discussion about personal matters, the identities of individuals are narratively revealed and constructed, as participants come to understand the lives, values, and experiences of those with whom they are interacting.

The most common topic of conversation noted by both Lebanese and UNIFIL participants was culture (mentioned by 13 participants). Over tea, coffee or a meal, Lebanese people inquire about peacekeeper's home countries, their way of living and how it differs from life in Lebanon – “some of them were interested in like, where you're from, how [is] it in Denmark” (AL-11). In the course of such conversations, cultural similarities and differences are revealed, comparisons are made, and common ground is discovered.

[T]hey would be mentioning that there are these common traditions, though there are differences but there is a common tradition. For example, the Italians or the Mediterraneans, they would be commenting that we have the sea just like their coast, or the way that we look Lebanese, we look like them (CS-20).

Yes. Let me tell you something. I had a cousin, now she is married to an Italian, before she worked with them for 3 years. She didn't know the mentality of them. She used to think that we have our traditions, and we are reserving our traditions, but they don't have their traditions, they don't have their restrictions. But later on, she worked with them, she said that we have a cool life, and they have a cool life, we have a reserved religion, and they have the reserved religion, and wherever you go you can see the merits and the demerits. So not all people all over the

world are the same. And as I talked with many friends who worked with me there, all of them think the same now (LC-19).¹²⁴

Common traditions and common experiences emerge in the course of interaction and conversation, revealing cultural similarities and differences. The Irish case is a unique example of this, which came up in multiple conversations.

And in Lebanon, it's also... you can compare Lebanon with northern Ireland, it's about 50% Muslims and 50% Christians... the battle was with the Christians, but the Muslims did get the majority, and the Christians didn't want to share the power, and then you get war. In northern Ireland it's with the Protestants and the Catholics (AL-13).

Unlike the Italian case in which cultural similarity is expressed through lifestyle and traditions, in the Irish case cultural similarity has historical and experiential roots, which were born out in conversations between Irish UNIFIL and Lebanese people.

[W]e spoke about the history of Lebanon, about the war in Lebanon, we explained our background, where we were coming from. That you know we... we have our own Troubles. We explained about the civil war back in the 1920s, about our history and what we were doing there. [...] Well if you look at south Lebanon, it's like looking at the west of Ireland, except it's got sun. And I mean that sincerely. It's almost... the stone walls, the villages, everything – it's like being at home. And I think there's also, I suppose the cultural aspect of that. I mean for 800 years, we were oppressed, we lived in rough, slummy [conditions], you know, we were treated very badly. And we kind of have a soft spot for the underdog and for the oppressed, which is I suppose why a lot of guys would take the Lebanese side over the Israelis. [...] But I think there was a very very close cultural bond there, and we weren't told, it just happened [...] Peace, it's there, but there is the undercurrent that it could kick off at any time (AL-15).

We, I suppose, spoke of our experiences in Northern Ireland, and tried to relate that to them, so to say that there is always hope for peace no matter what, so never give up hope (AL-14).

¹²⁴ This quotation most closely evokes a process in line with socialization theory (Checkel, 2017), wherein through employment with UNIFIL, the individual referenced in this anecdote becomes inducted into the social community that is UNIFIL, learning the norms and rules that characterize the Italian UNIFIL community, and by extension Italian culture more generally. While insights from socialization theory can be applied to the data in this dissertation, as noted in Chapter 2, the theoretical framework of this research does not align with socialization theory. The focus of this dissertation is not on the induction of individuals into one community or another, it is on the space between social communities and how individuals come to straddle or bridge communities through the hybridization of their knowledges and identities, as will be explained in the remainder of this chapter.

This shared history of oppression, war, and precarity between Irish UNIFIL and Lebanese people was a common source of connection, sympathy and conversation. Irish people could relate to the experience of Lebanese people in the south, and vice versa. In sharing and discussing these historical and experiential cultural similarities, UNIFIL and Lebanese people build trust and familiarity (Boege, 2019). Through such interactions, individuals actively and critically think about, represent and relationally construct and convey their cultural identities. Through comparison with the cultures of others, they engage in a process of knowledge development and sharing, generating understanding across the social divides between UNIFIL and Lebanese people.

Several Lebanese participants conveyed a sense of responsibility to share their culture and educate UNIFIL through their interactions and relationships.

For our side, how we benefit, is telling them about our culture, how we live, what things are happening here – they are foreigners, so we need to tell them (CS-20).

Yes, actually, I know the people that come as peacekeepers... they are new persons, and a new nationality, coming to a new area, and they are meeting people of different cultures, different backgrounds, so let's say, if... now you know, southern Lebanon, they are Muslim, and some of them [UNIFIL] don't know what's the culture of Muslims. So through interaction, they get to know why, for example, you are having a veil on your head. This is one of the things. Through interaction, they understand that this is Islam, there is Quran, there is Bible and all this. This is definitely the role of some interaction, and impact on others to help them understand what do I believe, and why I follow this (LS-5).

These quotations reveal that for some Lebanese participants there is an explicit knowledge transfer (Distler, 2016) objective to interactions, wherein they aim to help UNIFIL personnel understand their culture and the Lebanese lifestyle. In fact, apart from the official arrival training UNIFIL receive¹²⁵ and any pre-existing knowledge they have, most of the information and

¹²⁵ “What I also do apart from teaching, we have monthly something called induction training... this is to introduce the mission, and everything political, civil affairs, everything - movement control, the airplanes, how they should be, the security, everything they should know, it's 23 days. [...] I give the cultural awareness, the stress management,

knowledge UNIFIL peacekeepers acquire comes from contact with Lebanese people.

Intercultural exchange fosters knowledge development and constitutes a means through which Lebanese people exercise agency in leveraging their cultural identities and contextual experiences to transform and reconstruct the understandings of those with whom they interact.

In addition to conversations about culture, Lebanese hospitality opens up spaces for cultural experiences between UNIFIL and Lebanese people (noted by 14 participants). These experiences include exposure to Lebanese traditions and rituals around food, drink, home life, and socializing, which generate insights into Lebanese culture and lifestyle.

[T]here [in Lebanon] you could feel their culture, you could come out, you could eat their food, you could talk to them, you could smell, you could at least get into it (AL-10).

There are also numerous examples of cultural experiences, rituals or traditions being shared between UNIFIL and Lebanese people.

So they spent the day together, they cooked, they ate together, they told them how to do their traditions – like how the Italians would dance on such an occasion, like for [a] music festival (CS-13).

Grok, it is this traditional drink that they [Fijians] used to do with the leaves, so any occasion they used to invite them in and they would sit together and drink this Grok together (LC-2).

and the introduction of course to welcome them. [...] this is something that talks about Lebanon, like how they live, the traffic jams, that they don't respect the rules [...] basically they should know how to avoid accidents, that is one main important thing in this awareness. Then we talk about the food, the habits, [...] Yes, basically it's in general. Bits and pieces, you explain about the areas they shouldn't go to [...] always follow the security advisories that they send us all the time. You aware them that they shouldn't use anything about Israel, like the sign, or the Star of David, or some writings, it's really dangerous. [...] we tell them that Lebanese people exaggerate when they speak" (LS-3). Bove and Ruggeri (2019) note the significant gaps that exist in the cultural training UN peacekeepers receive prior to and in the early days of deployment. They liken this training to what Rubinstein, Keller and Scherger (2008, p. 545) call "travelers advice," which relies on stereotypes and is insufficient to encourage substantive interaction or trust-building. Similarly, Huda (2012) questions the effectiveness of cultural awareness trainings provided to military actors deployed in the Afghan context. He notes that there is debate amongst scholars and policy analysts about whether "mid-deployment" trainings should be instituted in order to encourage knowledge retention over time and in high stress situations (p. 3).

Akin to conversational intercultural exchange, sharing cultural experiences constitutes a means through which individuals present their identities to others and contribute to their knowledge development through experiential encounter.¹²⁶ Relatedly, Swidler (1986) links language and language use to cultural identity, which is a sentiment expressed by several Lebanese participants who learned UNIFIL languages in order to facilitate their interactions or business interests.

Yea, for me, learning a new language is like meeting a new culture, and meeting with a new culture is like knowing the country by itself. When I started learning Italian, went to Italy, then I met Italian people, I felt that this is a new culture and a new life for me. It is the same here, if you go and work with many communities, like Irish, French, you learn their traditions, you learn how they think, how they do, how they work... so it's a kind of interacting cultures (LC-19).

Through learning another language, one can come to understand the values, attitudes, and communication styles of other cultures, contributing to one's knowledge development and understanding. Pragmatically, learning another language facilitates communication and conversation, thereby enabling substantive interactions and "thicker," more meaningful engagement with others.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ The presence of UNIFIL in south Lebanon also generates some opportunities for cultural exchange through travel. Some contingents run travel programs for local elites, such as municipality leaders and civil society partners. Others (such as the French) do competitions in local schools that have a travel-related prize component. "Also I had the chance to go and visit South Korea. They chose 15 people from the community here, and I was one of them. In 2015 I went to South Korea for 10 days, just to see the country and discover the culture" (CS-18). In one case, an Irish UNIFIL veterans group invited a Lebanese woman, who had become infamous in the contingent for owning and working at a shop near the base and learning to speak English with a heavy Irish accent, to visit Ireland and reunite with some of her former UNIFIL friends. These travel experiences constitute concrete examples of the types of cultural experiences that are exchanged between UNIFIL and Lebanese people as they meet and interact.

¹²⁷ Language was noted as a barrier to substantive interactions by 29 of 82 participants. "I think sometimes people who would only speak Arabic, and then you would be speaking with your hands, just making signs, or pointing to something, and putting a smile on" (AL-13). Notably, language is less of a barrier today than it was in the pre-2000 period as Lebanon, particularly in urban centres, is functionally trilingual. Owing to its colonial history, many Lebanese people learned French in school and it remains widely used (Fisk, 2002). English-language capabilities are also high, as a result of media exposure, emigration, a large international development and peacebuilding sector, globalization and international trade and business relations. However, many of these multi-lingual drivers are restricted to urban spaces. Language barriers are more frequent and significant in rural villages, which impedes interactions and relationship-building. Despite this trilingualism, language barriers still exist at disproportionate levels depending on the contingent present in a given area. Certain contingents have less English capabilities than others, which reduces their options for direct communication.

Substantive interactions, often occurring within people's homes or businesses following an invitation to sit and dine, or enjoy a coffee or tea together, frequently amount to intercultural exchanges and knowledge formation opportunities. Through the interactions and rituals that surround hospitality in Lebanon, 'thick,' rooted identities are enacted and relationally conveyed in these informal, private, Lebanese spaces. Through discussions about UNIFIL, politics, the conflict, personal matters, and culture, meaningful, lasting, and impactful relationships are built. The enduring quality of many of these relationships was noted by participants (mentioned by 27 interviewees), who referenced keeping in touch with their friends through social media and telephone calls, reconnecting with contacts on second and third tours with UNIFIL, or traveling to visit friends long after a deployment had ended.

So when I was back in 2010, he had retired but was still there and we met him for a couple of cups of *shaaee* [tea] and his wife put out great *mezze* [small plates], as they do. So yeah it was great that he was still there and still remembered us from 10/12 years ago (AL-14).

I, like many soldiers, formed some relations with locals. Some stayed in touch a few years and one of them even came to visit me during a trip to France. As time passed, I did not keep any relationship (AL-20).

Through interactions, some individuals become a lasting part of one another's social networks,¹²⁸ which is indicative of the substance of relationships built through interactions in Lebanon. Such

¹²⁸ In some cases, close relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese people have resulted in marriages (noted by 30 participants), which, while controversial (see the extensive literature on sexual misconduct perpetrated by UN peacekeepers, such as Kanetake, 2010; Simić, 2016), are presented by UNIFIL and Lebanese participants in this study as indicative of the enduring, meaningful and substantive nature of the connection between these groups. Though such relationships would have always been forbidden or illicit according to UNIFIL protocol and regulations, in the early days of the deployment, the relative lack of oversight and the remote positioning of several contingents enabled a degree of flexibility, socialization and integration that would not have been officially permissible. Despite more oversight and regulations post-2006, there are still stories and anecdotes of UNIFIL personnel and Lebanese people who meet during a deployment and later get married. "You know many people get married with the Lebanese. I know more than 15 or 20 girls who got married with Italians, or Spanish or French, and they are now living abroad with their kids, with their families. It's really... it's something... it's good! It's enriching for the country *ya3nee* [you know] – cross-cultural" (LS-3). Such lasting connections reflect the substance of the relationships that are built between some UNIFIL and Lebanese people, as well as the way in which connections can become a lasting part of people's identities.

stories demonstrate that connections across the UNIFIL-Lebanese social and physical divide become a part of some people's identities, which is sustained over time and across distance through ongoing and repeat interaction.

As noted in Chapter 4, many of the interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people are superficial, fleeting encounters that consist of polite greetings and small talk in commercial, event-based and service-based interfaces. These conversations and interactions are superficial because the identities enacted through them are 'thin' and performative. In some instances, however, such superficial encounters can constitute relational platforms from which invitations are extended to enter hybridized relational spaces, in which agency is redistributed by relocating and recontextualizing the interaction. In these spaces, produced through Lebanese hospitality, substantive connections and relationships develop through conversation and action, rooted in 'thick' presentations of identity. This section discussed the content of those conversations and provided empirical evidence for the 'thickness' of the identities presented in hybridized relational spaces.

5. 2 What do interactions mean to the individuals involved?

In contrast to the superficial encounters that occur through interfaces, the identities enacted in hybridized spaces are culturally and politically rooted. In translocating interactions from performative, curated, international spaces, into situated, personal and local spaces, Lebanese people co-opt interfaces, transform their content, and temporarily equalize or invert power relations. While conversations in interfaces are typically described as "small talk" or "chit chat," conversations in interchanges are personal, political and cultural. In translocating and transforming encounters into connections and relationships, through gestures of hospitality,

Lebanese people create a context for impactful exchange, generating social processes of mutual knowledge formation and identity evolution that effect both UNIFIL and themselves. In sharing perspectives, experiences, opinions and knowledges through interactions, pieces of the ‘other’ are taken up into oneself and internalized. This adoption and internalization of another person’s knowledges and experiences amounts to a process of hybridization. Through these cross-cultural interactions hybridized people are produced. In this section, I discuss the impact of interactions on both Lebanese people and UNIFIL personnel, tracing the ways in which identities and knowledges evolve and become hybridized as a result of relationships.

5. 2. 1 Impacts on Lebanese people

UNIFIL, a force of over 10,000 military troops working alongside hundreds of civilian employees, has a variety of impacts on Lebanese people. These can be summarized by four main categories: economic and employment impacts, aid and development impacts, security impacts and social impacts.¹²⁹ The first three in this list will not be discussed in detail here, as they are related more generally to UNIFIL’s presence and operations in south Lebanon. The final category in this list will be explored in this section, as it is related directly to UNIFIL’s interactions and relationships with individuals in south Lebanon.

¹²⁹ There is an extensive literature on the impacts of UN peacekeeping missions, from multiple theoretical and methodological perspectives. For example, Diehl, 2008; Alger, 1998; Paris, 2004; Caruso et al., 2017; Bellamy et al., 2010; Bove & Ruggeri, 2019; among many others. This project focuses on the positive impacts that emerge from relationships and connections, however in interviews, I did inquire about negative impacts and received very little evidence of adverse effects. In only one interview was the topic of civilian abuse or peacekeeper misconduct raised (while marriages and flirtations were regularly discussed by Lebanese people, it was only in positive terms, and not as indications of protocol violations, which they were, or abuse). In my conversation with Timur Göksel, he discussed what UNIFIL would and could do about “bad apples” during his tenure with the organization (1979-2003) – “in UNIFIL we have so limited sanctions against people [...] nobody wants to offend the countries, this is the whole thing” (AL-1). Beyond threatening to embarrass contingents, or sending bad actors home, the necessity to maintain international support and troop commitments for the operation results in quiet and tactful maneuvering. Failure to be either transparent or effective in the timely removal of “bad apples” from the UN mission can undermine relationships with the Lebanese people, eroding trust, creating feelings of betrayal or animosity, and further victimizing a population that lives in a state of constant precarity and instability (Whitworth, 2004).

Prior to discussing social impacts, however, I will briefly introduce the other three categories as these are significant for many people in the south and connect to several of the motivations individuals have to seek out interactions, as discussed in Chapter 4. Economic and employment impacts refer to the money that UNIFIL brings into south Lebanon, whether through jobs, contracts, product sourcing, rents, retail or dining. Such impacts were the most frequently mentioned by participants and constitute a highly-valued and appreciated aspect of UNIFIL's contributions to south Lebanon (58 of 82 participants, 19 UNIFIL, 39 Lebanese). Aid and development impacts are related to this first category, but refer explicitly to spending on quick impact projects, as well as the services UNIFIL provides to communities, such as healthcare, veterinary, and school programs. Many participants (46 total, 10 UNIFIL, 36 Lebanese) conveyed their appreciation for such work and the significance of these projects for communities in south Lebanon.¹³⁰ Security impacts refers to the stabilization and monitoring activities of UNIFIL, as well as UNIFIL's presence as witnesses and deterrents to Israeli aggression (discussed further in Chapter 6), which despite limitations, generates a heightened sense of safety and security amongst Lebanese people (noted by 53 participants, 20 UNIFIL, 33 Lebanese).

The main focus of this section is on the social impacts that arise from interactions and connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. As has been noted elsewhere in this dissertation, Lebanese culture is prominently social, which fosters a love for meeting new people and learning about other cultures.

¹³⁰ Mamiya (2018) notes the success UN peace operations have had in many contexts with coordinating funding for programs in order to offer "tangible, short term support to communities" in line with broader mission goals (p. 17). This points to an intentional use of quick impact project funding as an adaptable incentivization tool in relations between the mission and host communities. Mamiya argues that such "opportunistic peacemaking" is an important part of operational success and constitutes "small victories that improve situations for civilians even if they do not end the larger war" (p. 18-19). Schia and Karlsrud (2013) make a similar point regarding budget manipulation and strategic "bending of the rules" by Civil Affairs Officers in UN peace operations (p. 243).

But the connection with UNIFIL was special because we Lebanese, especially them here [in the south], they love this kind of exposure, and getting introduced to new cultures and having connections with foreigners (CS-13).

So the thing is that it's kind of an exposure. I had to meet some people from foreign places. So the impact is that I get with time to know how to deal with foreigners and with different cultures (CS-20).

Several Lebanese participants use the term “exposure” to describe the impact they experience from their interactions and relationships with UNIFIL. This word is used to encapsulate a learning and knowledge formation opportunity that is culturally-rooted, wherein through connections, Lebanese people can experience and understand other cultures, from the comfort of their own homes and communities.

Particularly in the early years of deployment, prior to the Internet and instantaneous news and information access, the introduction of thousands of foreigners into south Lebanon was a radical and rapid exposure to multiple new cultures.

Well if we go back to 1981, the world was a much, much bigger place compared to what it is now. For example, if something happens in the Far East, it will be flashed up on the news, if something happens in Argentina or Mongolia, it will be flashed up on the internet. But in 1981, the world was vast, it was huge, and nobody knew nothing much that was going on in, for example, Lebanon. Any farther than 5 miles would have been considered a long way away. So I like to think that we brought something to the table, that we'll be remembered for being good people (AL-9).

UNIFIL brought with it news and information from the world, generating ample learning and exposure opportunities for Lebanese individuals in the south. Today, there is still an exposure benefit for Lebanese people, particularly in rural villages, who may not experience the tourism, foreign workers, or aid industry that urban parts of Lebanon witness.¹³¹

¹³¹ An urban-rural differential was mentioned by 6 Lebanese and 6 UNIFIL participants. For example: “I think there was an obvious difference between ‘real’ locals and locals with family or connection in Beirut” (AL-22). This differentiation between urban and rural Lebanese people is linked to social liberalism, education, openness and exposure to other cultures, as well as language capabilities, all of which are positively associated with interactions and connections by both Lebanese and UNIFIL participants. In villages where these attributes are lacking, the presence of UNIFIL is seen to provide valuable exposure opportunities.

So definitely, because here the people where the UNIFIL are present, the people are more of the village people, so they don't have a big exposure. So having the UNIFIL around them, and this kind of connection, will make them feel comfortable about having foreigners in the area (CS-14).

For individuals with fewer opportunities to interact with foreigners, UNIFIL can constitute a valuable exposure opportunity from within their own communities. This exposure can drive knowledge development and identity evolution by providing the foundation for greater openness and cultural understanding.

Several participants make a direct link between interactions with UNIFIL, exposure to new cultures, and increased openness within Lebanese culture, making explicit a pathway through which interactions can lead to identity change, as posited by cultural peacebuilding theory.

[S]outh Lebanon has become far more open than before, to anybody. Like, there is nothing like political conflict, or religious conflict, we don't have that type. So we can interact with whomever. [...] You know Sour [also called Tyre] was horrible before, I'm sure you know that, with the community interaction, it was horrible! Now you see that it's one of the touristic destinations, the good part, everything is allowed. There weren't clubs, but now you can see pubs, clubs... and this is because of the integration of the UN, otherwise they would be still backward. Saida is not like that, there is no interaction with people who are from outside – very rare. Those who are living in Saida, if they wanted to interact with people, they would go outside [of their city]. But because of the politics as well, a lot of people there are too much conservative. Totally different. A lot of Lebanese, Beirut people and others, would come to Sour, they would skip Saida. This is because of the communication that happened between the Lebanese local people and the people from the UN [...] you know when you integrate, and have a real integration with a lot of people from different areas around the world, you become very friendly. But in fact Lebanon, with their horrible politics and religions, they could even fight each other for nothing. So if they [UNIFIL] went out [of Lebanon], there would be less integration with people around the world... I mean, within the community, let's say Sour, no UN here, people would start to... not go backward... but there would be a shrink of this type (LC-11).

This participant articulates the impact of interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people clearly. Through interactions with UNIFIL, people in the south have been exposed to a variety of

different cultures and lifestyles. They have learned about these cultures and experienced them relationally, first-hand, in the course of their daily social lives. The result of this experiential knowledge development has been an evolution of their identities toward greater openness to otherness. The relational demands of a multicultural peacekeeping society have been taken up and internalized by individuals in south Lebanon, rendering them knowledgeable in how to navigate cultural difference, and identifiable as open to otherness. These impacts constitute hybridization. This participant further links the accumulation of individuals with this cultural understanding and openness, to changing the collective character and identity of south Lebanon as a region, contributing to more peaceful relations between peoples in south Lebanon (these collective impacts will be discussed further in Chapter 6), as exemplified by the increased willingness of northern Lebanese people to visit the south.¹³² Without exposure to UNIFIL, she argues that south Lebanon would still be socially conservative and were UNIFIL to withdraw, it may revert to a previous status of more rigid identity constructs and animosity toward others (Northrup, 1989; Wang, 2014).

Repeat, substantive interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people can foster identity hybridization, wherein Lebanese individuals come to adopt or incorporate aspects of their relationships with UNIFIL personnel or contingents into their own identities.¹³³ There is an infamous example of such an occurrence in relation to the Irish UNIFIL contingent.

¹³² For children especially, the exposure gained from interactions with UNIFIL is seen to generate positive development, understanding of their own country and communities, and openness to new cultures. “Look, our children are so so lucky with them, so happy with them, they have a good time with them, they development them, they develop their minds. This builds the relation between them and their parents so that they trust them” (CS-3). Through the events and programming UNIFIL does with schools, and despite the fleeting, superficial quality of such interfaces, children gain exposure to different cultures and learn how to interact with and understand people from different backgrounds.

¹³³ For some Lebanese people, exposure to UNIFIL contingents not only hybridized their identities but also inspired migration. Having learned about the culture of a particular UNIFIL contingent, several Lebanese people pursued migration to those UNIFIL countries, setting up new lives on a foundation of familiarity and understanding. “I mentioned earlier where we stopped for tea every morning for months, and there was a kid in that house who now

Imagine you were a child, only 8 years of age, you grow up all along all with the Irish. You get used to them more than you get used to Lebanese people, your own local peoples, you understand? (LC-22).

And it is a bit of a culture shock when you hear her saying cockney like that. But then you fall into the flow. As an Irish guy, I felt I was visiting Galway listening to her. But as I said, they[local people] were all amazing (AL-15).

In learning English from Irish people, amongst whom she lived since childhood helping her father in his shop near the Irish UNIFIL base and eventually running the shop herself, this individual adopted a hybridized identity – she came to sound like Irish people, use their turns of phrase, adopt their humour and learn their style of communication. This ability to communicate like Irish UNIFIL made her infamous among the contingent and became a core part of her own identity. Lebanese individuals who have embraced and cultivated hybridized identities through their interactions and engagement with UNIFIL, have often emerged as interlocutors, bridging UNIFIL and Lebanese communities, enacting grassroots leadership (Lederach, 1997) in strengthening social bonds and disrupting antagonism in south Lebanon (Wang, 2014) (discussed further below).

5. 2. 2 Impacts on UNIFIL personnel

A tour, or multiple tours, in Lebanon results in a variety of impacts for UNIFIL personnel. These can be summarized by three main categories: personal and career impacts, safety and comfort impacts, and knowledge development and opinion change impacts. In contrast to the previous section, two of these three categories emerge specifically from the interactions of UNIFIL with Lebanese communities. The first, personal or career impacts, emerges from the general experience of deployment, which I will discuss briefly.

lives in Ireland. [...] this chap actually moved out there, because he got on so well with the Irish guys. And he's not the only one I know" (AL-15). Such stories are indicative of the significant impact interactions can have on the lives of local people.

For many personnel, deployment with UNIFIL benefits their career prospects, contributing to building their resumes, developing skills, and in some cases, influencing the direction of their future employment. Several participants discuss UNIFIL as a foundational experience that inspired them toward careers in international development, security, governance, or humanitarian action,¹³⁴ and helped them develop their skills for working in multicultural environments.

I can say from my whole time in Lebanon, which was two times for six months, that ended up positively for the rest of my career, and the rest of my life. For me, it turned a direct line to my life, I think for lots of people (AL-21).

Personnel felt they had matured significantly while deployed with UNIFIL, improving their self-awareness and gaining new perspectives on their lives and the lives of people in other parts of the world, such as Lebanon. Several acknowledged their privilege as a result of deploying with UNIFIL. These personal and career impacts, which emerge from the general experience of UNIFIL deployment, influenced the lives of personnel upon return to their home countries.

Emerging specifically from interactions and relationships with Lebanese people, peacekeeper's perceptions of safety and comfort while deployed in Lebanon are positively impacted. Connecting with local people fosters feelings of welcome and acceptance, which help to assuage perceptions of threat and risk. When military actors feel threatened or insecure, bunkerization and securitization practices become prominent, which impede positive interactions and connections with the local community (Autesserre, 2014b; Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013; Eckhard, 2019). In a mutually reinforcing process, interactions foster feelings of safety, while feelings of safety generate a context conducive to positive interactions.

Right, otherwise I think the locals in general were friendly and it was quite nice to feel like you could... you could kind of put down your guard at times, you know,

¹³⁴ For a discussion of how international development volunteering leads individuals toward careers in humanitarian action, see Tiessen, Cassin & Lough (2021).

when you were in and people were just talking and going about their normal day you know? [...] Yeah. Ali, the local one with the restaurant, he invited us to his house, me and I think we were like five of us or something, and he invited us to have a barbecue and a coffee, and that was nice. It was just like being on holidays. So I... you know, like if you go to a different country just to meet the locals, you know, the war and conflict and everything was just like it was nonexistent at the time. Of course we still had our uniforms on but, that's it (AL-11).

Yes yes. I have many friends who say that the best mission that they can come to is Lebanon. And they pray to come to Lebanon, not to go to other places like Afghanistan, Libya, [or] Sudan. 'In Lebanon we feel at home, we feel that we are with our families, and we don't feel the danger, we feel we are in peace here'. Many many friends told me that, and even many Italians connect with others and spread that message – this is a good impact (LC-19).

Social acceptance through friendly and positive interactions generates feelings of safety and comfort, which in turn enable other connections and interactions to be built. Sentiments of “feeling at home” or “feeling like they are on holiday” evoke a sense of ease and enjoyment in the company of Lebanese friends. Such experiences are generated through substantive relationships enacted in hybridized spaces, where both UNIFIL and Lebanese people can achieve a sense of belonging and acceptance.

This sense of belonging is most clearly articulated through UNIFIL veteran's expressions of attachment to Lebanon. This belonging is the root of a series of knowledge development and opinion change impacts that arise from interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. Several UNIFIL participants referred to this as “enrichment,” wherein through interactions, they gain exposure to Lebanese culture, which fosters knowledge development and cultivates feelings of attachment to and affection for Lebanon. This attachment and affection drives opinion change and identity evolution amongst veterans, as they internalize the knowledges, experiences, opinions and perspectives they hear from Lebanese people, and develop a sense of solidarity with Lebanon – this becomes a part of their identities. Through this pathway, UNIFIL identities become hybridized as a result of their interactions with Lebanese people.

The UNIFIL veterans with whom I spoke describe Lebanon in romantic terms, as a country that starkly contrasts with their home nations, with a culture that enters their blood like a “poison” (AL-3), to which they become “hooked” (AL-10) during their deployments. Many veterans describe Lebanon as a “second home” (AL-23) and a “place that leaves a map on you” (AL-15).

[I]t hit my heart in a way, which I find a little bit difficult to pronounce properly. But... but... but there was something very, very ...appealing with the whole thing and... but again I know, I realize that sounds so romantic, which I hate, because I mean there's something very, very enriching about this experience and this culture (AL-10).

But believe me, if I asked 100 former peacekeeping soldiers, at least here in Sweden, ‘what made you go back again?’, and they [would] say, ‘it’s like a poison, once you get it in your blood, you cannot get rid of it’. And the people who are answering that way, are also the people who are talking warmly about the Lebanese people (AL-3).

Such experiences of Lebanon drive peacekeepers to return for multiple tours, and in some cases to return as tourists or on UNIFIL reunion visits.¹³⁵ For many UNIFIL, the average 6 month deployments are not enough time to experience Lebanon and Lebanese culture – “the time it was... it was way too short” (AL-21) – and they are sad to leave when the time comes.

They like Lebanon a lot and they wish to come again and again. Sometimes they tell us that they want to apply to come to Lebanon, or we want to come on vacation. And many of them do, they come again, and even sometimes they come with their families on holiday, and they come to visit us also. And ah... they are really nice people (LC-9).

I feel that we have a good impact on them, because it happened once that when a visitor here, a commander, was like the time we come here, it is like a blink of an eye and then we are leaving. They are always so sad when they are leaving. Another time it happened, I was attending an event, and they were saying the goodbye speech, and he was about to cry. He said like, ‘I feel like I am southern

¹³⁵ Several UNIFIL veteran associations arrange periodical reunion visits to Lebanon, some for memorial days, such as the Norwegians in Ebl el Saqi, others for fact finding missions, such as the Irish who continue to investigate missing soldiers, and some to visit old friends and allow veterans to see the progress and development Lebanon has undergone since their deployment (UNIFIL, 31 May 2018; UNIFIL, 31 July 2015).

Lebanese, I belong to here, I am a Phoenician.’ Just to express how he got attached to this area (CS-17).

Several veterans used language that indicates the embeddedness of Lebanon and Lebanese culture into their own identities. Comments about feeling at ‘home’ in Lebanon, or language like “our own area” (AL-16), “claims” Lebanon as a part of their identity.

Immersive exposure to a new culture constitutes an “enriching” (AL-15) learning opportunity for many UNIFIL personnel. Through substantive interactions, UNIFIL are able to socially and physically travel outside of the fortified walls and the restrictive protocols of the mission to experience culture first hand and develop their knowledge and understanding of Lebanon and the conflict.

The Dutch men got a lot out of this situation. You don’t get a lot of opportunities to go to a complete different country and culture and spend six months learning about it. Holland is a cold, flat and liberal country, Lebanon is a hot, mountainous and conservative country, what a ‘class room’! The eagerness to learn from each other was another factor that brought us together (AL-19).

This prolonged exposure to otherness enables UNIFIL personnel to disrupt their own stereotypes and presumptions of Lebanon and Lebanese culture, and revise and construct their knowledge through lived experiences and relationships. Several people specifically referred to the understanding they developed from living and working in a Muslim-majority context,¹³⁶ such as south Lebanon.

¹³⁶ Huda (2012) observes a knowledge gap regarding Islam and Muslim culture in the U.S. military and government, which he argues underpinned the desecration of the Quran in February 2012 at Bagram Air Base and the killing of 16 Afghan civilians by a U.S. sergeant in Kandahar in 2012. Though extreme examples of what can result from lack of cultural knowledge and understanding, similar stories emerge in the Lebanese context as well, such as one anecdote from the late 1970s, when Irish UNIFIL soldiers played rock music from the speakers of a mosque, which are normally used for the call to prayer. Religiously-based cultural insensitivities can be harmful to relations with local people and to local support for and trust in an intervention (Chapter 6 explores the link between knowledge and local support further). More commonly, the lack of knowledge and understanding manifests in the form of prejudice, reflected in comments such as, “I had this curiosity to see how they live, to see their culture, especially to see how the men treats the women, their rights between, and how it works between men and women. Because you hear so much about the women in these parts of the world, that they don’t have any rights and they are treated like dogs and things like that” (AL-3). Prejudice toward Islam and Muslim culture was most commonly expressed in reference to

Yeah. Uh well for me personally, I've encountered a totally other... uh... people, other social... other society, another culture, the Muslim community and uh... in the Netherlands we have talks about refugees etc., and my wife's helping Syrian refugees in language, in getting the Dutch language etc. And I'm asked to be a veteran at school, and I can tell them about other cultures, and we have Moroccans and Turkish and you know other people, other students in the classes and there are tensions in some schools. So once in a while, I'm asked for a presentation about other cultures, etc. with a connection to my own deployment in UNIFIL, and I think it's a big enrichment (AL-16).

In general I can say that it made me more tolerant to other people and cultures. People are the same everywhere, you have bad people and you have good people. I don't judge on color, religion, nationality or whatsoever, I judge on behaviour. I think that's one of the benefits of my UNIFIL time and the interaction with the people there (AL-22).

Having lived and worked in Lebanon and relationally developed their knowledge of Islam and Muslim culture, personnel find themselves more open to and accepting of diversity in their home lives. Exposure to Lebanese culture made them more understanding of different lifestyles, traditions and values. Comments such as these are indicative of the enduring, internalized, effects that interactions and intercultural exchange have on the identities of personnel.

Cultural exposure through UNIFIL deployment generates two key categories of opinion change among personnel: cultural and political. Several participants describe the pleasant surprise soldiers have upon discovering how different Lebanese culture is from their expectations and the popular conception of Lebanon cultivated in western media.

[T]here is this big difference from what they think of Lebanon before coming here, they expect something like Iraq or Afghanistan, and then they come here and they get surprised that here it is like Italy, and even more beautiful sometimes. So they always comment... I had one time at my house visitors from the Italian army, and they were like telling me that when they were told they were coming to Lebanon, they got depressed, but they were super surprised, especially with what media shows about Lebanon and what Israel does to show a bad image of Lebanon, and what is the reality (CS-17).

gender relations. These perspectives point to a pre-existing skepticism or prejudice toward Islam held by some UNIFIL personnel.

Through interactions with Lebanese people in the hybridized spaces produced through hospitality, UNIFIL personnel come to understand the openness, friendliness and sociability of Lebanese culture, in contrast to their expectations of backwardness, oppressiveness and restrictive socialization. This opinion change is evidence of knowledge development. For many Lebanese people, this is an explicit goal of hospitality – to show foreigners that Lebanon is not what they may expect. As such, hospitality and intercultural exchange through relationships is a form of agency through which Lebanese people direct a co-evolution of the opinions, understandings and identities of UNIFIL personnel.

In addition to cultural opinion change, many UNIFIL veterans describe changes to their political opinions on Israel,¹³⁷ Lebanon and the conflict, as a result of their experiences while deployed in south Lebanon and their interactions with Lebanese people.

Well, if it's more down on a personal level, the impact of my time in Lebanon has been educational I think, because my view on the Muslim world and on Israel were different than they are now. Before I went to Lebanon, I was kind of like, pro-Israel, because they're our allies in the West, you know? But you know, after being there and meeting the local Lebanese population and seeing what the wars and the conflicts have done to the local area, I'm more neutral and apprehensive about supporting Israel, because I can see it from the locals point of view. You know? And most of the locals just don't want a conflict, you know, they just want to be left alone. So that's the personal impact it's had on me, is like... yeah educational (AL-11).

Well it's hard not to be, as a UN peacekeeping soldier, you have to be neutral, you cannot take the side for Israel, or for the Palestinians or for the Lebanese. But

¹³⁷ “Also the Norwegians, who are big on these social science surveys, used to have their soldiers fill out questionnaires before they arrived in the south. Coming in, it seems that their views about Israel were about 80 percent positive, but after six months it was down to 15 or 16 percent. I think this was pretty typical” (Göksel, 2007, p. 62). My research supports the findings of Vanessa Newby (2017), who argues that Lebanese people discern between troop contributing countries within UNIFIL based on their national political orientation toward both Israel and Hezbollah (Newby, 2017). In a complex, politically entrenched conflict, Lebanese acceptance of UNIFIL is political. “Don’t forget, politics sometimes plays a big role, a big role with your opinion about the contingent” (CS-18). “In general, it doesn’t matter, unless it’s in one case – and this depends on the relationship of the country they come from with Israel. If they are on good terms with Israel and they are close countries, that will definitely effect here, they will not be very welcomed here as any other country” (MM-6). Quotations such as these demonstrate the ways in which a national politics, which inform the political opinions of peacekeepers, impact Lebanese public opinion on UNIFIL and UNIFIL’s relational capacity.

when you live with people like that, it's very hard not to choose sides, more or less. I understand, as a human being I have more sympathy [for those] who are under aggression than the aggressors of course (AL-3).

Through conversations with Lebanese people, the conflict is made personal and human for UNIFIL personnel. Lebanese people have agential power in hybridized spaces to construct narratives and stories about their experiences – to make their case and “convince” UNIFIL individuals of where their solidarity and sympathy should lie.¹³⁸

This is something important, because in the beginning time when they came here, they thought that we are terrorists, we are bad people. But later on, when they communicated with us, the villagers and the people here, they said that the people in southern villages are very very very nice people, they are very generous, they invite us to their homes, so they aren't as we see on CNN [Cable News Network], they aren't as we hear. [...] many of my friends they told me that we thought that you are terrorists, and Hezbollah are terrorists, but no... you are good people, you are defending your country, and it is your right to defend your country. And I had many conversations, and many debates with many of them, and I could convince them, or they said they were convinced, maybe they aren't, but I did my best to convince them about my experience of the war. I watched 6 wars in my life (LC-19).

This quotation reveals the intentionality, and thereby the agency, that Lebanese people exercise in the course of their interactions, utilizing their knowledge and experiences to elicit opinion change among their relations.

This opinion change is not only with respect to opinions on Israel, but also regarding the nature of Hezbollah¹³⁹ and its role and meaning in the context of south Lebanon. Through experiences and interactions while deployed, the pro-Israeli Western/Northern media bias on

¹³⁸ Da Costa and Karlsrud (2013) discuss the challenges peacekeepers face with maintaining impartiality in the course of their daily practice. They observe this tension in relation to their operational function to support state governance structures – peacekeepers “have to constantly assess and rebalance the relationship between the need to be seen as an impartial actor, and support the establishment of state governance presences on the country level, thus redefining what impartiality actually means in practice” (p. 302). I argue that this tension and negotiation of impartiality is also carried out in the course of their social functions and practices in conflict-affected areas, through their interactions with local individuals.

¹³⁹ Castellejo (2016) argues that international actors in conflict affected areas need to understand and learn to engage with political parties, such as Hezbollah, as they can constitute both conflict drivers and promoters of peace. Internationals typically lack understanding of political processes or power structures, and as such, their engagement with political parties typically relies on blueprints which neglect context.

which many UNIFIL soldiers have based their political understandings and opinions is complicated and contradicted. Personnel develop a deep respect for Lebanese people and their resilience in the face of precarity and pressure, both from Israel, as well as from neighbouring countries and refugee flows.

Over my four tours with UNIFIL there were both positive and negative aspects, and the fact that my first mission was in 1978 and my last mission with UNIFIL was in 1991/92 has meant I started out as a very young somewhat naïve soldier with very little knowledge of Middle East history or culture. And over the course of my later missions I became a lot wiser, and a more experienced soldier with a lot of knowledge, and experience, and with a huge amount of respect for the local population, who had to endure extreme disruption to their lives at times by way of invasion, occupation, shelling, shootings, kidnappings, air strikes, loss of family members, loss of land and property or had property destroyed, and all the other horrors that comes with living in a conflict zone (AL-17).

Through interactions Lebanese people are able to garner solidarity for their experience of the conflict, winning support by cultivating understanding and conveying knowledge. Doing so amounts to their active participation in a collaborative, relational process of knowledge hybridization and identity evolution. Through intercultural exchange and the sharing of their experiences and understandings, Lebanese people participate in the adaptation, reorientation and reconstruction of the cultural and political opinions of UNIFIL personnel. These changes are subsequently internalized by peacekeepers to become a part of their own knowledges and identities.

In the hybridized spaces produced through Lebanese hospitality, substantive interactions occur between UNIFIL personnel and Lebanese people. Through the translocation of interactions from international, formal, and public spaces into local, informal and private spaces, Lebanese people agentially co-opt and redefine the content of interactions, creating a social context in which ‘thick’ representations and enactments of cultural and political identities can occur. These

interactions impact the knowledge and identities of the individuals involved. For Lebanese people, interactions constitute cultural “exposure” opportunities which have fostered more openness and acceptance of otherness in southern communities. For UNIFIL, interactions contribute to feelings of comfort and safety, and constitute cultural “enrichment” opportunities which drive opinion change and feelings of solidarity with Lebanon. The impacts discussed in this section are anecdotal examples of the co-construction and co-evolution of knowledge and identities that occurs through interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. The individuals who convey these transformative narratives have each been hybridized in unique ways through their relationships across social and physical divides. For some, this individual hybridization has wide reaching impacts, as it directs their social actions in such a way that they emerge as interlocutors, functioning as bridging social agents between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities.

5. 3 Hybridized People – Interlocutors

Hybridity theory contends that all places and individuals are to some extent hybrid, as a result of globalization and the flow of information and peoples around the world (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012). Binaries such as “international” and “local” are increasingly irrelevant as all communities are infused with complex, intersecting, interweaving influences from various international and local forces (Hunt, 2018; Beck & Sznaider, 2010).¹⁴⁰ While many of the individuals discussed in this study, both Lebanese and UNIFIL, already possess such hybrid identities, empirical evidence from this research suggests that through interactions and relationships, hybrid identities are also constructed and developed. In a dynamic interplay of pre-

¹⁴⁰ The dissolution of binaries is also a central concept in cosmopolitanism: “the dualities of the global and the local, the national and the international, us and them, have dissolved and merged together in new forms that require conceptual and empirical analysis” (Beck & Sznaider, 2010, p. 383).

existing hybridity and relational forces of hybridization, several “types” of interlocutors emerge that bridge the social and spatial divides between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. These hybridized people are culturally hybrid in so far as they participate in, understand, and have privileged access to both UNIFIL and Lebanese communities and cultures. They have developed knowledge and constructed identities as a result of and to enable such social mobility. They mediate the connections and interactions of others in their social networks, producing a trickle-out phenomenon that impacts other members of both communities.

Interlocutors are individuals with social capital,¹⁴¹ that is “connections” with other individuals, which implicate them in “social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000, p. 19; see also Fukuyama, 2001; Rizk, 2012). The principle underpinning social capital theory is that social networks make individuals more socially and civically productive.¹⁴² Social capital benefits both the individual and the collective (Coleman, 1988; Jackman & Miller, 1998), by instilling mutual obligations and norms of reciprocity, both specific (“I’ll do this for you if you do that for me”), and general (“I’ll do this for you [...] in the confident expectation that someone else will do something for me down the road”), which emerge through frequent and repeat interaction among individuals in the social network (Putnam, 2000, p. 20-21). Connections can be either formal, such as through membership in social organizations, associations and religious institutions, or informal, such as getting drinks or having coffee, socializing with neighbours, or having a book club (Putman, 2000). Both formal and informal connections characterize the social capital and identities

¹⁴¹ “Networks and the associated norms of reciprocity are generally good for those inside the network, but the external effects of social capital are by no means always positive” (Putnam, 2000, p. 21). Negative effects can include “sectarianism, ethnocentrism, [and] corruption” (Putnam, 2000, p. 22).

¹⁴² This aligns with Kabeer’s (2005) concept of horizontal citizenship, as discussed in Chapter 2.

(Kabeer, 2005)¹⁴³ of interlocutors, many of whom are formally connected to both UNIFIL and Lebanese communities by way of their occupations (municipalities, civil society organizations, UNIFIL local staff), while others exclusively have informal connections.

While a single individual may function in multiple “types” of interlocutor roles, this research identifies four distinct forms of interlocution, which in practice are often fluid, overlapping and interrelated.¹⁴⁴

5. 3. 1 Access Interlocutors

Certain UNIFIL and Lebanese people, by virtue of their social position, their connections, their occupation, or their language skills facilitate access between these two groups. The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) occupy such an interlocutor role, as UNIFIL are required to operate alongside the LAF for many of their tasks and activities in south Lebanon.

Like recently, after so much time working on this, they reached a point where the UNIFIL can enter the village, but just with the Lebanese Army and with previous permission, whenever they want to enter. Otherwise they are not allowed (CS-14).

The purposes of this arrangement are threefold. Firstly, UNIFIL’s mandate is to aid the Lebanese government in restoring authority throughout the south,¹⁴⁵ as stipulated in UN Security Council

¹⁴³ Kabeer’s concept of “horizontal citizenship” recognizes the citizen as “someone who belongs to different kinds of collective associations and defines their identity from participation activities associated with these different kinds of membership (2005, p. 21-22). Isin & Wood (1999) link identity to the exercise of agency (see also McGee, 2014).

¹⁴⁴ de Carvalho & Schia (2011) observe the role of interlocutors in navigating the “porous” boundaries between international bureaucracies and local politics in the context of statebuilding efforts undertaken in post-war Liberia. They observe that these interlocutors translate the requirement of international bureaucracies to local partners within Liberian ministries, and navigate the development of policies to adhere more to local perspectives. Though not explicitly articulated by de Carvalho & Schia, the capabilities of these interlocutors emerge from their privileged knowledge of both international and local processes and interests, and through their occupations, they come to possess hybridized identities. As such, de Carvalho & Schia’s interlocutors fit well into the analysis presented in this dissertation.

¹⁴⁵ Initially, “Lebanon more than any other party welcomed the deployment of UNIFIL, which in its view could serve as an international proxy making possible the reassertion of its authority and sovereignty in the south [...] UNIFIL’s role would be to check Israel and assist the government in ‘re-Lebanizing rather than institutionalizing the south’” (Makdisi, 2014, p. 28). As Newby (2017) notes, building up the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces is an essential component of UNIFIL’s exit strategy.

Resolutions 425, 426, and 1701 (UNSC, 19 March 1978; UNSC, 11 August 2006), which means restoring the state's monopoly on the use of force (Weber, 1919). Through joint operations with UNIFIL, LAF legitimacy, presence and operational capacity are all strengthened (Newby, 2017).¹⁴⁶ Secondly, UNIFIL benefits from the legitimacy and security the LAF provides to their operations and movement (Newby, 2017). In operating alongside the national, non-sectarian Lebanese military, their operations are seen to be legitimate and in the interests of Lebanon. Thirdly, the LAF functions as access interlocutors for UNIFIL, facilitating their connections and communications with municipality leaders, armed groups, and local communities. Their understanding of both UNIFIL and Lebanese communities enables them to mediate access between these groups. Their hybrid identities as both Lebanese civilians and military actors working in partnership with UNIFIL (and interacting frequently with their UNIFIL colleagues), enable them to function in this bridging role.

UNIFIL Civil Affairs officers similarly possess hybrid identities as both Lebanese civilians and employees of UNIFIL which lead them to function as access interlocutors. This role has been discussed elsewhere by Da Costa & Karlsrud (2013) and Schia & Karlsrud (2013). In the former, the authors describe how Civil Affairs officers “act backstage, searching for legitimate local and national actors such as church groups that can take the lead in negotiations” (p. 307). In the course of these efforts, they often engage in strategies, such as “bending the rules” and “maneuvering the system” so that important actors are included in peace efforts

¹⁴⁶ Newby (2017) argues that the security sector reform (SSR) work of UNIFIL with the Lebanese Armed Forces constitutes an example of positive, successful hybrid peacebuilding. She argues that critical to both SSR and peacebuilding is normative alignment between international and local actors on the meaning and objectives of those terms and associated activities. To achieve normative alignment, “time, flexibility and pragmatism” are required (Newby, 2017, p. 157). Time particularly, enables the development of local knowledge and contacts, which improve context awareness, collaboration and normative alignment.

despite certain institutional and bureaucratic barriers to their inclusion (p. 307; see also Boege, 2019).¹⁴⁷

We have different, several NGOs, that are interested to do something in the south but they don't have presence. They are centralized in Beirut, or in other areas. So they contact us, "we want to help". [...] For example, Lions Clubs, or Rotary Clubs, other organizations. They come to us, "we want to help". So we play the role of facilitator. And here we facilitate the thing, but we do not pay money. This organization is paying money for the local client, and we are the facilitator, but we take the credit as UNIFIL. You see? (CA-1).

In this example, the maneuvering has less to do with peace negotiations and more to do with earning and preserving local support for the operation. Nonetheless, the strategic action is a result of this Civil Affairs officer's knowledge and understanding of the local area, his social contacts, and his hybridized identity as both a UNIFIL employee and a local community member.

Da Costa and Karlsrud (2013) describe how peacekeepers "can creatively leverage their assets to build relationships," retain impartiality and "play a mediating role" (p. 308). These "assets" are hybridized knowledge and identities, which allow them access to and mobility between various social networks across the UNIFIL-Lebanese divide.

Frankly speaking, the majority of our QIPs prove to be useful. The majority, let me say, not to say all of them. But this is due to the mayors usually. Because you know, some of the mayors are living in Beirut, they do not live in the village. When you go to meet them, 'what do you want?' So he thinks about general issue. – 'I want a public park, a mini football field.' See? For example, in one of the meetings with a mayor, I was assessing the village. 'How many you have in the village?' – 'We have about 400 old people during the winter, and it goes up to 1500 during the summer, because they come from abroad, or Beirut etc, old and young.' So, but the majority of the year, you have only about 400 old people. Ok, 'what do you request from UNIFIL if we have to have a QIP here?' 'I want a mini football field.' So, can you imagine how stupid this request is? I told him, 'are you crazy? Who will play in this field?' Haha, you have 400 elderly people here, nobody can walk! (CA-1).

¹⁴⁷ Writing on peacebuilding in Bougainville, Boege observes of international peacebuilders that "a lot could be done under the radar. There was space to bend the rules—and personnel on the ground were willing to do so when they realised that this was what was needed for the mission's success" (Boege, 2019, p. 8).

Civil Affairs officers engage in negotiation practices, wherein their hybridized identities as both Lebanese and UNIFIL local staff enable them to engage in real-time negotiation, directing, adapting, convincing and compelling municipality leaders and civil society actors into positions and arrangements that suit and benefit both parties that they represent.

Municipalities also function as access interlocutors between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, civil society organizations,¹⁴⁸ non-governmental organizations¹⁴⁹ and community associations. Acting as the primary contact point between UNIFIL (particularly Civil Affairs officers) and local communities, municipalities are the gatekeepers for invitations to events, access to project funding, negotiations about operational activities and mediating challenges or conflicts.

One of the examples of what I did, is that I made sure, we here made sure, that what I explained about the garden is a bit formal, about the city and higher ups, but I make sure to do some kind of project that might be touching the people themselves. Some time ago, I invited the Italians, the UNIFIL, to visit some places where there is sort of residential poor places, to let them see what is going on, and made sure that they met up with the scouts of the area, which are kind of volunteers, and they have many hospitals that are not equipped at all. So they did these visits, and within their visits, they offered to equip these places. To each of these places, they paid around \$15,000, they offered equipment, and then later on,

¹⁴⁸ Civil society organizations can also function as interlocutors between UNIFIL and local communities, however this role was not raised by participants in this research. As per the discussion of service or project-based interfaces in Chapter 4, civil society organizations are a part of connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, however they are not considered access interlocutors as the interfaces they help produce are largely fleeting and superficial (they are made more substantial through individual initiative in the form of invitations and hospitality, not through the efforts of civil society organizations). They are also not considered informational interlocutors (see section 5. 3. 3 below), as when asked in interviews if they provided information to UNIFIL, most civil society participants claimed this is not a part of their role, but is handled by the municipality. In her work in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, van Houten (2018) discusses civil society organizations as mediators between external funders and local communities. She complicates this role however, by noting, like Shepherd (2015), that civil society organizations are not always as representative as international actors assume. They are often relative elites, isolated to the capital, and are also not apolitical.

¹⁴⁹ Though not directly relevant to the subject of this research (interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people), UNIFIL themselves act as interlocutors in several ways, some of which will be discussed in Chapter 6. One way in which UNIFIL act as interlocutors is in mediating the connection of international non-governmental organizations with Lebanese civil societies partners and community recipients. By virtue of their extensive network of municipality and civil society contacts in south Lebanon, UNIFIL can act as facilitators for organizations that lack such reach in the area.

after this event, there was a dinner, they were invited to the dinner of the area themselves, the people of the area were cooking the food themselves, and then they had to stay for the dinner and try the Lebanese food, but not the one that is common in the restaurants, but the one that is common in the houses [...] so this was special for them, that they even asked to have some for take-away, because it isn't something that is going to be done again (MM-6).

These quotations show the agency municipality leaders can exert by way of their occupation and social position or networks. They can impede, facilitate or direct access between UNIFIL and Lebanese people according to their own interests, goals, values, and political positions. This reality informs the uneven relationship between UNIFIL and certain villages. When relationships are poor between UNIFIL and municipal leaders, areas receive less project funding, as project funding is handled through municipalities. Relatedly, if relationships are strained, UNIFIL may be impeded in some of their operational activities, such as patrols and market walks, cutting them off from both their mandated functions and their social functions in south Lebanon. Municipalities, by virtue of superior procedural information, wide reaching social connections and experiential understanding built through repeat interaction, are able to mediate access between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals and associations.

As observed by Mamiya (2018)¹⁵⁰ and Gopin (2009), key individuals often function as gatekeepers for access to certain insular, isolated or secretive groups. In south Lebanon, particularly in the context of the early 1990s,¹⁵¹ Hezbollah was such a group. UNIFIL's initial contact with Hezbollah was negotiated through the efforts of one, hybridized UNIFIL international staff member, who by virtue of his long career in Lebanon and his Turkish

¹⁵⁰ Mamiya (2018) notes that engaging with non-state armed groups is often challenging with respect impartiality and operational mandates, and "risks conferring legitimacy" on such groups (p. 1). However it is essential to peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities as such groups are interlocutors for peace settlements and humanitarian protections. Such groups are often pragmatic and willing to engage with UN peacekeeping forces if credibility and relationships are built.

¹⁵¹ The early 1990s was a period of active war and Israeli occupation in Lebanon (Fisk, 2002). At the time, Hezbollah was actively engaged in terror attacks and aggression against foreign forces in Beirut and the south (Fisk, 2002).

nationality, understood “the way things work” in Lebanon and took the necessary risks to mediate a connection vital to the maintenance of safety and stability in south Lebanon.

I said, there must be another coffee shop in this village. So yea, let’s go. So we found another coffee shop, and there were these guys looking very strange. Definitely looked out of place, and I said, drive in there. So we go and they get very uncomfortable. So I said ‘ok, what you want [to the colleague I was travelling with]?’ A coffee. So we had our coffee – god I consume coffee so much! – anyway, and one of the better looking guys, he says ‘we know who you are from television. Why are you here?’ ‘What do you mean? I’m here to drink coffee?’ ‘No no, you are not here to drink coffee’... so I said ‘Call me your boss.’ He said, ‘We don’t have a boss.’ And I said, ‘No, you do.’ I’m just guessing, because I know the system. And low and behold, 10 minutes later a young Imam shows up, a young man speaking English, and he said ‘What can we do for you?’ And I said, ‘I just wanted to meet you guys. You are not from here are you?’ He said, ‘Some of us are. Most are from the Beqaa.’ So with this guy, this was the first UNIFIL contact with Hezbollah. I said, ‘Look,’ he said ‘Sir, we respect you, we see you on television, you are Turkish.’ I said, ‘we have to stop these fights between UNIFIL and your fighters’ (AL-1).

This connection was dependent on several points of knowledge and understanding, built over time, through engaging Lebanese communities in his work as a press officer: 1) that political parties and militia groups often have preferred coffee shops where they can be accessed; 2) that passive presence would evoke a response and open an opportunity for interaction and access; 3) that he would have some cultural and social capital as a result of his Turkish identity; and 4) that he had sufficient visibility to be known as a viable and powerful contact within UNIFIL. This UNIFIL civilian possessed a hybridized identity that enabled him to take initiative and mitigate risk in order to locate a contact, themselves an interlocutor, and create a bridge between UNIFIL and Hezbollah. The “young Imam” in this story, by virtue of his English language capability and his social position, was similarly an interlocutor to facilitate and mediate that social connection.¹⁵² While a story from the early 1990s, in the early days of Hezbollah’s development,

¹⁵² This UNIFIL veteran noted the importance of the rise of Hassan Nasrallah to Hezbollah leadership. Nasrallah, who was born in south Lebanon in Bazourieh, had an understanding of UNIFIL’s role and championed transforming the relationship between UNIFIL and Hezbollah from one of outright hostility, to one of co-existence and tactical

to some extent, it remains a secretive and insular organization today, despite being an official political party. Perpetually skeptical of spying and activities to undermine their cause, Hezbollah remains accessible to UNIFIL largely through interlocutors. Today, those interlocutors are most often found in municipalities and the Lebanese Armed Forces.

Perhaps the most prominent type of access interlocutor are translators. Given language barriers between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, all contingents operate with the assistance of translators, who are typically local staff members (Baker, 2019). However, many individuals also informally act as translators in order to mediate and facilitate interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. While some of these individuals have language skills that have been developed from their education, many have developed their language over time and through exposure to and interactions with UNIFIL personnel.

Conversation was difficult. Most people didn't understand English, some spoke French. Especially the elder[ly] only spoke/speak Arabic. Most of the time the children did the talking (AL-22).

Children, who are adaptable and learn quickly, often become translators for their older relatives. Through exposure to large numbers of foreign peacekeepers at a young age, children adapt to engage with such individuals and take on the hybridized identity of interlocutor or communicator between both groups. Professional translators, formally employed by UNIFIL, also act as access interlocutors for friends and neighbours in their communities, as recounted by this civil society participant.

I am more in contact with the Italian translator. He is Lebanese, and is my neighbour, and a friend of my brother. So it is mostly this guy that is the contact person. Whenever I need anything, I will ask this guy, and he will contact to UNIFIL (CS-4).

avoidance. According to Doss (2011), leaders can “define the parameters of opportunity” for peacebuilding (p. 1). While Nasrallah cannot be described as a transformational leader who prioritizes unity and peace over personal power maximization, as Doss describes, he can be understood as a leader who responds to contextual incentives to maintain a peaceful relationship between Hezbollah and UNIFIL.

Translators, by virtue of their privileged access to both UNIFIL and Lebanese communities, are able to exert agency in facilitating connections, communicating needs, and negotiating the access of others in their communities across the social divide.¹⁵³ Translators often relay information through informal interactions with their employers, influencing the knowledge and understanding of peacekeepers beyond the core content of a verbal exchange (Baker, 2019). Importantly, translators are not apolitical, as they come to their employment with their own beliefs, opinions, values and agendas (Baker, 2019). They simultaneously are imbued with the *habitus* of their vocation and their employer (Baker, 2019). Together, these create hybrid identities that both enable and mediate interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. Whether formally employed as translators, or acting as functional translators for others in their lives, such individuals are able to act as access interlocutors as a result of their hybridized identities, which are built through multiple, substantive connections and interactions with UNIFIL.

5. 3. 2 *Logistical Interlocutors*

Learning how to get things done in a particular country or community is key to effective functioning. For some UNIFIL personnel, particularly international civilian staff, functioning in

¹⁵³ Baker (2019) argues that translators (official) exercise a significant degree of agency in the course of their work, engaging in micropolitics. While the literature primarily attributes agency to translators regarding their contributions to post-conflict reconstruction efforts or their capacity to present a positive image of the host population to their employers, Baker observes several other forms of agency. These include tempering the language of hostile speakers, contextualizing the language of speakers, and negotiating their own identities in response to context. Baker's argument aligns with the argument in this research. Baker notes that translators navigate "at least three different ethical codes and understandings of role: foreign forces' (and, if different, interpreters' employers') expectations that interpreters would faithfully relay content and register; interpreters' own understandings of how best to achieve peace at the micropolitical levels to which meetings pertained; and the expectation of most local military interlocutors, and many (not all) civilians, that interpreters would and should act in the ethno-political interests of the group their name and background attached to them" (Baker, 2019, p. 240). Inghilleri (2010) writes that translators operate "simultaneously as free agents and embodied conduits for the political and military institutions they agree to serve" (p. 175), evoking the influence of both individual agency and the *habitus* of their employment on their role.

south Lebanon is mediated and facilitated through logistical interlocutors. These individuals are often current or former UNIFIL local staff, who are known in the UNIFIL civilian networks, and thus are called upon to facilitate certain activities and tasks (Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013).¹⁵⁴ A key example is finding accommodations for new UNIFIL international civilian staff.

First after the war, the UNIFIL was increased, and personally I experienced many people coming here looking for accommodation. You know I'm local, so they come and ask me, so this is how I met him. I was looking for the apartment, and then we became friends (LC-23).

This individual has a hybridized identity as a result of his former employment with UNIFIL and his connections and interactions with UNIFIL personnel since childhood. Through these experiences, he developed privileged knowledge of and access to UNIFIL social networks and needs. As a Lebanese person, his understanding of the local housing market and his social networks in the community, enabled him to assist UNIFIL international civilians with locating desirable accommodations.

Similarly, Lebanese individuals who possess hybridized identities as a result of their personal lives and attachments, such as marriage to former UNIFIL or other internationals, often emerge as logistical interlocutors for UNIFIL individuals.

Like a lot of people, when people in the UN need help with something, like renting a flat, they're having problems, anything like that. They call me. Even people that don't know me. Word spreads, if you need anything, call this person (LC-7).

This woman, who married a UNIFIL veteran, possesses a hybridized identity as a result of that relationship and the connections and interactions she had that pre-date and underpin her marriage. This places her in a social position that traverses both UNIFIL and Lebanese networks,

¹⁵⁴ “Working alongside internationals gives them connections that can be a significant advantage, both for themselves and for those related to them. For example, it is common that international colleagues in search of a maid or other domestic worker—or even seeking companionship with a local partner—come to their national colleagues for help. National hires are thus in a position to recommend family members or friends to internationals, which—even if it does not directly profit them endows status” (Jennings, 2015, p. 301).

enabling her to facilitate and mediate the functioning of UNIFIL personnel in Lebanese communities. The position of logistical interlocutor becomes a part of these individuals' identities and a source of pride. Their social capital is built and strengthened with each new connection and opportunity to function as a logistical interlocutor, further hybridizing them as individuals.

5. 3. 3 *Informational Interlocutors*

Access to information in a context of social and physical divisions is often mediated by interlocutors who have superior knowledge of the needs and concerns of both UNIFIL and Lebanese communities.¹⁵⁵ These individuals typically possess hybridized identities as a result of their work, their experiences, or their repeat interactions across social divides. Municipality leaders can be important, though limited, informational interlocutors, as they have their own political, social, or personal incentives for sharing, withholding, or strategically presenting information.

You see, it's not just that you meet the mayor and it's a formal thing. The mayor is the local authority, so he has to be sure, he will only speak to you under these conditions and under this framework, but when you start talking to the teacher, to the shop keeper, to the farmer, to the barber...so you can get the pulse of the street. And this is useful to us because if there is something expected, something bad expected, you can feel it from the pulse of the street. The mayor will not tell it to you, or the *mukhtar* [village chief], because he will abide by the governmental instructions (CA-1).

In contrast, to get “the pulse of the street,” or information that is reflective of regular individuals within the community, unfiltered through the political office of the mayor, other connections and

¹⁵⁵ De Carvalho and Schia (2011) observe the existence of informational interlocutors within Liberian government ministries. These individuals are internationals who possess enhanced knowledge and understanding of both the bureaucratic processes and requirements of internationals, as well as the perspectives of local individuals and stakeholders. As a result of their position in the ministry and the implementation practices they utilize, their identities become hybridized (my word) as outsider-insiders, enabling them to facilitate local ownership of international statebuilding efforts.

contacts can be more effective.¹⁵⁶ The following quotation describes the utility of market walks and local connections for mediating access to information:

So then what happened is the village patrols would have started, where a section of personnel would have actually armed up and just went walking through the village and checked in with the local shopkeepers, the local *mukhtar* [village chief] or the local mayor, just calling in, having some *shaaee* [tea], having a talk, checking the local vital installations, like the water level. Though there weren't many phones at the time, but some places would have had landlines, so just making sure that none of the lines were cut, because if telephone lines were cut, it meant there was movement of some kind, that somebody didn't want something to happen (AL-9).

Through physical and social presence in Lebanese communities, connections and relationships are cultivated and the context for interactions is created (such as “having some *shaaee* [tea]”), which mediate access to information from “the street.” UNIFIL Civil Affairs officers frequently act as such informational interlocutors, speaking directly to local individuals in order to develop understanding of how the intervention plays into the local political economy (Schia & Karlsrud, 2013).

Substantive connections and relationships between UNIFIL and local individuals can build trust and loyalty between these communities, inspiring individuals to demonstrate care and concern for the safety of others, through the act of passing warnings or information.

Because once, like for example, I was... I saw Lebanese people, like guys working for the UNIFIL. Yeah, but they're not working for the UNIFIL soldiers, but they are not just local community, just... they do updates, they tell them about the situation on the ground. Yeah I realized this. Like just for safety, just for safety, in case there is some tension, so the UNIFIL don't go take this road, or don't go to this village. So yeah (LC-23).

Through relationships and friendships, UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals co-construct a shared, hybridized identity wherein they are members of the same community, united in a contextualized

¹⁵⁶ This wisdom is born out in other peacekeeping contexts as well, such as Mali, where Albrecht et al. (2017) observe that information spread through “gossip and casual conversation” is often more accurate and relevant than information from other sources, such as local media (p. 3).

experience of a peacekeeping mission and an ongoing conflict. This disrupts the binary between internationals and locals and creates incentives for bidirectional information sharing between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. Trust, loyalty and friendship emerge from interactions between individuals, encouraging an ethic of care that leads some to facilitate informational flows across social divisions.

5. 3. 4 Cultural Interlocutors

Positive relations between UNIFIL and Lebanese people are dependent on a variety of cultural interlocutors, who assist both parties in understanding the customs, traditions, lifestyles and norms of the other social group. These individuals possess hybridized identities as a result of their existing social connections, occupation, personal history, or their prolonged and repeat exposure to and interaction with individuals across the social divide in question.

Such a role is commonly performed by UNIFIL local staff, who have privileged understanding of both communities and are in frequent contact with UNIFIL international personnel and staff through their work (Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013).¹⁵⁷ These individuals are often called upon by colleagues to explain aspects of Lebanese culture or social norms. This is particularly true of Civil Affairs local staff, as it is a core aspect of their jobs to function as cultural interlocutors.

To be a Civil Affairs officer here with UNIFIL, it means to be the image of UNIFIL in front of the local community and the image of the local community in front of UNIFIL. So, we have a code of conduct, we have to follow up, and we understand very well our people. I am, as Lebanese, I know very well the traditions, the customs, of each and every group or sect in the area. Now in this area of operations, the majority are Shia, but still we have Sunnis, we have Christians, we have the Druze, we have all the sects. So for a person like me who knows very well all the traditions, all the customs of the people... it's very useful to UNIFIL to know how to deal with people, taking into consideration that

¹⁵⁷ Da Costa and Karlsrud (2013) refer to local staff as “social translators” (p. 309).

UNIFIL has troops from 40 countries, 41 countries. Can you imagine 41 countries from all the continents coming here with their traditions, with their customs, with their languages... all are different from what we see here, *ya3nee* [you know], in this small area, even our small area of operations, the traditions and customs vary from one area to another. Imagine these communities how to deal with this heavy military presence, we are talking about 10,500 soldiers, you see, so you need to find a way to make this presence of this huge number of military a very light one in dealing with the local community. That's why you need Civil Affairs (CA-1).

This role is not the exclusive purview of Civil Affairs officers, however. Several local staff members with whom I spoke recalled stories of international colleagues seeking explanation and interpretation of certain behaviours, customs and interactions they had experienced in the community.

This is particularly true of translators, who are often called upon to offer cultural interpretations and explanations alongside their linguistic services. This constitutes an important source of knowledge for peacekeepers that is removed from official, and often political, channels (Baker, 2019). The hybridized position of these actors enables them to function as cultural interlocutors, mediating and moderating the engagement of others in their social networks across social divides. The following story was shared by a former translator with the Fijian UNIFIL battalion:

You know, at the beginning, when UNIFIL troops arrived to south Lebanon, you know there were some misunderstandings. I don't want to call it problems you know between UNIFIL troops and the local community. You know different customs, different traditions, different methods of life. So at the beginning, you know we face some problems to be honest with you – in the first four or five years. Then we had to make the soldiers understand our customs and our traditions, so we start to create kind of lessons for the troops, to make them understand our religion, how to deal with local women, how to respect the religious personnel, so it was hard at the beginning. But with time things have changed yes (LC-6).

This experience is shared by many of the Lebanese individuals, staff as well as shop keepers, business people, restaurateurs etc., who develop substantive relationships with UNIFIL personnel. By virtue of their connections with UNIFIL, they are called upon to interpret

Lebanese culture, functioning as interlocutors, whose information mediates other connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals. They are able to function in this capacity because they understand the cultures of both UNIFIL and the local communities. Through repeat, substantial connections and interactions, these individuals have developed hybridized knowledge and hybridized identities, building their social capital and leading them to mediate the international-local interface.

Municipality leaders, by virtue of their privileged position at the interface of official UNIFIL activities and relations with Lebanese communities, also function as cultural interlocutors, particularly those who have positive relationships with UNIFIL, or who seek to maximize the advantage their communities get from UNIFIL's presence in their area.

Yea the way that whenever they are invited to any kind of event, especially the newcomers, he would be very helpful. Especially for them, they need to explore the area, the mentality, the culture here, so he is the one to be helpful, to make them go into the community (MM-7).

The welcome breakfast for the new Korean UNIFIL commander discussed in Chapter 4 is an example of the ways in which municipality leaders can mediate and facilitate the cultural understanding and mobility of UNIFIL within their own communities. Making personnel feel comfortable and welcome encourages them to spend free time in communities and importantly, to spend money shopping and eating in local businesses. Potential advantages incentivize municipality leaders to cultivate a positive relationship between UNIFIL and their communities. This leads them to function as cultural interlocutors, leveraging their social capital and their hybridized knowledge and understanding to facilitate the connections and interactions of others by contributing to mutual cultural understanding.

Further research is needed to thoroughly discern the strategic decision making and maneuvering interlocutors do between their various identities and knowledges as they bridge social networks. Within the anecdotes in this section are indications of how interlocutors make contextual, ad hoc decisions regarding how to leverage their identities and knowledges to accomplish tasks effectively or to attain optimal outcomes. Several of the interlocutors I encountered in south Lebanon occupy this role instinctively, as it is a part of their identities. Individuals who grew up across from a UNIFIL base, or have many UNIFIL friends, will naturally explain their cultures, tell their friends about the goings on in the community, or introduce their neighbours to their UNIFIL companions. For others, their function as interlocutors is strategic, intentional and practiced – it is something that they actively leverage.

Conclusion

Mark Granovetter (1985) discusses individuals, such as the interlocutors described above, as “connectors” and “boundary spanners” who are capable of moving well beyond their immediate environments (or “strong” ties, such as relatives and close friends), to generate reciprocity and trust¹⁵⁸ through multiple relationships and interactions across social networks (building “weak” ties). Individuals with “weak ties” are often “heterodox individuals at the periphery of the society’s various social networks who are able to move between groups and thereby become bearers of new ideas and information” (Fukuyama, 2001, p. 9; see also Nan, 2008, Granovetter, 1985; Rizk, 2012). Interlocutors, who possess hybridized identities by virtue

¹⁵⁸ Trust, like social capital, is rooted in a rational-choice conception of individual action. Individuals trust one another because they think it is in their best interests to do so. Incentives to accumulate social capital and be trustworthy in one’s connections are rooted in the desirability of maintaining relationships. “The prototypical case of mutual trust at the individual level involves an interaction that is part of a long sequence of exchanges between the same parties. [...] Hence the main incentive that one faces in a particular exchange in which one is trusted by the other is the potential benefit from continuing the series of interactions” (Hardin, 2004, p. 17). Another incentive is reputation – being trustworthy in a given relationship may aid in attaining other relationships (Hardin, 2004).

of their formal and informal connections across the UNIFIL-Lebanese social divide, are such heterodox individuals.

Within a complexity worldview, the greater the degree of connectivity, the greater the potential for exchanges of information, the greater the potential for change and development.¹⁵⁹ Networks, however, are not necessarily inclusive,¹⁶⁰ such as in Autesserre's articulation of 'Peaceland,' denoting the generation of habits, practices and narratives that bond the expatriate peacekeeping and peacebuilding community as distinct and apart from the host communities in which they operate (Autesserre, 2014b; see also Nan, 2008; Lewis, 2011). To transform exclusive networks, or "closed relational systems," into inclusive networks, or "open relational systems," Moore (2013) argues that a third party is often a necessary catalyst for such identity transformation (p. 116; see also Redekop, 2012).¹⁶¹ I argue, that by virtue of their heterodox

¹⁵⁹ However, greater connectivity can also generate greater instability (Hendrick, 2009, p. 35).

¹⁶⁰ Social networks can be either "bridging" or "bonding". Bridging "networks are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages," while bonding networks are "inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups" (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). Fukuyama (2001) uses the terminology of "positive externalities" as analogous to bridging social capital, wherein the "radius of trust" generated by the group can be larger than the group (p. 8). Fukuyama links bonding social capital with high levels of collective action, and a tendency to produce "external enmity," while bridging social capital is "more inclusive though less capable of collective action" (2001, p. 14).

¹⁶¹ In Moore's (2013) analysis, a chaplain working in religious leader engagement can be such a third party. Moore outlines a process, rooted in several theoretical constructs, through which chaplains can bring about the transformation of the identity politics that function to create and propagate conflict and inter-communal division. At the outset, the capacity of chaplains to build relations with the "other," rooted in the "ministry of presence" that they employ at the core of their pastoral role within military institutions, enables them to build partnerships and friendships with local religious leaders that hold "strategic value" (Moore, 2013, p. 112-113). Emblematic of trust, tolerance and interfaith cooperation, chaplains model such behaviour to local religious leaders (understood through mimetic theory), which encourages similar behaviour from these individuals (ibid. 115-116). Encouraged to "encounter" or connect and communicate with the "other," local leaders take the first step, by demonstrating a "will[ingness] to embrace," which aids in beginning the dismantling of stereotypes and distorted understandings of identity (ibid. 116). It is in such encounters, which enable one to not "simply see the other from one's own perspective but [...] view oneself from the perspective of the other," that closed relational systems begin to transform into open relational systems (ibid. 116). Beyond communication and encounter, collaborative activities have the potential to contribute to this process (ibid. 117). Through repeated acts of collaboration, particularly toward "supra-ordinate goals," a "working trust emerges" as four key elements of trust are learned by each party about the other, namely the competence, predictability, integrity and benevolence to accomplish tasks and work collectively (ibid. 118-119, 121). As Gopin (2009) argues, religious leaders are "boundary spanners" who can be critical to making the initial efforts necessary to begin building such trust (ibid. 120). The interactions of individuals come to influence the whole through social networking and the accumulation of increments of positive change and peace over time (ibid. 122, 125). Redekop suggests that peacemaking, which can easily be articulated as a

position in social networks, which is due to their relationally-developed hybridized identities and knowledges, interlocutors can be understood as such third parties, and can champion or catalyze the opening of relational systems in a peacekeeping environment.

Putnam argues that social networks that exhibit “bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocity,” as opposed to bonding networks, which reinforce and support “narrower” conceptions of identity and self (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). Societies with multiple, overlapping and intersecting social networks – high bridging social capital – have strong civil societies, which is “almost universally seen as a necessary condition for modern liberal democracy” (Fukuyama, 2001, p. 11). In this chapter, I have argued that through substantive, repeat interactions, both UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals undergo “interchange,” wherein their knowledge and identities become hybridized (section 5.2). For some individuals, this leads them to function as interlocutors, facilitating and mediating the interactions and connections of others in their social networks across the international-local divide (5.3). In Chapter 6, I will argue that as a result of this hybridization, which occurs through relational intercultural exchange, incremental movements emerge toward dismantling the distorted and rigid identity constructs that arise in south Lebanon, as a result of threats to human identity needs from the inter and intra state conflicts.

transformation of “closed relational systems” into “open relational systems,” “demands an inner strength and resilience, a capacity for paradox and complexity with an openness to that which is transcendent, an ability to connect with people at a profound level, and an ethical orientation and vision oriented toward the well-being of all of the parties implicated in the violence. In other words, peacemaking actions are motivated, initiated, and sustained by spirituality” (Redekop, 2012, p. 959). The implications of this conception of spirituality and its potential to drive emergent creativity, transform social networks, and produce incremental conflict transformation, invests many individuals, including but not limited to military chaplains and religious leaders, with the work of overcoming identity-based conflict and instability. For Redekop, spirituality is understood to have the following components: “a source of inner strength, transpersonal connection, transcendence, and a capacity for ethical action” (Redekop, 2012, p. 962). Note that while transcendence can “refer to a connection to the Divine,” it also can be also be understood as “reaching a more fully encompassing position,” or achieving a “transcendent perspective” (Redekop, 2012, p. 963-964).

Chapter 6: What do relationships mean to peace?

Local Knowledge and the Restoration of Identity Needs

Introduction

This research has shown that UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals often meet through commercial, event-based and service-based interfaces, where interactions are primarily superficial, formal and ‘thin’ in terms of the identities performed. However, these interfaces constitute platforms from which new opportunities for interaction emerge, largely enabled by or mobilized through the Lebanese culture of hospitality. Through invitations to share tea, coffee or food, either in businesses or homes, Lebanese people exert agency in transforming and translocating interactions with UNIFIL from performative, international spaces, into local, hybridized spaces. In these hybridized spaces ‘thick’ cultural and political identities can be enacted and substantial interactions can occur. In these spaces, UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals share information, discuss politics and the conflict, share personal stories and events, and engage in cultural exchange.

These ‘thick’ interactions impact both parties in distinct ways. For Lebanese people, substantial interactions with UNIFIL provide cultural “exposure” (CS-13), generating more openness to different cultures, values and lifestyles. For UNIFIL personnel, substantial interactions with Lebanese people foster feelings of comfort and safety, and constitute “enrichment” (AL-15) opportunities, driving knowledge development and opinion change regarding south Lebanon, the conflict, and Lebanese culture. These impacts result in the hybridization of knowledge and identities for those involved, thereby constituting “interchanges” (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012, p. 4), wherein identities co-evolve and are co-constituted through cultural, relational interactions. By virtue of their social position, occupation or networks, some

individuals become interlocutors that exercise bridging social capital, facilitating and mediating the interactions and connections of others in their social networks, across the social and physical divides that exist between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities.

Pursuant to complexity theory, an individual relationship does not exist in isolation, but instead exists in a complex web of overlapping social networks and connections (de Coning, 2020; de Coning et al., 2016; Gopin, 2009; Putnam, 2000). Micro inputs have disproportionate, non-linear, emergent and unintended impacts, as such, a single relationship or the accumulation of many such relationships, can ripple out to effect the peacekeeping mission and the peace context in south Lebanon (de Coning et al., 2016; Hendricks, 2009; Benitez-Schaefer, 2015; Bousquet & Curtis, 2011). In this chapter, I begin by discussing the meaning participants ascribe to the concept of peace, in order to contextualize the ensuing discussion (6. 1). I subsequently explore the ways in which individual relationships trickle-out and accumulate generating meaning and outcomes relevant to the UNIFIL mission and to peace more broadly. To the benefit of the UNIFIL mission, I argue that relationships and connections between peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals contribute to building and developing UNIFIL's access to local knowledge, including both information and understanding. This knowledge is an important factor in gaining and retaining local support and cooperation for the mission, which positively contributes to UNIFIL's effectiveness and capacity to engage in real-time, micro-diplomacy to the benefit of stabilization in the region (section 6. 2). I subsequently discuss how the relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals impact peace by disrupting rigid identity constructs (section 6. 3). In this chapter, I argue that relationships and connections between UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals lead to the hybridization of knowledge

and identities, which improves the effectiveness of the UNIFIL mission and generates positive incremental changes productive to both inter- and intrastate peace in south Lebanon.

6. 1 The Meaning of Peace

A UNIFIL veteran told me a story about his first contact with a Hezbollah member in which he commented that UNIFIL was in Lebanon for peace. The individual with whom he was speaking, a young Imam, replied, “which peace are you talking about?” (AL-1). This anecdote points to an important reality – peace is not a universal concept. In his illuminating 1993 article, Paul E. Salem makes the salient point that prevailing conceptions of peace in the international system are rooted in a Western, Christian historical and ethical context, in which the absence of violence and suffering are the ultimate “good.” He argues, however, that different historical and ethical contexts understand and value peace differently. In Islam, for example, justice and dignity are the “good” for which struggle is legitimized and valued, over comfort and the absence of violence. In such a context, peace as the absence of violence is meaningless or unsatisfactory without justice and dignity.

In the majority of interviews I conducted for this research, I asked a common set of questions towards the end of the conversation: “What does peace mean to you?” And, “does UNIFIL contribute to peace as you understand it?” These questions were asked not only to encourage reflection on UNIFIL’s role and function, but also to establish personalized and contextualized understandings of peace in order to avoid applying a Westernized, academic construct onto the experiences and perspectives of participants (Parpart, 2003; Mohanty, 1991; Foucault, 1972; Spivak, 1993).¹⁶² As such, before discussing the ways in which relationships and

¹⁶² This point emerges from critical theories under the broad umbrellas of post-modernism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism. These bodies of scholarship observe that Western epistemological constructs are often assumed to be universal, which affords them power in defining the terms of legitimate action and knowledge (Foucault, 1972).

connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals impact peace in south Lebanon, I will first discuss what peace means to the individuals involved in those relationships.

Six main definitions of peace were articulated by participants, most of whom applied several of these definitions in explaining their understanding of peace. These are: 1) harmony and cooperation; 2) freedom from fear; 3) resistance and balance of power; 4) internal peace; 5) freedom from want; and 6) freedom to plan. These categories are used as referents in exploring the ways in which the relationships and connections between UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals impact the UNIFIL mission and peace more broadly.

6. 1. 1 Harmony and Cooperation

Understandings of peace as “harmony and cooperation” commonly referred to integration, interdependence, respect and love between individuals and communities, despite their differences.

Oh, it’s a big word, it’s a big big word. Peace for me is that all religion, all culture, all the people can live in peace and be respected for their beliefs, and for their culture, for the difference of their cultures (AL-3).

So peace is when, not only every two countries, but every two person, don’t get violence for each other, who love each other, who will do beautiful work with each other, who will accept each other. This is peace (CS-3).

This conception of peace was more commonly expressed by UNIFIL participants (48%) than by Lebanese participants (20%). This may be partly attributable to the fact that 22 of 25 UNIFIL participants who responded to this question are from European Union member states.

I’m not saying the Euro brought peace, but the introduction of the Euro currency was one more step to a closer integration. This whole integration just means that the cost of getting yourself into a conflict is just too high, because if you trigger a conflict, you are basically damaging yourself because you are so integrated with your counterpart (AL-10).

This constitutes epistemological violence, which functions to silence alternative perspectives, experiences and knowledges (Spivak, 1993).

The formation of the European Union, as well as many of the Bretton Woods Institutions in the post-World War II period, was based on the classic thesis of liberalism – that trade and economic interdependence would assure a peaceful coexistence (Kant, 1795; Montesquieu, 1748 [1989]; MacMillan, 1997). This sentiment was less commonly expressed by Lebanese participants, whose responses referred to harmony and cooperation in terms of neighbourly or community behaviour, in which respect and love are interpersonally, rather than institutionally, expressed.

[...] peace is what we make it, it's how we make it. It is how much you are faithful to your own country, and how much you like your own country. It's like you and your next door neighbour - it's how good he is, and how good you are, and how you are getting on together – this is how I call things. If, for example, you have a next door neighbour and you are fighting every day, you would not want to stay in your house, you would move out. If you are relaxed with the other people, and you have good times, and he have time for you, and you have time for him, this is the best thing. This is what we call peace (LC-22).

In this conception of peace, people live together and work together in harmony and cooperation, despite differences. Overall, this definition of peace was raised in 26% of interviews.

6. 1. 2 Freedom from Fear

Evoking Johan Galtung's now famous 1996 distinction, "freedom from fear" (Roosevelt, 1941; Sen, 1999) constitutes an expression of negative peace, or the absence of violence. In this understanding of peace, participants described a life without fear, feeling safe and having a reasonable expectation that such feelings would persist into the future.

Peace to me is a sense of calm and reassurance that you can go to bed tonight and know that your kids are not going to be murdered in their bed, know that your kids are going to get a good night sleep, know that there is not a threat to you or your family. If you never really felt that, then you've got peace. To me that's what it means, that you can go home at night time and not worry that some rocket, or some terrorist, or some bad guy is going to cause a problem that will impact you and your family (AL-15).

Peace? Now, what we are living now, this is peace. I lived the Israeli occupation, I've seen my friends getting killed, I've seen... I've been through a lot, and I've

worked as ...I mean we lost our friends! What we have been through in this country is awful. Personally, I'm not asking for more – this is peace. I don't want anything else (LC-7).

Many Lebanese people experience a latent, but constant, fear due to the precarious state in which Lebanon has existed since the creation of Israel and the start of the war. Understandings of peace as the absence of violence and freedom from such fears were expressed by nearly a third (27%) of Lebanese participants, and 44% UNIFIL participants. Overall, this understanding arose in 28% of interviews.

6. 1. 3 Resistance and Balance of Power

For many participants, particularly Lebanese people, their conception of peace is intimately linked to the balance of power that has been achieved between Hezbollah and Israel since the 2006 war. This balance of power results in mutual deterrence, which enables the preservation of stability and prevention of open hostilities. For many in south Lebanon, this constitutes peace.

So, Lebanese, south people in Lebanon, they had *ya3nee* [I mean/you know] bad history, so they... I ... we expect, or we think, that peace is stopping this aggression. Now why people like the resistance, the Lebanese resistance [Hezbollah], is because they have *ya3nee*, balance. Before the Lebanese resistance every day we had bombing, we had killing, so on and so forth, but now they stopped. And all the world can see this. It stopped. If Israel think to bomb Lebanon, they will know that their people will be bombed. So now people... so this is good for us. So now you can see for example people having their jobs, their businesses everywhere, everything is good, at night you can see people at the border, in their houses, they are having good nights. Peace is this. This here. If we don't have this balance, we don't have peace. And we think all of the unions, not only the UN, are coming to stop the resistance and to let Israel do what they want. This is not peace, in our opinion, this is not peace. Either you stop Israel aggression, or you keep this balance. You can't tell people, Lebanese people, to please go to their homes and drop their weapons and Israel is free to do what... no this is not peace! (CS-1).

Now they understand, that the resistance is the people, all of the people! Whether this is Hezbollah, this is Amal, whatever, the people are the resistance, because if

I'm not firing against the Israelis, or I am not carrying a weapon against the Israelis, but just rebuilding my house, starting again from zero, this is resistance! You know what I mean? (LC-6).

Resistance comes not only from Hezbollah, but from the resilience and perseverance of the people of south Lebanon. This understanding is connected to dignity and the Lebanese right to protect their land and live without harassment. These sentiments arose in 20% of UNIFIL interviews and 27% of Lebanese interviews. Notably, over 75% of those who discussed peace as resistance and balance of power identified as Shia. This conception of peace arose in 13% of interviews overall.

6. 1. 4 Internal Peace

In 13% of interviews, participants expressed a notion of internalized peace, or peace as a “state of mind.”

So, in other words peace means to me a state of mind where you find tranquility between all kinds of people, regardless of their religion, nationality or whatever (AL-22).

So to achieve peace, we need to have this peace within ourselves. Sometimes we people, without any interaction with anyone, we don't have peace within ourselves” (CS-20).

These articulations of peace resonate with the concepts of reconciliation and forgiveness (Lederach, 1997; Gopin, 2009; Redekop, 2014), as they point to an individual responsibility to achieve peace regardless of external conditions.

So for me peace is felt on a personal level. First we need to have peace with ourselves, then peace with the family, then peace with the neighbours, then peace with the community and then peace with the country overall. This is how the progress of peace goes. So one should work on this, everyone by himself until we reach an overall peace condition (CS-14).

This participant articulates a trajectory through which achieving internal peace can foster peace at a broader, societal level. This understanding of internal peace was noted by 20% of UNIFIL participants and 14% of Lebanese participants.

6. 1. 5 Freedom from Want

In line with human development (Sen, 1999) and human security (UN, 2000; Newman, 2011; Owen, 2004), several participants expressed understandings of peace as “freedom from want” (Roosevelt, 1941; Sen, 1999), meaning economic wellbeing and access to choice in order to build a “fulfilling” life.

Oh my god, please, I haven't felt peace to tell you what about peace. I don't know what's peace. For me peace is getting electricity at home, taking away garbage, living in a healthy community, having good air... now everything is polluted, we don't feel we are in a peaceful country. Even politics... they are disturbed, there is nothing in our country (LC-19).

Peace is very... without peace, we cannot survive, we cannot develop, we cannot enjoy the life, we cannot raise our children and educate them to be... to be loyal to their country, and to respect or appreciate the Lebanese army. Peace is very important (LS-5).

Without basic services, a steady and adequate income and opportunities for growth and development, the absence of violence does not amount to peace for many participants.¹⁶³ In part, these understandings align with Galtung's (1996) conception of positive peace, however I distinguish between economic peace and the justice-oriented components of positive peace, in alignment with Lebanese understandings. This conception of peace as “freedom from want” was noted by 36% of UNIFIL participants and 30% of Lebanese participants, emerging in 29% of interviews overall.

¹⁶³ This sentiment would likely be even more prevalent today given the significant economic deterioration in Lebanon over the past 2 years, including the crash of the Lebanese pound (LBP), growing poverty rates, the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and now, fears over food security as a result of the war in Ukraine (Yassine, 2021).

5. 1. 6 Freedom to Plan

This understanding of peace emerged early in the interview process as I chatted with a private business man and civil society member. Upon being asked, “what does peace mean to you?”, this gentleman replied “stability,” and began to share a story:

I am having this issue with the family, there are stairs in the backyard and I need to renovate it. So they are asking me, “why don’t you renovate it?” And I am like, “why would I?” You never know when the attack will come (CS-9).

This conception of peace is rooted not only in stability (freedom from fear) and the financial means to make such repairs (freedom from want), but also in predictability, such that individuals are able to invest in their lives and homes with the reasonable expectation that such investments will not be futile. This distinct conception of peace emerged repeatedly in other conversations.

Well I think we have never been in peace. Yes... it’s a hard word to define, when you don’t know it [...] when you’ve never seen it. And I think peace is when you look to the future and you see like, stability in your life (LC-23).

I rebuilt everything 3 times, but last time in 2006 I said I don’t want to rebuild. I don’t want to build my house, I don’t want to build my business, enough is enough! I don’t have the power anymore, and I don’t have the means anymore to destroy and rebuild, destroy and rebuild. Now, what kind of guarantees can be given to the citizens of south Lebanon that the Israelis will not invade again? Will not destroy again? This is the question that we have. We are, believe me, we are very very peaceful people. We want to live in peace as people of south Lebanon. But what kind of peace? Peace with dignity, not peace being forced on you – the peace that they [internationals/Israel] want. We want to live in peace and have all our families, look after them... you know, I don’t have confidence in tomorrow, and this is not only me. This goes to the majority of people. As long as Israel is there, we have this worry (LC-6).

This understanding of peace is rooted in the need for justice, which in the case of Lebanon refers to a lasting resolution to the interstate conflict and an equitable and effective political system that protects the rights of the Lebanese people.

If you want to have peace without the justice, they are going to feel oppressed, and they want to feel like, how to say, if we want to have peace one day in this

area, and the Palestinians don't have the right to go back to their villages, this is not the peace, and the conflict is going to continue (CS-18).

I mean peace without corruption. Peace in the Lebanese way means corruption, but security. [...] Peace where there is no canon or there is no gun firing, but you have corruption, but this is not the peace that I meant. The real peace, without corruption, and the institutions are doing their jobs, and the people have their rights, especially the human rights (LC-17).

For the majority of Lebanese people, and according to the official stance of the Lebanese government, there cannot be a lasting resolution to the conflict between Lebanon and Israel until there is a lasting resolution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, meaning until Palestinians are given the right to return to their homeland and self-govern as an independent state – peace is “a land and a nation” (CS-5). This conception of peace as the “freedom to plan” in a just and equitable society was noted by 38% of participants overall, mentioned by 24% of UNIFIL participants and 61% of Lebanese participants.

These six understanding of peace inform the ensuing discussions on the impact of relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese people on both the mission and on peace. These categories are layered for many participants, with different aspects applicable to different contexts and conversations about peace. As such, these types of peace will be drawn upon to contextualize the depth or extent of impact connections and relationships have on the UNIFIL mission and on conflict dynamics in south Lebanon.

6. 2 How do relationships impact the UNIFIL mission?

The connections and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals impact the mission of UNIFIL in three interconnected ways. Firstly, through relationships, individuals on both “sides” of these connections co-construct knowledge, hybridizing insider and outsider perspectives and understandings, thereby contributing to the cumulative local knowledge to

which UNIFIL has access. Knowledge and understanding are essential to fostering local support for and cooperation with the activities of UNIFIL in pursuit of its mandate. Consequently, by building knowledge and support, relationships enable UNIFIL to engage in ground-level, micro-diplomacy, which contributes to operational effectiveness.

6. 2. 1 *Local Knowledge*

In this section, the term “knowledge,” or in some cases “local knowledge,” is used as an umbrella referent for two types of knowledge that can be conceived of hierarchically. The first type of knowledge I term *information*, which refers to facts, details and descriptions of events, individuals, groups, and places. The second type of knowledge I call *understanding*, which refers to the meanings, systems, and structures that contextualize information. Together these two types of knowledge capture the “what?” (information) and the “so what?” (understanding) of experiences, interactions, individuals, communities and places.¹⁶⁴ In this section, I discuss the role of connections and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals in generating both *information* and *understanding* for UNIFIL, thus contributing to the development of UNIFIL’s “fund” of local knowledge (Distler, 2016, p. 328).

Since the early 1980s, UNIFIL has provided personnel with information about Lebanon and the conflict as part of their induction and arrival training (ITS, 2015).¹⁶⁵ In the pre-2000 period, UNIFIL personnel recall receiving informational booklets that covered local religions, demographics, economic activities, customs, and other basic information about south Lebanon

¹⁶⁴ Philosophies and theories of knowledge constitute a significant, and varied body of scholarship, well outside the scope of this dissertation. Beyond stipulating the epistemological perspectives embraced in this project, as I have done in Chapter 2, I rhetorically and functionally distinguish between information and understanding in this section to emphasize the importance of knowledge contextualization and situatedness for UN peacekeeping operations.

¹⁶⁵ Historical information about arrival and cultural training is anecdotal, as I was not able to find documentary or scholarly evidence of the UN’s, or UNIFIL’s, historical training practices.

and the conflict. Today, UNIFIL provides deployment training sessions to UNIFIL officers, referred to as “induction training” (LS-3), which they then relay to their units (ITS, 2015).¹⁶⁶ These training sessions are more comprehensive than earlier booklets, and are run by UNIFIL local staff, who provide details about Lebanese culture, traditions, social customs, the conflict, and the relationship of UNIFIL with local communities (ITS, 2015). Despite such resources, it is a common refrain that UNIFIL personnel are not adequately prepared to culturally and socially encounter Lebanese peoples and communities (Haddad, 2010).¹⁶⁷

The discussions I had with UNIFIL veterans and Lebanese individuals indicate that there has been, and continues to be, significant knowledge gaps in the training and informational resources UNIFIL receive, particularly with respect to *understanding*, as I described it above. Significantly so in the pre-2006 period, though ongoing today, much of the knowledge UNIFIL personnel acquire comes from “learning by doing” (AL-11). This points to the importance of the experiential and relational components of knowledge acquisition in the context of south Lebanon.¹⁶⁸

During the years of Israeli occupation and active conflict (pre-2000), UNIFIL relied heavily on local contacts and communities for both *understanding* and everyday

¹⁶⁶ UN PKO training takes place in three stages: pre-deployment training, induction training and ongoing training. Pre-deployment training is delivered by troop contributing countries and various regional peacekeeping training institutes, covering information general to UN peacekeeping. Induction training is delivered in the early days of deployment by the Integrated Mission Training Centres associated with each UN mission. Induction training covers mission-specific information, such as “the security, cultural and operational complexities of their working environment” (ITS, 2015, p. 144). Ongoing training is specialist in nature, delivered by various teams and experts within the mission, according to the task demands of different personnel and contingents (ITS, 2015).

¹⁶⁷ Haddad (2010) makes a similar point in his exploration of French peacekeepers to UNIFIL and their cultural preparedness to encounter Lebanese communities and partners, such as the LAF.

¹⁶⁸ Distler (2016) makes a similar point regarding international police missions in Kosovo.

information about incidents in the area of operations, including militia movements, shelling, shooting, interruptions to services (e.g. electricity, telephone), and leafleting.¹⁶⁹

The first thing to do was to find out what happened at night, because there was always tension, shooting, shelling, and all that. So the important thing was to keep an eye on what was happening around us (AL-1).

During market walks, foot patrols and daily activities, UNIFIL personnel had opportunities to listen to local concerns and priorities from regular individuals.

I had an office in Tyre for my local staff who couldn't come to Naqoura. And next to it is this massive parking lot that provides *service*¹⁷⁰ taxis to all parts of south Lebanon. So these guys go and come back. As soon as they come to Tyre and they have something to report, they will come to me and I start to know this is happening. So I knew things the most not because of UNIFIL's intelligence, which we didn't have any, not because of the Lebanese army, but because of taxi drivers (AL-1).

These anecdotes, recounted by Timur Göksel, spokesperson for UNIFIL from 1979 to 2003, indicate the value of relationships and connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals for UNIFIL's access to pertinent information. While the majority of this section will focus on the ways in which relationships contribute to the co-construction and hybridization of UNIFIL's *understanding*, thereby increasing their "fund" of local knowledge (Distler, 2016, p. 238), it is important to note the value of connections for UNIFIL's access to *information*, which is also a foundational aspect of its effectiveness (Bove & Ruggeri, 2019; Autesserre, 2014b; Haddad, 2010).

¹⁶⁹ It was common practice during the active years of conflict for Israel to drop leaflets from airplanes informing local civilians to depart an area prior to an operation or shelling event (Mowles, 1986; Haddad, 1983; Aljazeera, 2005).

¹⁷⁰ "*Service*" taxis (French, meaning service) are taxis that pick up multiple passengers along a particular route, heading in a common direction determined by the passengers that get in the taxi. A potential passenger flags a taxi and asks the driver if they are heading toward the neighbourhood or area they are hoping to visit. The taxi driver indicates yes or no. This is the most common form of taxi service, and also the most affordable (in 2017/2018 a *service* within a city like Beirut or Tyre was normally 2-3 LBP). The majority of Lebanese people take *service* taxis as opposed to private taxis, which take only one passenger (or one united group) from a specific destination to another specific destination.

While information has become easier to access through mobile and Internet connectivity, UNIFIL continues to depend on local contacts and individuals for information. Today, the UNIFIL Civil Affairs unit is a key contributor to information gathering, as they are the most visible and accessible interlocutors between UNIFIL command and Lebanese municipalities and civil society groups (UN PKO/DFS, 2012).¹⁷¹ The job of Civil Affairs officers, and civil-military co-operation (CIMIC) officers from troop contributing countries, is to actively expand their social networks and social capital, building trust, credibility and access, thereby improving their ability to gain both information and understanding. In many ways the role of Civil Affairs officers is to actively pursue knowledge hybridization through interaction, so that they can function as mediators and representatives of the understandings and perspectives of both UNIFIL and Lebanese communities. However, Civil Affairs officers must consciously and carefully abide by the local politics of information.¹⁷² Municipalities are the primary point of connection for UNIFIL with local communities, and thus are the official sources of information and local knowledge for UNIFIL. Soliciting information from alternative sources, such as local civil society organizations, can be perceived as bypassing local authorities – “this would be a kind of *coup d’etat* I guess,” (CA-1) said one Civil Affairs representative. Such action could undermine the relationships between UNIFIL and municipalities, which would compromise operational capacity and effectiveness.¹⁷³ This reality means that the local knowledge UNIFIL receives

¹⁷¹ UNIFIL also engages in information sharing and exchange with other international organizations operating in south Lebanon, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. All research participants from such organizations were careful to distinguish information sharing as “coordination,” not “collaboration” with UNIFIL, citing their organizations’ need to maintain political neutrality and distance from any perception of participation in the conflict. This distinction points to the pervasiveness of the perception that UNIFIL is not a neutral or impartial actor in south Lebanon. While international organization staff may view UNIFIL as impartial, the views of Lebanese people are what determines the optics of collaboration for many organizations.

¹⁷² This naturally requires some *understanding* of local political dynamics.

¹⁷³ Poor relationships can result in certain roads and areas becoming blocked, restricted or prohibited to UNIFIL vehicle and foot patrols, which inhibits execution of the mandate. This has occurred in several villages over the

through official channels is often politically skewed or informed. In this context, diversifying sources of local knowledge through informal channels, such as the relationships and interactions of UNIFIL personnel with Lebanese individuals, is essential to cultivating a representative body of information on which UNIFIL can draw to improve its operational effectiveness.¹⁷⁴ Informal connections and conversations do not undermine the accepted protocol for information gathering, but aid UNIFIL in developing a broader understanding of local experiences, opinions and perspectives.

Beyond the acquisition of *information*, relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese people are essential to developing an *understanding* within the UNIFIL mission about the many ways in which Lebanese people encounter and interface with UNIFIL staff and/or personnel in the course of their daily lives. Further, information requires contextualization, as meaning is rooted in cultures, histories, systems and norms that are often uniquely expressed in different societies and communities (Berger & Luckmann, 1991 [1966]). I argue that this type of knowledge can only be attained experientially and relationally, as it is often implicit and thus difficult to verbally convey through training sessions or information sharing.¹⁷⁵ *Understanding* emerges from the co-construction and co-evolution of knowledge that occurs through substantial interactions in which individuals engage in cultural exchange, embodying ‘thick’ politically and socially-rooted identities. In the following paragraphs I present empirical evidence for the ways

course of UNIFIL’s deployment, including Khiyam, Kafr Kila, and Ramyah, among others (UNSC, 15 Nov 2018; UN SC, 18 Nov 2019; UN News, 2014).

¹⁷⁴ Elsewhere (Cassin & Zyla, 2021) I have argued that the legitimacy and sustainability of peace and statebuilding efforts hinge on local ownership and support from a diverse and representative range of local perspectives, actors and organizations (Doyle & Sambanis, 2007; Richmond, 2011; OECD DAC, 2006, 2007). Local partners, as well as sources of knowledge, cannot be conveniently chosen to align with liberal values and goals for post-conflict reconstruction, but rather must be representative of the full spectrum of local society.

¹⁷⁵ Conversely, the prospects of having productive and meaningful connections and relationships across the international-local divide is improved by having a developed *understanding* of Lebanese communities and customs.

in which relationships and connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals contribute to the development of UNIFIL's local *understanding*.

An essential component of knowledge for UNIFIL personnel, and the mission generally, is a keen understanding of “who you are dealing with” (AL-1)¹⁷⁶ in any given setting or interaction. This evokes an understanding of the social fabric of south Lebanon and the connections that exist between geography, religion, politics and social capital. Ultimately this amounts to what one participant described as “local knowledge of the village system” (AL-1). This refers to an understanding that villages often contain varying compositions of religious groups with particular sectarian, political affiliations. For example, there is a close link between municipal leadership in south Lebanese villages and affiliation with major political parties, particularly Hezbollah due to the Shia majority in the region.¹⁷⁷ Understanding “who you are dealing with” goes beyond knowing the sectarian affiliations of an individual or community. It requires an appreciation of how Lebanon's history and conflict have been experienced differently by individuals and communities. This understanding can only be developed through interactions in which Lebanese people can embody politically and culturally rooted identities and exert agency in expressing their experiences and perspectives, thereby participating in the construction of new, hybridized understandings amongst their UNIFIL friends.

¹⁷⁶ Several UNIFIL participants note the dearth of information and knowledge about both the conflict situation and Lebanon itself. Timur Göksel, in the first few years of his employment with UNIFIL, was charged with creating a document detailing the political and military groups in south Lebanon, how they were connected and how they were engaged in both the civil and interstate conflict. Prior to this point, UNIFIL did not possess a clear understanding of warring groups in the region that they were meant to stabilize.

¹⁷⁷ In addition, civil society and social organizations, while often officially and explicitly inclusive, retain loose ties to or receive funding and support from religious or sectarian groups. The relevance of understanding “who you are dealing with” is indicated by the Lebanese process of social identification practiced when being introduced to a new person. Questions and conversations between new acquaintances are regularly conducted in such a way that allows Lebanese people to place one another within the social, religious and political context of Lebanon. By learning the surnames of new acquaintances and where they are from, Lebanese people can gauge the perspectives of one another on various issues.

Another valuable component of knowledge that UNIFIL attains experientially and relationally is the understanding of ‘how to get things done’ in south Lebanon. This knowledge is directly linked to UNIFIL’s operational capacity and effectiveness. The Lebanese governance structure is such that while formal processes exist for most government-citizen interfaces, often informal processes and pathways are more efficient and effective (Egan & Tabar, 2016) (this principle was referred to as *wastah* in Chapter 4, section 4.4.2 Financial Motivations). Lebanese people regularly leverage social contacts to gain privileged access to government services and facilitate their movement through complex, sometimes inefficient and corrupt, bureaucracies (Egan & Tabar, 2016; Cortés & Kéchichian, 2020). While UNIFIL’s operating procedures are restricted to official, formalized processes so as to maintain support from the Lebanese government, realities on the ground often demand adaptation, flexibility and negotiation. This requires an understanding of both the social fabric of south Lebanon and the pathways through which “things get done.” This context necessitates the development of such knowledge through informal means, such as the interactional spaces that exist between UNIFIL personnel and Lebanese individuals. Despite protocols, standard operating procedures, and oversight, UNIFIL contingents learn and adapt to operate within their unique geographic, social and political contexts (Heiberg, 1991; Duffey, 2000; Novosseloff, 2015), an understanding of which cannot be adequately provided through training or information sharing, but must be experientially developed.

An illustrative example of the utility of understanding ‘who you are dealing with’ and “how to get things done” emerges from a Civil Affairs representative who recounted several stories about negotiations with municipalities about quick impact projects.

Sometimes, you have tough mayors that they don’t know the priority of the needs of their people, and they insist on a certain request. For example, one village...

I'm giving you examples just it helps. So a very poor village, very very poor, most of its people works in livestock, they grow up cattles, cows, goats, etc. So it's very poor. So I went to see the mayor. It's population is 400 people. "What do you request?" He said, "we want you to build another floor for the mosque of the village." I told him, "what for? You have a mosque, and I guess it is big enough for the population." He said, "Yea, but when we have a big occasion, or a funeral, or we want to have the prayer of the Eid, it is not enough space." I told him, "no, we are not going to build you such a project, because God excepts your prayer even if you pray on the street. And our work is to help the poor people, not to waste money. God will not forgive us if we do this with this poor community." So I played on the religious issue. So he brought the *sheikh* [Muslim religious leader] of the village to convince me about the mosque. And it seems that the *sheikh* asked about me. "Is this a Muslim, or a Christian or whatever?" He knew I am a Muslim [...]. He started saying, "my son, I know that you are Muslim, and you know how much God will praise you when you build a mosque." I told him, "look *sheikh*, Prophet Mohammed said that the nearest person to God is the most beneficiary for the people. Isn't it?" He said "yes." And I told him, "can you tell me what benefit shall I give the people of this village if I build another mosque and they are suffering hunger here, they don't have a place to eat, they don't have a place to live properly?" He said, "you are right." I told him, in front of the mayor, that "the mayor does not want to scratch his head and think something useful for this community. So the easiest thing is to build a mosque, but already you have a mosque. And you know, people might donate money to build a mosque. But no one will donate money to make a kind of project that is beneficiary for everybody." He said "yes, you are right. You mayor, you should do what this guy is saying." And then, this mayor, proposed a serious project. He asked us to build a mixer for the food of the animals. You see how different it is now? So you need to negotiate also. It's not just that we go and ask him, "what do you want?" Ok, this is ok, and you go out! No! You discuss! Use common sense! And here you need to put yourself in the shoes of the local community. If I am them, what should I do, what is my priority? (CA-1).

This story is indicative of the importance of "know[ing] who you are dealing with" and knowing "how to things get done." Further, it links such knowledge to the ability to assess the needs and priorities of Lebanese communities, in some cases enabling UNIFIL to act as an interlocutor between local peoples and their own municipalities.¹⁷⁸ This story also demonstrates the

¹⁷⁸ In many cases, a strong argument could be made that UNIFIL are not equipped to represent or evaluate the legitimacy of municipality requests, given they are outsiders interfacing with local individuals in positions of power. However, in this anecdote, the UNIFIL staff member in question is local staff, and thereby has some heightened legitimacy in this respect. Regardless of the ethics of representing the needs and priorities of others in any given context, the point being made in this section is that such advocacy or evaluative capacity would be impossible without adequate knowledge and understanding. Further, the understanding that some scrutiny may be required in certain circumstances to evaluate the potential benefit of proposed quick impact projects is itself knowledge that is

advantage of understanding cultural conventions of conversation and debate, which enables effective negotiation without giving offense. These sorts of knowledges are not conveyed in training sessions, but are rather developed experientially and relationally, through interactions and cultural exchange.

As Boege (2019) argues, both cultural similarity and difference matter in particular ways for the relationality of a peacekeeping mission. Cultural difference necessitates cultural exchange to develop understanding and knowledge of one another, while cultural sameness can facilitate relationship-building and the development of trust (Boege, 2019; Bellou, 2014;¹⁷⁹ Bove & Ruggeri, 2019;¹⁸⁰ Lind Petersen, 2013¹⁸¹). Before cultural exchange and knowledge-building occurs however, cultural difference can generate tensions or misunderstanding,¹⁸² which inhibits interactions and connections between socially distinct groups, such as UNIFIL and Lebanese communities.

I had a few, kind of, not that positive encounters with locals. I had a few road accidents where locals, civilians were involved, some of them got hurt and I was involved in treating them, so that's not positive, but it was successful anyway. But it was kind of stressful... the local population reacted kind of aggressively

experientially and relationally acquired. This reflects an understanding that the social structure, political system, and style of interaction with UNIFIL can generate disincentives for municipality leaders to carefully and pragmatically propose quick impact projects.

¹⁷⁹ Bellou (2014) draws on wisdom from tourism marketing to argue that communications strategies that promote “cultural products which generate familiarity and a sense of ‘common sharing’ amongst peoples who are otherwise strangers” can reduce the cultural alienation experienced by host populations in the face of foreign intervention (p. 584).

¹⁸⁰ Bove and Ruggeri (2019) investigate the impacts of “cultural distance” (geography, language and religion) and “social distance” (economic and institutional difference) from local populations in peacekeeping operations. They find that “cultural proximity increases the level of protection of civilians and reduces the number of battlefield casualties, two tangible proxies of peacekeeping mission success” (p. 1651). They also present evidence that geographically distant countries and countries that differ from the host nation in terms of economic development and institutional composition also positively contribute to mission success. While cultural similarity can improve trust building and information sharing, it can also introduce bias and threaten neutrality.

¹⁸¹ Lind Petersen (2013) discusses the advantage of having technical advisors with “some sort of cultural affinity” work with host institutions on capacity building projects post-conflict, in order to facilitate knowledge and understanding, and generate trust between external and internal actors (p. 3). Lind Petersen argues that alongside cultural similarity, interveners with shared experiences of corruption and other governance challenges can have a superior capacity to assist individuals in navigating these issues in statebuilding.

¹⁸² Duffey (2000) makes a similar point that “culture has a powerful influence on the peacekeeping environment, both positively or, in most cases due to lack of cultural understanding, negatively” (p. 143).

towards it, they were trying to get involved. In a matter of maybe five minutes there were like a hundred and fifty people gathered around, you know kind of stressful, but not that bad anyway (AL-11).

In the European culture, when a car accident occurs, nobody approaches the injured person. They wait [for] the ambulance to come to have proper, correct means of first aid. In [Lebanese] culture, nobody waits [for] the ambulance. Just you see the accident and there is an injured person, you pick them up and put them in your car and you take them to the hospital. Hahaha... you see, this is the different culture (CA-1).

In these examples an already tense situation, such as a road accident, can transform into a security situation with the potential to escalate as a result of cultural difference.¹⁸³ The formal, “wait for the ambulance” approach of UNIFIL can be perceived by local populations as a foreign, occupying military neglecting the health and wellbeing of Lebanese civilians. In contrast, the urgent, compassionate response of the Lebanese people, who perhaps doubt the reliability and rapidity of an ambulance in such circumstances, can be perceived by UNIFIL as aggressive and irresponsible.

And people in Lebanon wait for a tiny thing like this, to grrrrrr!!!! You know?! All the good you do goes [away] with one tiny thing! It’s not only Lebanese, it’s international. They say when you are right no one remembers, when you are wrong no one forgets (LS-3).

As this UNIFIL local staff member notes, these misinterpretations, which are caused by a lack of local knowledge and understanding, can quickly entrench into misunderstandings and foster a negative context for interaction.

Through conversations with Lebanese people, international UNIFIL staff can begin to understand what words, actions, patterns, and interactions mean within the social and political

¹⁸³ Göksel (2007) makes a similar point about the potential for incidents to escalate into conflict, however he attributes it to a lack of law and order in south Lebanon prior to the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces in the region. Fetherston and Nordstrom locate such escalation potential in the *habitus* of military culture. Military training and ideology perpetuates “an us/them dichotomy” and a belief “that force is a primary means of ensuring victory” (1995, p. 107). This training results in a military *habitus* that impacts personnel response to many different situations during a deployment. “One important outcome of this is that the mere presence of armed forces sharpens the sense of threat. This pervades the entire civilian context” (Fetherston & Nordstrom, 1995, p. 108).

context of south Lebanese villages.¹⁸⁴ Developing this knowledge is important for avoiding misunderstandings and mitigating hostility between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities. Several UNIFIL veterans commented that they were faced with tense situations in which they did not understand who the opposing party was or the context of the hostility. In some cases, assumptions or misunderstandings about these situations have the potential to escalate, rather than deescalate the encounter.

I only had a couple of incidents where I felt threatened. It was not that bad, and again we don't know who it was. So it could have been al-Qaeda, it could have been anyone, from Palestinians, local Lebanese, Syrians, whatever. So in my perception of it, it was not that it was the locals being aggressive against us, it was outsiders coming in trying to start some kind of conflict (AL-11).

Absent adequate understanding of the conflict dynamics and resistance in south Lebanon, this participant conflates a tense situation with the broader, global narrative of the War of Terror (Makdisi, 2017).¹⁸⁵ Doing so has the potential to augment UNIFIL's threat perception and defensive posture. Defensive, military reactions, most commonly to traffic incidents or stone throwing in villages, fuels the Lebanese perception that UNIFIL is "against us" (MM-2), which can escalate a tense encounter.¹⁸⁶ These situations must be contextualized within Lebanese social and cultural norms (e.g. in response to a traffic accident, people attempt to help and intervene rather than waiting for paramedics), and the history and politics of south Lebanon (e.g. stone

¹⁸⁴ Miller and Rudnick (2010) note that culture can determine the interpretation and meaning of words and social exchanges resulting in misunderstanding or insult over the course of daily activities and encounters. Duffey (2000) also observes that "cultural differences may give rise to barriers to interaction, misunderstandings, prejudices, and unknowingly offensive behaviour that may reduce the chances for constructive activity" (p. 147). Lebanese people encounter multiple different cultures, each with their own relational idiosyncrasies, and each requiring learning and adaptation to facilitate interactions.

¹⁸⁵ See Makdisi (2017) for a discussion of how the War on Terror influenced Resolution 1701 and the shape of UNIFIL following the July 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah.

¹⁸⁶ Taken alongside the redeployment of some contingents to UNIFIL from tours in Afghanistan, where the posture toward the local population is significantly different than what would be appropriate in Lebanon, without sufficient *understanding* of such incidents relations between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities can rapidly deteriorate and become hostile.

throwing as an act of resistance to foreign occupation or an expression of dissatisfaction with UNIFIL actions and/or policies).

Social, cultural, historical and political *understanding* are critical to the effectiveness of peace operations, as they are necessary aspects of local support and cooperation (Bellou, 2014). Bellou argues that cultural awareness can have a “multiplying effect in the implementation of a mission, positive when present and negative when absent” (2014, p. 583). This illustrates the impact of the acquisition and development of knowledge, including both *information* and *understanding*, through interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. Through relationships, knowledge is relationally co-constructed and hybridized through Lebanese agency in interactional spaces. The accumulation of such knowledge within UNIFIL personnel contributes to UNIFIL’s “fund” of local knowledge on which it can draw in pursuing both local support and operational effectiveness.

6. 2. 2 Local Support and Cooperation

As discussed in the previous section, much of the important knowledge UNIFIL requires, including both *information* and *understanding*, is experientially and relationally developed while deployed in south Lebanon. This knowledge is crucial for UNIFIL to show respect to Lebanese communities and individuals, and to earn their respect in turn.¹⁸⁷ Several participants directly linked mutual respect, or in some cases mutual trust, to support for and cooperation with UNIFIL’s activities and mission – “Just show them respect and they will show you respect back” (AL-3); “there is a kind of respect between both sides” (CS-7). Notably, there are also several contributing factors to mutual respect and local support that are not rooted in relationships and

¹⁸⁷ Kakar (2014) discusses the importance of respect in engaging Afghan religious leaders to support and partner on reforms for women’s rights.

connections, but rather emerge from UNIFIL's activities in south Lebanon, such as demonstrations of commitment,¹⁸⁸ protection and development efforts,¹⁸⁹ and humanitarian works beyond the mandate.¹⁹⁰ While these are not the focus of this argument, they are important for local support and cooperation.

Within Lebanese culture, traditions of hospitality and social conventions are intimately linked to the development and demonstration of respect and trust between interacting parties. As such, the interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people that occur within the context of

¹⁸⁸ Both UNIFIL veterans and Lebanese participants linked indications of commitment or investment in Lebanon to signs of respect. Lebanese participants often observed that peacekeepers have left their homes, their families, and their lives to come to Lebanon and try to make a positive contribution. "They are good people, nice people, who are coming from outside to help us, to serve in difficult conditions in Lebanon, without power sometimes, no roads, no traffic lights. It's a big sacrifice for someone sitting in Sweden, a nice country, who is then deployed to Lebanon to serve in a country where people they are driving crazy, pollution everywhere, you know, I give them credit absolutely, I respect them so much" (CS-18). Irish UNIFIL veterans particularly framed the duration of the Irish engagement in south Lebanon as evidence of commitment to the cause and the mission, which in their understanding is a key factor underpinning their positive relationship with the local community. "Yea, I think the locals respected the Irish, because we were there since 1978, continuously probably, and I suppose because we integrated" (AL-14). Commitment is also evoked through perseverance, despite at times difficult relations with local populations in the earlier period of the UNIFIL mission. In contrast, indications of a lack of commitment, such as fleeing to bases in the face of Israeli tanks or failing to fulfill promises and business contracts, erode respect and trust between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities.

¹⁸⁹ Many participants express respect and appreciation for the protection UNIFIL provides and the funding, projects and development it channels into south Lebanon. These activities make UNIFIL deserving of respect. "But you know, it's always the feeling to protect and secure the place. Like even if my grandmother or grandfather spoke to us, the presence for them during the war in Qana was to protect people and feel them secure. And even for now, we can hear always that some people are going to bring for example the bread or ointment from them. So there is a trust between the people and between them, because they are really doing something good" (CS-12).

¹⁹⁰ Several participants, both Lebanese and UNIFIL (27 total) recount stories of UNIFIL engaging in good works, beyond the scope of the mandate. These narratives are framed in a highly positive light, as evidence of the good and substantial relationships between these two groups, and of the support and solidarity UNIFIL demonstrates through, and receives as a result of, these efforts. Particularly in the early years of the mission when UNIFIL had no humanitarian budget, they still engaged in many initiatives and projects pioneered by deployed units and individuals. Such efforts include donating old furniture to schools, offering manual and skilled labour for projects in the villages, refurbishing old computers and donating them, providing gasoline to projects and individuals in times of scarcity, donating leftover bread and food to local kitchen staff to distribute to their families and neighbours, and helping individuals build shops and mini markets near the UNIFIL bases. "If we have some spare time, and we have some good machines, we could make a football field, hell we'd make a football field for the kids you know. If they needed some water pipes and we have some extra water pipes, okay we fix water pipes... even if it's not our duty to do it, yea what the hell, we have 10 hours today and nothing to do, help them instead of just sitting here and playing cards" (AL-5). Narratives such as these emerge commonly in this research, primarily in people's reflections on the period prior to 2000. In the post-2006 period, UNIFIL's oversight, protocols and regulations became far more restrictive and controlled, leaving less opportunity for on-the-ground innovation and humanitarian efforts outside of the operational scope of UNIFIL. Nonetheless, the memories of such good works have enduring impacts on shaping a positive relationship between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, underpinning motivations to support and cooperate with UNIFIL today.

hospitality (see Chapter 4) are important to the development of trust and respect between these groups.

If you were invited in for some *shaaee* [tea], you would go in, and have your tea there, be polite – basically them trusting you, and you in turn showing a presence there to reaffirm that they were safe, and we were there to protect them and such. As small of an army as we were, they did appreciate it, you know? (AL-6).

Many of the gestures surrounding the sharing of food and drink are symbols of trust and respect (Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Chapple-Sokol, 2013), such as the trust displayed in both the invitation and its acceptance (Hultin et al., 2021), the submission associated with entering the private spaces of others (Derrida, 1997), the conviviality of sitting at a mutual table (Chapple-Sokol, 2013),¹⁹¹ the ritual of small talk and inquiring after one another's health and wellbeing, as well as the familial and communal practice of sharing food and drink (Chapple-Sokol, 2013).¹⁹² Each of these aspects of hospitality, under the right conditions, are productive to the development of mutual respect and trust, often expressed by participants through the language of friendship and loyalty. Understanding the cultural meaning of these interactions constitutes local knowledge that is valuable for cultivating local support and cooperation.

Local knowledge is also an important determinant of professionalism and cultural sensitivity,¹⁹³ which several participants positively link to mutual respect and local support. For

¹⁹¹ “Commensality, from the Latin for the act of sitting at the table together, is vital to diplomatic discussion. While public dialogue and large conferences can lead to decision-making, the best negotiation and conversation often happens away from the public eye, over a meal or a drink” (Chapple-Sokol, 2013, p. 162). These insights also inform the literature on and practice of Track Two diplomacy, or unofficial diplomatic activities undertaken with secondary elites, or ‘key people’ with strong social networks, in the interest of building “epistemic communities for peace” and promoting “new concepts into the region’s discourse” (Jones, 2009-2010, p. 106). Diplomatic engagement at unofficial levels improves the effectiveness of mediation and cultivates grassroots level support for peace processes (Jones, 2019).

¹⁹² “The process of familiarization is the key to cultural diplomacy [... it] brings foreign audiences to newfound respect for one’s cuisine, culture and, hopefully, country” (Chapple-Sokol, 2013, p. 169).

¹⁹³ Duffey (2000) argues that culture is relevant at both an interactional and a process-level in conflict resolution and peacebuilding interventions. “Culturally sensitive approaches are more likely to support sustainable peace processes” (p. 146). This echoes Avruch and Black’s (1991) “ethnoconflict theory,” which posits that conflict is culturally produced and interpreted, and as such conflict resolution must be approached with culturally appropriate strategies. Feldman (2010) notes the numerous problems peacekeeping has faced with respect to “lack of

example, UNIFIL are advised not to take any offers of food or drink, or to be seen eating and drinking in public, particularly in Muslim-majority villages or areas, during the fasting month of Ramadan.¹⁹⁴ Such practice exemplifies “the small details, [...that] show respect to the community” (CA-1) and foster good relations. This practice emerges from both *information* about the traditions around Ramadan and the geographical distribution of Muslim communities in the south, as well as *understanding* of how the local community would interpret public consumption by non-Muslims. While training materials may include this information, an understanding of the disrespect conveyed by such action is experientially and relationally developed. In many contexts, the Lebanese culture of hospitality would dictate that a guest be offered food and drink even if the host is fasting. While this is certainly a gesture of welcoming, acceptance of this offer would be considered quite rude, while normally refusal of such an offer of hospitality would itself be rude. To navigate these dynamics of meaning and social convention, one UNIFIL participant explained that he consciously avoided visiting Muslim contacts and friends during the day in the month of Ramadan, so as to not encounter such a complex social situation. This story demonstrates the value of *understanding information* within specific cultural and social contexts so as to demonstrate respect and preserve good relations with local communities.

understanding of local cultural forms, political conditions, and meaning systems,” which constitute barriers to positive community relations (p. 417).

¹⁹⁴ Another important example is the politics and acceptable protocol around taking photographs. Photographs are sensitive in south Lebanon as people may interpret taking pictures as spying, as violating the modesty of their wives and female relations, or as an Orientalizing gesture – “the sensitivity of the civilians mainly... ah... focus on taking pictures. When you are moving around in the village taking pictures, so first of all, you know we are in a conservative area – ‘you are taking picture of my wife? My mother, my sister?’ etc. So, this is not good. Second, ‘what do you think my house is a Roman ruin, you are taking pictures of my house?’” (CA-1). This has been a frequent source of tension between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities, and as such is an important piece of information conveyed through training. Understanding of why photographs are sensitive in south Lebanon is developed through an appreciation of the historical and political context of the region and the profound sense of mistrust that exists toward foreigners as potential spies for Israel.

The literature on international interventions in conflict-affected settings makes clear the value of organizational learning and institutional memory for the development of relevant knowledges, which is connected to local support and operational effectiveness. This rationalizes advocacy for longer deployments and stronger mechanisms of knowledge transfer within organizations (Moore & Antill, 2011; de Coning, 2019; Hardt, 2017; Martin-Brulé & von Hlatky, 2018; Grant & Zyla, 2021; Keane & Wood, 2016). This theme was similarly expressed by participants, particularly of Irish origins, who connected the duration of the Irish commitment in Lebanon, and the reality that many Irish troops did multiple tours, to valuable knowledge development and strong relations with local peoples.

Over my four tours with UNIFIL there were both positive and negative aspects, and the fact that my first mission was in 1978 and my last mission with UNIFIL was in 1991/92 has meant I started out as a very young, somewhat naïve soldier, with very little knowledge of Middle East history or culture, and over the course of my later missions I became a lot wiser, and a more experienced soldier with a lot of knowledge, and experience, and with a huge amount of respect for the local population, who had to endure extreme disruption to their lives at times by way of invasion, occupation, shelling, shootings, kidnappings, air strikes, loss of family members, loss of land and property or had property destroyed, and all the other horrors that comes with living in a conflict zone (AL-17).

During all of my tours of duty with UNIFIL we have always had a good interaction with the local Lebanese people, and over decades have built a great relationship which is one of mutual respect for one another (AL-17).

Through experiences and interactions in Lebanon, personnel develop greater *understanding* of and respect for the opinions and positions of Lebanese people – “But then you have to respect, they were, in their eyes, fighting quite a legitimate war as well, you know” (AL-14).

Understanding the history and political context underpinning both the intrastate and interstate conflicts benefits UNIFIL’s credibility in the eyes of Lebanese people (Newby, 2018). Further, it

erodes the widely held perception that UNIFIL is biased against Lebanon,¹⁹⁵ thereby positively contributing to local support for the mission.

As UNIFIL personnel develop their knowledge through social connections and relationships in Lebanese communities, several stories describe the evolution of an ethic of care and kindness. These sentiments result in extraordinary actions at both contingent and individual levels.

Look, the Irish, who are very popular, they are in a village called Tibnin, which [...] they [Israel and/or the SLA] used to shell quite often. So every time the shelling used to start, some Irish senior sergeants, old timers, they used to grab their guitars, and go around to the orphanage – there was a huge orphanage there which the Norwegians and the Dutch had built when they were here, and it provided greatly – so they would go around with their guitars and entertain the children during the shelling, so they would not be scared. I mean where are you going to get that kind of service? It's in the Irish nature also. Because they are old timers, they have their own children and grandchildren, and all that. So I mean, those sort of things made you very close with the people (AL-1).

We were 1984, just kids, one of the Norwegians, I remember, we were kids, he said “why you don't play football with us?” I said, “how can we, you are army, you have your own balls, your own shoes, we don't have anything.” He said, “but really? If somebody offers you, can you make a team?” So with his own money, he bought us balls, shoes, shorts, t-shirts, and gave us money to send those t-shirts to Saida to print the names (LC-5).

Stories such as these point to the positive impacts individual acts of caring and kindness can have on relationships and support for the mission (see Chapter 7 for a discussion of UNIFIL's active suppression of individuality amongst peacekeepers). This evokes what Constantiou (2006) terms “homo-diplomacy” or “the nonprofessional dimension of diplomacy, by which I mean the

¹⁹⁵ UNIFIL, though a force to monitor the border area between two countries and prevent both parties from sovereignty violations, is exclusively deployed within Lebanese territory (Kassem, 2017; UNSC, 19 March 1978, 11 August 2006). This reality reflects and perpetuates a politically-rooted partiality that is consistently experienced by Lebanese people. “But inside our hearts, we don't believe in the UNIFIL. We know that UNIFIL belongs to the United Nations, and the decisions of the UN are big politics, and we don't decide anything about it. And they have good relations with Israel, which is our enemy, and we believe that the relation between UNIFIL and the United Nations – between them and Israel, is better than the relation between them and us. So we know this” (LC-20). This conception of UNIFIL as biased against Lebanese people is widely held and based on knowledge of global politics, the structure of the UN system, and four decades of experience with UNIFIL (Kassem, 2017; Makdisi, 2014).

interpersonal dealings of the homo sapiens, or if you like the nontechnical, experimental, and experiential diplomacy of everyday life” (p. 352). This form of diplomacy is transformative insofar as it shapes “knowledge of the Self as a more reflective means of dealing with and transforming relations with Others” (p. 352). Crucially, these gestures are relationally informed and enacted – they emerge from understandings of local context and are themselves produced through interactions across the international-local divide. Such gestures encourage a sense of solidarity and community, incrementally transforming relations between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities, thereby fostering a more supportive and cooperative operational environment.

Several of these stories of care and kindness emerge by virtue of individuals who exhibit risk taking behaviour and act in contravention of official rules and protocol. Such individuals were discussed frequently in this research as they stand out in people’s memories and narratives about the connections and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. Such stories make clear that UNIFIL personnel are individuals with their own value systems, who exercise agency according to their own knowledges, ethics and perspectives,¹⁹⁶ which are shaped by their relational experiences in south Lebanon. Lebanese people who have witnessed or directly benefitted from such actions understand the risks these personnel have taken in subverting the rules, which are interpreted as gestures of care and support, which in turn inspires support for UNIFIL individuals and the mission. The willingness to take such risks is a marker of

¹⁹⁶ “I can say for example, in my squad, the dry foods unit, we were taking care of millions of tonnage of food, and we had a smart system to count exactly... Let’s say you are a cook in one camp, and you ordered 25 kilos of rice, but the rice is packed so you can only get 24.8 kilos, but when we give it to you, we put 25 kilos. That means we have 200 grams of rice in the balance too much, but no one knows about it except for us. So we counted out, we have one guy sitting and counting out exactly what we have in stock of good things like cocoa powder, corn flakes, cooking oil, rice, cookies... they are all the good stuff you know... so every third month, he printed out exactly how much we have in stock that nobody knew about. Those things we put on a truck, and everybody knows about this, even the peacekeeping forces on the civilian side, and we drove up all this stuff to a home for kids who have lost their parents in Lebanon and gave it for free” (AL-5).

exceptionalism that emerged several times over the course of this research.¹⁹⁷ At times it manifest as a willingness to put oneself in danger by circumventing security protocols to attain or maintain access to local areas and individuals. In other cases, individuals took the risk to stand up to or confront superiors in the interest of good works or building positive relationships with the local community. Finally, this exceptionalism also emerged through extraordinary acts of defense and protection by both UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals, which are understood by participants as demonstrative of mutual care and loyalty.¹⁹⁸

Ultimately, both UNIFIL and Lebanese communities mirror the treatment they receive from the other party – respect and support breeds respect and support, while disrespect and hostility encourages disrespect and hostility. “What makes division is being not supporting, and not respecting. This is demanded. It takes away from the mission” (LS-5). Through relationships

¹⁹⁷ Notably, there are also several ways in which exceptionalism and individual initiative from personnel can generate negative results and impacts. For example, “He [a battalion commander] had a meeting with the Christian militia without telling us. He allowed his officers to attend their ceremony, and I said ‘what?’ The next day it’s in the newspapers. So I got an email to New York, I said, ‘this guy goes home,’ and New York agreed – that’s the whole thing. And we sent the guy home. Never happened in UN history here a battalion commander is sent home” (AL-1).

¹⁹⁸ Stories of UNIFIL protection of Lebanese civilians are numerous, with the most frequently cited example being the bombardments of Qana in 1996, where the Fijian UNIFIL base was targeted and 106 civilians were killed. In response to these experiences of protection and defense, Lebanese individuals have also protected UNIFIL through both information sharing and direct protective action.

LC-17: I remember a big Colonel, a French Colonel who came... I am the guy who hide him. They [a political group, unclear which, but implicated in other kidnappings and murders of foreign forces] wanted to kidnap him.

Me: And you hid him?

LC-17: Yes I did. This is the first time I tell.

Me: What made you decide to do that?

LC-17: Who me? Because I loved him.

Me: He was a friend.

LC-17: Yes, he was my friend, and they wanted to take him and they wanted to kill him. This is the first time I am telling. [...]

Me: How did you become friends?

LC-17: Because he came every week to my shop.

This story was shared to illustrate the depth and meaning of the relationships that can develop between UNIFIL and Lebanese people through repeat interaction in the interfaces discussed in Chapter 4.

and connections, UNIFIL gains access to local knowledge, including both *information* and *understanding*, through the hybridization and co-construction that occurs in substantive interactions. This knowledge enables respectful, appropriate and effective actions and behaviours, thus earning and preserving local support for and cooperation with UNIFIL's operational activities and mandate.

6. 2. 3 Operational Effectiveness, Real-time Diplomacy and Peacekeeping-as-Presence

It has been well argued elsewhere that support of the local population is an essential aspect of operational effectiveness (Gordon & Young, 2017; Roberts, 2011; Boege et al., 2009; Fishstein & Wilder, 2012). This sentiment is echoed by participants in this research:

And the second thing is if you have to pacify, you have to make contact with the people, because if the people are against you, your operation is lost, you are fighting a lost battle and it costs you a hell of a lot of lives if you don't understand people and if you are not on speaking terms with them. As a military unit, then it goes wrong, your mission has failed (AL-16).

What brings them together, first of all, is their role here, they are here to keep the peace. By the description of their role, it makes them have to mingle with the people here, and bring them together (CS-19).

Not only does UNIFIL depend on an ongoing invitation from the Lebanese government to operate in south Lebanon (Novosseloff, 2015), it also functionally requires the assistance of the Lebanese Armed Forces to conduct its daily actions.¹⁹⁹ UNIFIL must be seen as a legitimate and/or beneficial actor in south Lebanon so as to avoid passive and active resistance from local people, impeding the execution of its mandate and the maintenance of stability in the region.

Based on evidence collected through 82 interviews with both UNIFIL veterans and Lebanese individuals, I pose two arguments regarding UNIFIL's effectiveness. Firstly,

¹⁹⁹ As noted in Chapter 5, section 3, the LAF serves to mediate and facilitate the interactions of UNIFIL with certain municipalities where tensions exist due to complex histories and incidents between UNIFIL and local communities.

participants universally understand that UNIFIL is incapable of fulfilling its mandate of preventing hostile action by either Hezbollah or Israel and preserving the territorial sovereignty of the Lebanese state as mandated in Resolutions 425, 426, 1701 and all subsequent renewals (UNSC, 19 March 1978, 11 August 2006). Despite this foundational ineffectiveness, UNIFIL is still widely embraced by the people of south Lebanon for the ways in which it does positively affect their lives. UNIFIL is effective as a contributing factor to development and stability in south Lebanon, both of which enable Lebanese people to live their daily lives in relative peace.²⁰⁰ In support of its stabilization role, UNIFIL's relationships and connections bolster its access to local knowledge, which enhances its capacity to engage in ground-level, ad hoc diplomacy, diffusing tensions and maintaining relative peace.

Secondly, I argue that there is a further parameter of effectiveness that is not captured by UNIFIL's mandate, but is significant to the people of south Lebanon – that is 'peacekeeping-as-presence'. This role casts UNIFIL as witnesses to the situation in south Lebanon, with two key effects – deterring Israeli aggression for fear of reputational losses and international sanction, and shaping UNIFIL as interlocutors for the Lebanese people to the international community. This interlocution role emerges due to the relationships and connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, through which Lebanese individuals exert agency and foster solidarity and understanding for their experience in this conflict landscape.

There is a profound understanding in south Lebanon that UNIFIL is limited in its capacity to fulfill its mandate, "maintain the border" (LC-23), preserve the territorial sovereignty of Lebanon, and prevent hostile actions from involved parties.²⁰¹ UNIFIL participants (20 of 25)

²⁰⁰ The relative peace that UNIFIL provides through stabilization is described by participants as less than the "real peace" they seek. For further discussion see section 6. 2 below.

²⁰¹ For example, prior to the June 1982 invasion of Lebanon, "Operation Peace for Galilee" (which lasted until May 1983), UNIFIL was given less than 30 minutes notice and told not to resist the progress of Israeli forces. In

attribute these limitations to the parameters of the mandate and use of force provisions, which are ultimately constrained by international politics surrounding the State of Israel.²⁰²

I thought it was very frustrating, because of course we asked when we were down there what to do if Israel decided to invade, and we were told to just find the nearest camp and stay there. And we were like, “What the fuck? Are we not supposed to kind of like oppose them and to keep them back?” And they were like, “Nope. Yeah you’re just gonna go away, just hide and stay in your camps.” And that kind of like created a sense of it being totally pointless (AL-11).

response, UNIFIL established barricades and attempted to physically block the advance, but were quickly overrun. Israel invaded as far as Beirut, and “UNIFIL was simply ‘brushed aside contemptuously’” (Makdisi, 2014, p. 32). Göksel (2007) notes that “like everybody else, the UN knew the Israelis were going to invade or do something and the instructions from New York were: do as much as you can, but don’t sustain casualties – basically, you’re a peacekeeping force, you’re not equipped or mandated to resist an invasion” (p. 66). Their role subsequently became primarily humanitarian, providing medical aid, food and shelter to the people of south Lebanon during the invasion (Novosseloff, 2015).

²⁰² The political power and influence of Israel, alongside numerous materially and politically powerful allies (including several permanent members of the Security Council), directly restricts the mandate of UNIFIL (Makdisi, 2014). UNIFIL emerged as a response to both a conflict problem and a political problem – the desire of the United States to maintain the ongoing Camp David peace talks on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (talks included Egypt) in 1978 (Makdisi, 2014; Novosseloff, 2015). Makdisi (2014) describes how the creation of UNIFIL occurred under the stewardship of then-U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who focused on “securing Israel’s compliance” for the mandate and the UNIFIL mission, as opposed to structuring a mandate that reflected an “understanding of the larger Arab-Israeli picture and its consequences for Lebanon” (p. 27). The UN Secretariat expressed concern about the mandate and “the mission’s inadequate planning, equipment, and lack of exit strategy,” and as such insisted on “interim” being used to describe its short-term conceptualization (Makdisi, 2014, p. 31; see also Göksel, 2007). The Security Council at the time authorized Resolutions 425 and 426 with 12 votes in favour, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Czechoslovakia opposed, and China in abstention (Novosseloff, 2015). It was not until 1986 that the USSR reversed its vote to support UNIFIL’s mandate. Further, UNIFIL’s presence was issued on the request of the Lebanese government, without the consent or support of all conflicting parties, namely the PLO and Christian militias in south Lebanon (Novosseloff, 2015). As such, UNIFIL since its advent, has lacked strong political support from the international community and the support of the warring parties, which together severely constrain its mandate and operational capacity (Novosseloff, 2015; see also Weinberger, 1983; James, 1990). The lack of international political consensus on the advent of UNIFIL also led to a under-valuation of UNIFIL’s force strength – Hillen (2000) argues that while UNIFIL was originally allotted 4,000 uniformed personnel and 1,000 logistical support staff, it likely required closer to 20,000 troops in order to execute the mandate set out in Resolutions 425 and 426 (see also Novosseloff, 2015). In addition, the speed at which UNIFIL was created and deployed (due to the political context of the Israeli peace talks), meant the force lacked a defined area of operations in south Lebanon. As such, for many years UNIFIL had a fragmented area of operations, lacking access to areas controlled by the South Lebanese Army, and the Tyre pocket controlled by the PLO (Skogmo, 1989). As early as 1979, UNIFIL and the United Nations failed to compel the South Lebanese Army to permit the deployment of the Lebanese army into the south of Lebanon, and were themselves blocked from moving throughout south Lebanon and shelled by the SLA (Makdisi, 2014). “Despite UN protest to Israel, there was little political consequence, since Washington did not intervene in any meaningful way” (Makdisi, 2014, p. 32). Further, Israel periodically denied UNIFIL access to the international border region limiting its capacity to prevent incursions (Novosseloff, 2015). UNIFIL operated under direct occupation (1982-2000), incapable of performing tasks associated with its mandate, instead focusing on “secondary” tasks such as “emergency relief, humanitarian intervention, and record keeping” (Makdisi, 2014, p. 33). Finally, UNIFIL also struggled financially, with several UN member states refusing to provide their agreed contributions (Novosseloff, 2015). The constraint of global politics on UNIFIL’s capacity to enforce its mandate equitably undermines its credibility with the Lebanese people. The inequity and limitations of the intervention are understood as reflections of international political will regarding the conflict, which manifests geopolitics as a barrier at the interface of UNIFIL personnel and the Lebanese people.

UNIFIL is already more than 40 years in Lebanon and I think they prevented escalation in certain times, but only with the help from the US. And maybe that's one of the problems. UNIFIL can't hold Israel at place. And many Lebanese see UNIFIL as a follower of the US [...] By the Lebanese, UNIFIL is seen as a paper tiger" (AL-22).

Lebanese participants (33 of 56) understand these limitations through the language of UNIFIL's role in south Lebanon, which many perceive as monitoring and controlling the area – "they are monitors" (CS-4) – rather than preventing hostilities and defending Lebanese sovereignty.²⁰³

In light of its limited capacity to fulfill its core mandate, UNIFIL's role is alternatively framed and conceptualized by individuals in south Lebanon. In part, this role reconfiguration or reframing is an intentional effort by UNIFIL, through its quick impact projects, development work, and partnerships with civil society groups. These constitute strategies to win and preserve the support and cooperation of the local community (UN PKO/DFS, 2012). However, this role reconfiguration is also taken up by the Lebanese people, who recast the function of UNIFIL to align with its actual, positive impacts in the region. The reorientation, or "positive spin," of UNIFIL's role and effectiveness emerged in many interviews through participants' simultaneous acknowledgement of UNIFIL's lack of capacity and their support for its ongoing presence. UNIFIL's effective role in south Lebanon is understood as "peacekeeping-as-development" (Jennings, 2015) and "peacekeeping-as-stabilization."

²⁰³ Despite the widespread understanding of UNIFIL's limitations, 22 participants in this study believe that UNIFIL offers protection to the people of south Lebanon, either directly through sheltering and defensive action, or indirectly by reducing the likelihood of the resumption of conflict. "We feel more protected here. Mainly they are here for protection, they are here to calm down the challenges from both sides, but we feel safe whenever we see the patrols around, we feel more safe" (CS-8). "But the genuine people would have remembered what had happened in the past as well, when the Israelis came in, and a lot of them would have gone to us to seek shelter as such" (AL-6). This protective function is commonly conveyed through specific, discrete stories and anecdotes. Few participants attribute a more general, existential protectionary role to UNIFIL due to the limitations described in this section.

Through job vacancies, projects, spending and development work, UNIFIL is widely appreciated and understood to have concrete, positive impacts in south Lebanon (see Chapter 5, section 2.1).

But we went back out there and there were houses built up all around them. And there was a huge development, it was great to see it, economy was absolutely recovering and people were actually building houses and making money and the roads had improved so much. There was infrastructure again, which there was none of that in 78-79. There was no infrastructure whatsoever, right? And that's just what UNIFIL did is brought back a bit of security and dependability to the local people. That's what we thought anyway (AL-8).

In many ways, UNIFIL fills gaps in service delivery and security provision left by the Lebanese government (Makdisi, 2014). “The thing is... is that we are living in a government that is like really not offering what it is supposed to do. So part of this lack is being done by the UNIFIL” (CS-11). UNIFIL improved service delivery and provided for people's basic needs (e.g. water treatment facilities, solar power street lights, building projects).²⁰⁴ Importantly, UNIFIL has also undertaken capacity development of the Lebanese Armed Forces.²⁰⁵ Lebanese participants consider this to be a valuable and effective contribution to Lebanon's overall security, in partial fulfillment of UNIFIL's mandate. UNIFIL's effectiveness as a contributor to development was noted by 31 of 82 participants, with varying degrees of emphasis. For some participants, these

²⁰⁴ “UNFIL's responsibility for facilitating the provision of humanitarian aid was not specifically part of its original mandate but became over the years the primary justification for maintaining it. It also provided the local population with some limited economic development. Indeed, over the years, UNIFIL became a significant economic force injecting millions of dollars into the local economy, and thus raising living standards” (Novosseloff, 2015, p. 254). While individuals are grateful for these services, there is also an acknowledgment that in contributing to employment and service delivery, the Lebanese government never develops the capacity to govern south Lebanon. “The bad thing for the UNIFIL if we are going to check out some disadvantages... because the UNIFIL are here and they are taking care of all the people and they are offering job vacancies and all that. But while they are here, the Lebanese government is not aware of anything about what the people here need. So if one day when they would leave, do you think that the Lebanese government would take care again of these people?” (CS-14).

²⁰⁵ As early as April 1979, the Lebanese army began to deploy into south Lebanon, in support of the UNIFIL mandate and the objective to quickly conclude the operation by handing over territorial and security control to the Lebanese government. In 1979, a battalion of 500 individuals operated under UNIFIL command, however the ongoing civil war in Lebanon and the active Israeli occupation limited further deployments until 2000 (Novosseloff, 2015). Following the Israeli withdrawal and the dissolution of the South Lebanese Army, Lebanese military and police forces were able to establish a greater presence with the assistance of UNIFIL (Novosseloff, 2015).

functions were the primary role of UNIFIL and the greatest source of UNIFIL's impact in increasing "freedom from want." For others, these development-related functions were a minor aspect of UNIFIL's broader role – to stabilize the region.

The most prominent conception of UNIFIL's role and effectiveness was "peacekeeping-as-stabilization" (mentioned by 56 of 82 participants).

You don't heal the wound, but you try to stop the blood from pumping out of the body (AL-10).

So I can feel also that UNIFIL [...] people feel that they make the place more secure and the local people see that, that it's more secure with UNIFIL, even though UNIFIL cannot interact or fight with Hezbollah or IDF or these kinds of things, but still I can feel that they think it's more stable (AL-18).

These responses support the assessment of multiple Secretaries-General who consistently observe in their reports that despite limitations, UNIFIL is nonetheless vital for stability (for example, UNSC, 12 Jun 1980, 22 Jan 1988, 11 March 2022). UNIFIL's effectiveness in this respect has enabled people to live their daily lives with some degree of stability, increasing "freedom from fear," for significant periods of time between hostile incidents.

[...] the presence of UNIFIL gives the people in the South more room for a normal life. And until now UNIFIL can maintain a certain status quo in the peace process, but I think a fragile one, only by favour of the big countries (AL-22).

described UNIFIL as "not a peacekeeping force, but a war-dampening force. Its mandated task is impossible to attain, yet its presence remains indispensable" (p. 67). This research presents evidence that this stabilization role is bolstered by UNIFIL's relationships and connections with Lebanese people, which generate knowledge hybridization, improve local support, and thus enhance UNIFIL's capacity for ground-level, ad hoc diplomacy.

Equipped with local knowledge and key local contacts, several stories illustrate the role of relationships in enabling micro-level diplomacy by UNIFIL personnel. Through ad hoc

negotiations, UNIFIL has been effective in deescalating tensions and maintaining stability in the area of operations.

It [a traffic incident] disturbed the relationship and it was our [UNIFIL's] responsibility as the first responders. Because the mayor told this commander that your soldiers are not welcome in our area. You are not allowed to come to our municipality any more. So, the case came to us. So how to solve this. We went to the mayor, we let time pass, about one month, just to calm him down. And then we went to him and said "Look, you have two ways. Either LAF will enforce you to accept their [UNIFIL's] presence, because this is their work. Or, there is another option, just to compensate this mistake, to ask this battalion to make a QIP for you". Hahaha you see?! And then it is sure that they will not repeat this action. "So what do you think? Which option do you prefer?" (CA-1).

And you know, back in the 80s we used to have lots of problems. I was called after the midnight, you know, "there's a problem between some UNIFIL troops and some armed elements, Lebanese armed elements." So I go to the spot, and the first thing they ask me is "why they want to stop us defending our land? And they don't stop Israelis shelling our villages and taking our children." It's a normal question. So we tried to ease things down as much as we can (LC-6; a Lebanese translator for a UNIFIL battalion).

Micro-diplomacy is a valuable, relational tool for UNIFIL to compensate for its limited force capacity and expand its effectiveness in stabilizing the region.

The local intelligence would have indicated that a lot of that [our role] was to keep a lid on the local area, and you know, keep everyone happy. The fact that if anything really happened, we... I won't say we wouldn't be capable, but it was a lot easier to go down conversing, rather than with the heavy hand (AL-6).

Explanations, conciliatory gestures and bargaining are all strategies enacted by UNIFIL in the interest of maintaining stability and good relations with Lebanese communities. These capacities are dependent on sufficient local knowledge, including both *information* and *understanding*, as well as sufficient local support and cooperation. Real-time, micro-diplomacy improves UNIFIL's effectiveness as a stabilizing actor, enabling Lebanese people to live their lives in relative peace between overt hostilities across the border.

Linked to its role in peacekeeping-as-stabilization, an alternative conception of UNIFIL's effectiveness in south Lebanon emerged in this research. A recurring theme in conversations

with UNIFIL and Lebanese participants was the valuable and distinct impacts of UNIFIL's physical and relational 'presence' in south Lebanon.²⁰⁶ By virtue of its physical presence, UNIFIL functions as a deterrent²⁰⁷ to aggression against Lebanese civilians.²⁰⁸

In our time, the best protection we could offer to the people was having UN bases in the villages, so somebody else couldn't shell them. [...] but then gradually, which was inevitable, the people started returning to south Lebanon, and they started demanding their houses back. [...] Our people decided to build bases outside of the villages. I was dead against it. [...] we became more distant to the people. Big mistake. The people knew that that was the best security we offered them, by being around them (AL-1).

So the mere fact that we were living among the Muslim areas was definitely a factor which prevented the SLA from being more aggressive, and Israel being more aggressive than they were (AL-10).

UNIFIL's effectiveness in protecting Lebanese people, from both Israeli and SLA forces, is rooted in their physical presence as a direct deterrent to aggression. This deterrence also functions indirectly by elevating the reputational costs of hostile actions against civilians.

Oh absolutely, I think without UNIFIL being there, I think the attacks, the investigations by Israel would be more frequent. The interactions between Lebanon and Israel would have been more frequent. [...] It was like the big brother watching Israel, keeping an eye on Israel, like look, we're here and you can't just do what you want. If you do infringe, you're reported to the UN in New York, follow ups and all the rest of it (AL-14).

The other thing is that having some foreigners, especially Europeans in the area, this makes us feel an extra bit of safety (CS-19).

²⁰⁶ Presence is discussed as an enabling feature of building connections and relationships in Chapter 4.

²⁰⁷ Thakur (1987) also described UNIFIL's role as a "deterrent" to south Lebanon becoming "Israel's 'North Bank'" (p. 69).

²⁰⁸ This role is distinct from peacekeeping-as-stabilization, as it is passive and has a different mechanism of effect. In the case of presence, UNIFIL contributes to stability not by their actions to quell tensions or keep the peace, but rather by their existence as witnesses, and to some extent, as physical shields for the Lebanese people. UNIFIL's physical presence elevates the political consequences of violence. The mechanism of effect in presence-based stabilization is external to the conflict itself, as the disincentives emerge from international political sanction.

With thousands of international witnesses to aggression, the risk of international sanction against perpetrators of violence is augmented.²⁰⁹ Further, the presence of internationals in south Lebanon is thought to elevate international attention on the region and the conflict, generating positive impacts on donorship to Lebanon, as well as accountability for acts of aggression.

This final point is related to UNIFIL's relational presence in south Lebanon, which generates effects not captured by its mandate, but considered important by Lebanese people. As argued throughout this dissertation, relationships and connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals constitute sites of agency through which Lebanese people can engage in the co-construction and co-evolution of the knowledges and identities of UNIFIL personnel. In so doing, they build solidarity for their experiences of the interstate conflict. This solidarity is understood to accumulate and shape UNIFIL into an actor that represents Lebanese interests in the international community.

At least we feel that there is a... our worries are reflected, and they are always interpreted in a good way, and there is a role for the Lebanese country, or people, in the conferences that happen and the reports that are issued by UNIFIL based on the attacks and deviation of the enemy, or on the border, or in the air... so every, you know month, you might have a violation. So this is a good issue to be witnessed by UNIFIL (LS-5).

In this conception of UNIFIL's role, it becomes an interlocutor or advocate for Lebanon, bolstering its political voice and influence in the international system.²¹⁰ This implicates UNIFIL in contributing to enhancing the 'freedom to plan' in the south. There is a prevailing hope among

²⁰⁹ One participant explained this deterrence function by contrasting south Lebanon with Beirut in the 1982. "Absolutely. Similarly, if there are no journalists in a warzone, things can get out of hand. And I think in the early days, around Beirut especially, where those incidents in Sabraa and Chatila, it was crazy what happened there, so I suppose it would have prevented massacres from happening in south Lebanon, where if you have eyes on, then the likes of the Israelis, and not just the Israelis, but I think we were there in the early days and the Christians really knew that they couldn't mess with the Irish" (AL-6).

²¹⁰ Notably, this role conceptualization would directly conflict with and jeopardize UNIFIL's impartiality, as mandated in Resolutions 425 and 426 and reaffirmed thereafter (Novosseloff, 2015). Da Costa & Karlsrud (2013) also address challenges faced by UN peacekeeping forces in maintaining impartiality when they are dependent on government support and consent.

Lebanese people that UNIFIL, as mission and individuals, will translate or transfer sympathetic knowledge of Lebanon and Lebanese people into the international community, and positively impact political sentiment toward Israel and the conflict.

Safety and security, we are not left alone, we have people from the outside watching what's going on, to know more the reality of what's going on, on both sides. For me, the UNIFIL to be here just to see the refugees, the Palestinians and the Syrians, for me this is a big message, to know the misery of these people. For me this is one of the best things they can experience. They can go to their country to say yes, we saw it with our eyes, people from 1948 at Rashidieh, al-Bas, Bourj Shemali, Mohayam – camp refugee – they are waiting to go back to their land, to their villages, and to see the Syrian refugees and what Lebanon is carrying on. Really! And this can give a little bit of knowledge, they can go back to say, “this country needs help,” and this is a big message I think (CS-18).

This imagined advocacy role inspires many Lebanese people to cast themselves as “ambassadors” for their country and culture, enacting a form of micro-diplomacy in interactional spaces to generate good will and affection for Lebanon.²¹¹

And the other thing is they are giving the good side of the Lebanese, that we are not some kind of fighting wars, we are people who would just like to live. We are not terrorists. They are giving a good image about us as well (MM-5).

And I don't want the international people to have a bad feeling about Lebanon, because one person can give a very bad idea about a place (LC-7).

In light of Hezbollah's designation as a terrorist group and the Western bias toward Israel,²¹²

Lebanese people envision UNIFIL as advocates for Lebanon, with hybridized knowledges and

²¹¹ Baker (2019) observes a similar effort among translators to present a more positive, alternative image of Serbian people during the Bosnian conflict – “explaining how they had become interpreters, was the opportunity to present an alternative image of Serbs to the preconceptions they expected peacekeepers to have formed from Western media” (Baker, 2019, p. 245).

²¹² The international status of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, which was voted for by the European Union in July 2013 (Newby, 2017), constitutes evidence for many Lebanese people of the international bias in favour of Israel. In a region of Lebanon with approximately a 75% Shia population (Newby, 2017), support for Hezbollah is high (Göksel, 2007). Göksel argues that Hezbollah has promoted a “communal identity” and systems of social services that transcend religious or political differences. Regardless of sectarian affiliation, people in south Lebanon depend on the services Hezbollah provides. Their support also stems from a reputation for “incorruptibility,” distinguishing them from many other political parties and actors in the country. Its support is rooted in “the Shi'i sense of dignity; if you don't understand the link between their idea of dignity and resistance, you'll never understand the Shi'a” (Göksel, 2007, p. 71). He goes on to describe the support of Hezbollah as follows: “I mean, a woman loses her son, loses her house, and she's shouting, ‘We're for Nasrallah!’ And she's not acting, they're not

identities that have been constructed through their relationships and experiences in the south. This is considered an important aspect of UNIFIL's impact that is not captured by the mandate or conventional understandings of effectiveness.

In light of the limitations UNIFIL faces in executing its mandate, both UNIFIL and Lebanese people recast their conceptions of its role to align with its experienced effects in south Lebanon. This aligns with an interactionist perspective wherein "there is no state- or peacebuilding operation *per se*, but only the concrete manifestation in the mind and practice of actors" (Distler, 2016, p. 332). UNIFIL is commonly considered effective in its contributions to development and a stability in the region, improving living conditions and enabling the resumption of daily life and activities. The hybridized knowledge UNIFIL has acquired through its relationships and connections in south Lebanon enable personnel to exercise ground-level, ad hoc, micro-diplomacy in support of this stabilizing function. Lebanese people understand UNIFIL's impact in experiential and relational terms, through a valuation of its 'presence'. Through its physical presence in south Lebanon, UNIFIL functions as witnesses and deterrents to Israeli aggression, preserving stability and increasing the reputational costs of hostile actions. As a result of UNIFIL's relational presence in the south, Lebanese people agentially shape UNIFIL

acting, that's the way they feel. They are not going to submit to that kind of pressure be it from the Israelis or internally here in Lebanon. There is a real communal identity now that wasn't there before. They were a feudal society, they were serfs, nobody thought about them. All that's over now and they have a political voice, which now is Hezbollah. And guess what? They don't want to be marginalized any more" (Göksel, 2007, p. 76). This widespread support is also observed by Harik (2007), who notes that "Hezbollah, for instance, is considered a legitimate resistance force all over the Arab and Muslim worlds" (p. 7). Aspects of the UNIFIL mandate that suppress what is widely perceived, by both Hezbollah supporters and many others, to be a legitimate political party and resistance movement against foreign occupation and domination, directly alienates many people in south Lebanon. Hezbollah is an important part of the hybrid sociopolitical order in this region, as it is a public goods provider, a political actor, and a security actor (Göksel, 2007; Hunt, 2018). As such, the relationship of Lebanese people with Hezbollah effects their relationships with UNIFIL, inspiring many to set out to change peacekeeper's perceptions of Hezbollah and Lebanese people in general. Meanwhile, Hezbollah's international status necessitates care and tact from UNIFIL in their engagement with this group, as Israel is already critical of UNIFIL for "collaborating with Hizbullah too closely" (Elron, 2007), and cooperation or collaboration risks lending the group legitimacy (Mamiya, 2018). As such, UNIFIL relies on the Lebanese Armed Forces to function as interlocutors between them and Hezbollah.

personnel into interlocutors or advocates for Lebanon to the international community, thereby elevating its political power. I argue that UNIFIL's effectiveness must be reconceptualized to capture these experienced and valued effects.²¹³

6. 3 What do these relationships mean for peace in south Lebanon?

In the majority of interviews I conducted in south Lebanon, I asked participants if they thought there was anything UNIFIL could do to resolve, or change people's opinions about, the conflict with Israel. Unanimously, the response was negative, noting that this was not within UNIFIL's capabilities or role, and involvement in any conflict resolution efforts would be contrary to their credibility and impartiality.

No, never. They can never change this, because it is our history and it is what we believe in. We don't even believe in the presence of this country, so definitely nothing. Their role is limited to the safety, nothing more (CS-17).

To explain, participants often cited the intractability of the conflict, its embeddedness in complex international and regional politics, and the importance of maintaining UNIFIL's impartiality in these matters. However, this participant makes clear that the challenge exceeds politics, as the conflict, and the Lebanese perspective on it, are a part of Lebanon's history, and thus a part of Lebanese people's identities. Despite these legitimate and significant political barriers, I argue

²¹³ Bargués-Pedreny (2020) observes a trend in critical peacebuilding literature wherein instead of questioning the utility or effectiveness of interventions, scholars seek out superior ways of intervening. In the end, this serves to necessitate longer time scales and more robust, open-ended efforts that entrench and legitimize neoliberal governance. This research could be vulnerable to such a critique as it ultimately argues in favour of relationships and connections between international and local actors, which constitutes a legitimizing argument for the social reach and pervasiveness of the UNIFIL intervention, rather than questioning the utility of its ongoing existence, despite the numerous limitations I note. In defense, I would argue that such a critique assumes a unidirectional pathway of agency and impact that does not hold according to the evidence presented here. The argument presented in this dissertation is about the co-evolution and co-construction of knowledges and identities through the mutual agency exercised in interactional spaces. Impacts are varied and multi-directional, and though undoubtedly liberal peace and governance principles have been promoted as a result of UNIFIL's relational presence, so too have Lebanese conceptions of peace and governance within the collective consciousness and knowledge base of UNIFIL. Further, there is ample evidence that while UNIFIL has effectiveness deficits, it remains an essential stabilizing actor whose presence benefits the protection of Lebanese civilians.

that through its connections and relationships in south Lebanon, UNIFIL does contribute, incrementally, to disrupting identity constructs related to the intractability of the conflict with Israel, through cultural peacebuilding.

As argued in Chapter 5, through relationships and connections UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals engage in intercultural exchange and the co-construction and co-evolution of their knowledges and identities. This has a hybridizing effect on the individuals involved, impacting their social actions and social networks. In this section, I link these individual- and community-level impacts into a broader discussion on peace by drawing on incremental conflict resolution theory (Gopin, 2009). I argue that UNIFIL's relational presence in south Lebanon contributes to peace by restoring or ameliorating the core human identity needs that are threatened by the conflict with Israel and the ways in which it intersects with internal tensions in Lebanon. In so doing, UNIFIL contributes to disrupting the rigidity of identity constructs and opening social networks and relational systems. These contributions constitute incremental changes that emerge from the cultural peacebuilding that occurs in relational spaces between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, which are productive to complex pathways toward both intra- and interstate peace.

Mark Gopin (2009, p. 66) argues, “the increments of positive change” that arise from the individuals engaged in micro-diplomacy and peacebuilding accumulate and steadily transform social life. Lederach (2005, p. 91) terms such positive change as the “critical yeast” of peace. Incremental conflict resolution theory posits that in understanding the effectiveness and impacts of peace interventions, an incremental approach should be taken in which each increment of positive change moves one step closer to addressing the roots of conflict and bringing about lasting change (Gopin, 2009, p. 64).²¹⁴ In this understanding of peacebuilding, short-term goals

²¹⁴ This logic is aligned with complexity theory and the notion of emergence discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 (Redekop, 2015; Kaufmann, 2000).

are measured and valued independent of long-term success or failure. Nonetheless, the short-term goals should function in service of a longer-term strategy or vision (Gopin, 2009). In this conceptualization, “the effect of the increment is transformative, meaning that it profoundly changes the attitude and approach *of at least some people* toward peace and away from destructive forms of conflict” (Gopin, 2009, p. 68). From this perspective, UNIFIL’s contributions to the hybridization of knowledges and identities constitute increments of positive change, transformative at micro-levels, in support of a complex, long-term trajectory toward peace in south Lebanon.

6. 3. 1 Disrupting the Rigidity of Identity Constructs

As argued in Chapter 5, through interactions and relationships UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals engage in cultural exchange and the mutual co-evolution of their knowledges and identities. In so doing, their knowledges and identities become hybridized, meaning they are opened and reconstituted so as to take up pieces of each other’s knowledge and identity within their conception of self (Moore, 2013). This is ultimately a disruption of pre-existing identity constructs.

As argued in Chapter 2, the interstate conflict in south Lebanon can be conceptualized as a conflict based on threats to human identity needs, wherein Israel’s actions and existence threaten Lebanese needs for “*connectedness, meaning, security, action, and recognition*, all of which function together to create the need for *being*, or an integrated sense of the *self*” (Moore, 2013, p. 32, emphasis in original; see also Redekop, 2002; Burton, 1990). In response to threats to human identity needs, understandings of the ‘other’ become increasingly distorted, the boundaries between different identity groups become more rigid, and the conflict becomes an embedded part of one’s sense of self (Moore, 2013). Together, these responses render the

conflict increasingly intractable. To respond to such conflict, a disruption is required in this trajectory. I argue that the hybridization of knowledges and identities that emerges through the relationships and connections of UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals constitutes such a disruption, as it positively contributes to the restoration of the human identity needs of the people of south Lebanon.

UNIFIL and Lebanese people are a part of a common community, which motivates individuals to forge connections across the international-local divide (see 4. 4. 2). Human identity needs theory posits that “we need community” and “a degree of bonding with the *other*” (Moore, 2013, p. 34). While the “other” in this research is not Israel, the connections explored here do constitute exposure to otherness and bonding with “others,” leading to increased openness and greater acceptance of difference in Lebanese society (see 5. 2. 1). Participants link this openness to improved relations within Lebanon, between different social and religious groups. Integration, cooperation and socialization across divides, enables us to “see ourselves as members belonging to a group” (Moore, 2013, p. 34), fulfilling a sense of *connectedness* important to our identities. This research demonstrates not only how connectedness materializes between Lebanese and UNIFIL individuals, but also how UNIFIL contributes to improving *connectedness* amongst communities in south Lebanon. This is an incremental change in the intrastate context, which as previously argued (Chapter 2), has implications for peace in the interstate context.

At the core of *meaning* is “what we deem as a sense of justice: the understanding of healthy relation, what is fair, and what is a reasonable expectation for the behavior of *others* in respect to our well-intentioned efforts” (Moore, 2013, p. 33). Through their relational and physical presence, UNIFIL are transformed into agents of justice for the people of south

Lebanon, through their function as witnesses and deterrents to Israeli aggression and their development into advocates for Lebanon in the international community (see 6. 2. 3). This advocacy role emerges as a result of the “well-intentioned efforts” of Lebanese individuals through relationships and cultural peacebuilding. Human identity needs theory stipulates that “undermining our need for *meaning* is the attack on our sense of ‘selfhood’, where our narratives of life and culture are being brutalized by the other” (Moore, 2013, p. 33). Both Israel and the international community are implicated in this brutalization, through the common narratives of Israel as victim and threatened beacon of democracy in the Middle East, while Lebanon (Hezbollah in particular) is cast as an aggressor and supporter of terrorist actions (Jalbert, 1984²¹⁵; Said, 1981; Berman, 2022; Wilner, 2017; Beauchamp, 2014; Harkov, 2021). Through relationships, UNIFIL is constructed as a counterbalance to such identity brutalization, emerging as ambassadors for Lebanese identity to the international community. This role for UNIFIL positively contributes to a sense of meaning and justice for Lebanese people by reducing the brutalization of their identities by the international “other,” which, due to global politics surrounding Israel,²¹⁶ is deeply interwoven with the brutalization of Lebanese identities by the Israeli “other.” Thereby, relationships with UNIFIL partially restore Lebanese people’s sense of justice and *meaning*, which is threatened by the conflict with Israel and the international

²¹⁵ Jalbert (1984) notes that the popular analysis in the early 1980s of American media bias on the Lebanon-Israel war was that American media was pro-PLO and anti-Israel. He contradicts this popular analysis and presents evidence that in fact, American media was generally pro-Israel in the initial years of the war. For example, Jalbert (1984) analyzes an excerpt from Paul Miller on National Broadcasting Company (NBC) News, June 12, 1982, where he states that the Israelis were “looking for terrorists” in their invasion of Lebanon, referring to the PLO at the time (p. 26).

²¹⁶ The international community, and particularly the West, is understood to be supporters and enablers of Israel in both the interstate conflict with Lebanon, and the Middle East conflict writ large. The recent decision of former U.S. President Donald Trump to move the American embassy to Jerusalem is an example in the minds of many Lebanese people of the Western, and particularly American, bias toward Israel and complicity in Israel’s aggressive actions (Lander, 2017). “Individuals are very nice and they are friendly with them, [...] but at the end of the day, we know what they are here for, and we know in the global thinking that they are not here for Lebanese benefit” (MM-2).

community's complicity in it. As such, this restoration constitutes a positive incremental change toward the amelioration of human identity needs in south Lebanon, which is productive in the complex pathways toward peace.

As argued above (6. 2. 3), UNIFIL contributes to stabilization (freedom from fear), development (freedom from want), and in some ways, to justice (freedom to plan). In so doing, it increases the sense of *security* for people in south Lebanon. Human identity needs theory posits that a sense of self is dependent on a vision for and an expectation of "a long-term future" (Moore, 2013, p. 35). While UNIFIL's limitations in providing peace as the "freedom to plan" are many (as argued above), their contributions to stability, development and justice positively contribute to a temporary or incremental sense of *security* in both the intrastate and interstate contexts.

An individual's sense of self, or identity, is linked to their "ability to take meaningful and significant action" in their lives – to exercise "control over [their] immediate social and physical environment" (Moore, 2013, p. 36). Ultimately, *action* is about choice. In building relationships across the international-local divide, Lebanese people engage in the agential translocation and transformation of superficial encounters into substantial relationships, through hospitality (see 4. 3). Their actions produce contexts for the hybridization of knowledges and identities, thereby claiming a meaningful role in shaping the UNIFIL mission (see 6. 2). UNIFIL's presence as deterrents to Israeli aggression, also contributes to the reduction of feeling "acted upon" in Lebanon (Moore, 2013, p. 36). Lebanese people feel this sense of being "acted upon" keenly, in light of the international politics around the conflict and the disproportionate power (both political and military) of Israel. As such, in transforming UNIFIL into advocates for Lebanon

through relationships, Lebanese people gain agential capacity in the interstate context. Each of these *actions* constitute positive incremental changes in the complex pathways toward peace.

Finally, the Lebanese need for *recognition* is incrementally fulfilled at both individual and societal-levels as a result of relationships with UNIFIL. In inviting UNIFIL into their homes and businesses, to sit at their tables and connect, Lebanese people share their culture and traditions with personnel, developing UNIFIL's appreciation for Lebanon and Lebanese culture, and shaping their understandings and opinions about the conflict (see 5. 2. 2). This produces individual-level *recognition*. In building these substantial connections with UNIFIL, Lebanese people also augment their international recognition through the advocacy role they envision for, and inspire in, UNIFIL personnel. This contributes to restoring their dignity and image in the international system by disrupting the "brutalizing" narratives that contribute to the ongoing interstate conflict. In so doing, relationships across the international-local divide contribute to satisfying "the need to feel that you are appreciated for who you are; that your identity is acknowledged as important" (Moore, 2013, p. 37). The *recognition* that emerges from relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, thereby constitutes incremental contributions to reducing threats to human identity needs in the interstate context.

According to human identity needs theory, threats to "*connectedness, meaning, security, action and recognition*" (Moore, 2013, p. 32, emphasis in original) result in the development of increasingly rigid identity constructs, or in other words, the closure of social networks and relational systems (Moore, 2013; Redekop, 2012). By this logic, restoring or ameliorating these key components of identity would disrupt the rigidification process, and contribute to the opening of social networks and relational systems. In this section I have argued that relationships and connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, incrementally, but positively, contribute

to the restoration of each of these components of Lebanese identity, in ways that are relevant to the interstate conflict. As such, I demonstrate that through incremental changes and complex pathways, UNIFIL contributes to peace in south Lebanon through their relationships and connections with Lebanese people.²¹⁷

Conclusion

While in many ways, the relationships at the centre of this research involve two individuals, who by virtue of their personalities, interests, backgrounds and identities, have developed connections and relationships across the international-local divide, their impacts are not restricted to the individual level. Through cultural exchange and substantive interactions, these individuals share their knowledges and identities, and in turn take up pieces of one another into themselves in a process of co-construction and co-evolution that amounts to hybridization. Some of these hybridized people emerge as interlocutors who facilitate the connections of others in their social networks and exercise a bridging function, drawing both UNIFIL and Lebanese communities together through the proliferation of relationships and encounters. UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese people have been interacting and co-existing for over 40 years, and as such many of these individual-level impacts have accumulated throughout south Lebanon.

²¹⁷ A key criticism of this argument that could be advanced is that while the rigidity of identity constructs in south Lebanon may be disrupted by the interactions and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals, these disruptions do not directly impact the ways in which Israel or the conflict are understood by Lebanese people and taken up as a part of Lebanese identity, as exemplified by several of the quotations included in this dissertation. The issue with this critique however, is that it is rooted in a linear conception of change, in which identity evolution and transformation is only productive to peace if in the direction of superior relations between conflicting parties. This research however, is rooted in a complex conception of change, in which non-proportionality, unpredictability, self-organization, and emergence function to implicate many forms of input in pathways that are productive to peace. In this section I argue that the hybridization of identities and the restoration of key components of human identity needs through the interactions and relationships of UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals serve to disrupt rigid identity constructs in south Lebanon, which constitutes an incremental change productive to a complex pathway through which the distortion and rigidity that underpins the interstate conflict may also one day be disrupted.

In this chapter, drawing on insights from complexity and incremental conflict resolution theories, I have argued that these individual-level impacts accumulate to effect the UNIFIL mission by contributing to the development of UNIFIL's access to local knowledge and the support they receive from Lebanese communities. Both of these factors are relevant to UNIFIL's effectiveness, by bolstering its capacity to engage in ground-level, ad hoc diplomacy in the interest of maintaining stability. Further, through its relational presence, UNIFIL's role in south Lebanon is reconceptualized by Lebanese people to correspond to its experiential effects. UNIFIL's value is understood as witnesses and deterrents to Israeli aggression, and as a result of the hybridized knowledges and identities emerging from relationships, UNIFIL is transformed into advocates and interlocutors for Lebanon in the international community. These impacts on UNIFIL's effectiveness are linked to the ways in which the connections and relationships between peacekeepers and Lebanese people contribute to the restoration or amelioration of the key components of human identity needs in south Lebanon, which are threatened by the conflict with Israel and the ways in which it overlaps with internal tensions and sectarian divisions within the country. This implicates UNIFIL in a relational processes of cultural peacebuilding which incrementally, and positively contributes to the complex pathways toward both inter- and intrastate peace.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Introduction

The objective of this dissertation was to “people” a UN peacekeeping intervention, meaning to understand the individuals that populate interventions as unique inputs, with their own identities, personalities, beliefs, and practices that generate similarly unique impacts for the communities in which they operate, the missions for which they work, and the peace that they are intended to keep or build. This thesis has analyzed the connections and relationships between UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals, more specifically the ways in which culture mediates and motivates the development of substantive connections and what the impacts are of those connections.

This dissertation emerges from a keen sense that the intractability and structural constraints of many conflicts make the prospects for enduring peace bleak and temporally distant, which necessitates investigation of the incremental, complex, social and relational pathways available today, in the existing system of international security governance and conflict response. This approach has implications for how operational effectiveness is understood, moving beyond evaluation according to certain benchmarks of sustained stability or measures of mandate fulfillment, and toward an experientially and relationally-rooted understanding of intervention effects from the perspectives of the individuals who live and work in peacekeeping societies, embedded in complex, incremental conceptions of change.

In undertaking a qualitative, inductive, ethnographic approach to investigating the connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese people, this research has been guided by the experiences of participants and reflects the value they place on the relational realities of their peacekeeping society. While insights have been derived from cultural peacebuilding and

hybridization theories, in the broader ontological and epistemological framework of social constructivism and complexity theories, the findings in this dissertation are fundamentally people-centric, experiential and situated. This dissertation offers a novel narrative of operational effectiveness emerging from the everyday relationships that arise at the interface of UN peacekeeping and south Lebanese society.

In this concluding chapter, I will present a summary of my findings in reference to the key research questions explored in this project (7.1). In the second section, I will discuss the contributions I make to the literature, addressing the three gaps I identified in the introductory chapter (7.2). Subsequently, I will offer three policy recommendations for UNIFIL, and UN peacekeeping generally, in order to provide a permissive environment for interactions and relationships to develop between peacekeepers and local civilians, given the positive peace potential I have demonstrated can arise from these hybridizing connections (7.3). Finally, I note three areas for future research through which the findings of this study can be further strengthened, nuanced and generalized, establishing an outline for a research agenda on people-centric peace intervention studies.

7. 1 Summary of Findings

This dissertation has presented rich, empirical evidence grounded in an interactionist, social constructivist, complexity-based approach to cultural peacebuilding theory, in order to explore the phenomena of connections and relationships between UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals, their meanings to those involved and how they impact both the UNIFIL mission and peace more broadly. In so doing, several key findings can be identified.

Firstly, in the context of south Lebanon, religion is not a significant factor in mediating or motivating individuals to connect across the social and spatial divides that exist between UNIFIL

and Lebanese individuals. Due to UNIFIL's reluctance to engage with religion in the interest of maintaining political neutrality, alongside the low levels of Lebanese engagement in daily religious practice, religion did not often provide the spaces and contexts for interactions to occur. The primary contexts in which UNIFIL and Lebanese people connect are commercial, event-based and service-based interfaces. While these connections were numerous, for participants they were largely understood as superficial and performative. However, these interfaces provided contexts for Lebanese participants to transform and translocate connections into more local, informal and private spaces, through the Lebanese culture of hospitality and gestures of invitation. Through the sharing of coffee, tea, and food, Lebanese people create the social and physical spaces for substantial interactions based in cultural exchange and the enactment of 'thick' identities, generating "interchange" for both interacting parties.

Substantial interactions between UNIFIL and Lebanese people generate two key categories of impact. Through intercultural exchange in contexts of hospitality, individuals share their understandings, perspectives and opinions with one another – they share their knowledge and thereby gain new knowledge. Through cross-cultural interactions the knowledge of both parties becomes hybridized, as they take up aspects of one another's understandings and perspectives into their own. Through repeat interactions and relationship building, the boundaries between internationals and locals become blurred, and the identities of some individuals on both sides of these exchanges become hybridized. The hybridization of identities results in the development of some individuals into interlocutors, who by virtue of their privileged knowledge and access to both UNIFIL and Lebanese social networks, undertake actions that impact others in their lives, networks and communities. These interlocutors perform a social bridging function, facilitating the development of other connections across the international-local divide.

The hybridization of knowledges and identities impacts the UNIFIL mission by augmenting its access to local knowledge, which is an essential element of gaining and retaining local support. Both local knowledge and support are necessary elements of UNIFIL's operational capacity, and enable UNIFIL personnel to engage in micro, ad hoc diplomacy, improving the mission's effectiveness in maintaining stability in south Lebanon. Through their physical and relational presence in south Lebanon, UNIFIL generates alternative effects not captured by its mandate or conventional metrics of effectiveness. In response to its limitations, Lebanese people recast or reconceptualize UNIFIL's role to better align with local experiences of its effects, including its role as witnesses and deterrents to Israeli aggression and its envisioned role as advocates for Lebanon in the international community. Through relationships, Lebanese people exercise agency in shaping and claiming a more justice-oriented role for UNIFIL than its mandate and operational limitations allow. Further, through connections and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese individuals, UNIFIL positively, though incrementally, contributes to the restoration or amelioration of the key components of Lebanese human identity needs, which are threatened by the conflict with Israel and the international community's support of its actions. In so doing, UNIFIL is implicated, through its relational presence, in positive, incremental change in the complex pathways toward peace in south Lebanon.

7. 2 Contributions

As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, this project set out to fill three main gaps in the literature on peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Firstly, despite the proliferation of studies on local ownership and hybrid peacebuilding, there remains a lack of empirical data and understanding of how regular people experience and interface with UN peacekeeping operations and how hybridization occurs in practice. Studies tend to privilege the perspectives of relative

elites, such as municipality leaders and civil society representatives. The data presented in this dissertation includes perspectives from many ‘types’ of locals, including not only municipality leaders and civil society workers, but also shop keepers, local staff, and other inhabitants of the area of operations. In so doing, it has made two key contributions to the literature. Firstly, this dissertation provides empirical evidence for how hybridity occurs in the context of a peacekeeping intervention. It identifies a mechanism through which Lebanese people agentially transform superficial, formal encounters with UNIFIL peacekeepers into substantive, impactful relationships through their culture of hospitality. In transforming the context for interactions, the content of those interactions is similarly transformed, enabling the ‘thick’ enactment of identities and cultural exchange. In conversing about culture, politics, the conflict, their personal lives, and so forth, individuals share aspects of their knowledges and identities with one another and take up those knowledges and identities into their conceptions of self. Through the interactional process of substantive cultural exchange and relationship building, UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese people co-construct and co-evolve their knowledges and senses of self, resulting in hybridization.

Secondly, in including an array of “regular” people’s experiences, the empirical data in this dissertation provides an alternative conception or agential method of exercising local ownership, wherein Lebanese people transform superficial encounters into substantive, impactful relationships, and thereby appropriate UNIFIL’s purpose to better match its experiential and valued impacts. This form of local ownership is distinct from local ownership as buy-in to international efforts, or local ownership as local leadership of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Rather, it is local ownership as the agency that local people exercise in identifying, creating and maximizing the personal and community benefits they can attain from interventions.

Those benefits can come in the form of money, jobs, cultural exposure, language skills, social connections, solidarity, advocacy and so forth. In recasting UNIFIL's role in south Lebanon, Lebanese people transform and claim its impacts.

The second gap this research intended to fill was the limited understanding in the literature of the ways in which micro-level impacts connect to macro-level peace processes. In focusing on the informal, individual-to-individual connections peacekeepers and Lebanese people form through the lenses of cultural peacebuilding and complexity theory, this dissertation argues that the hybridization that occurs through substantive interactions and relationships contributes to restoring or ameliorating the key components of Lebanese human identity needs, which are threatened by the conflict with Israel and the ways in which it exacerbates internal divisions within Lebanon. In so doing, UNIFIL is implicated, relationally, in positive, incremental changes that contribute to complex pathways toward peace in south Lebanon. This argument ties the everyday, micro-level realities of peacekeeping to broader, macro-level peace processes, in complex, incremental ways. Ultimately, this is an interactionist, constructivist argument about how individual actions and relationships can transform identities and knowledges, and thereby social structures, such as identity constructs, social networks and relational norms. This has implications for how effectiveness is understood in the context of peacekeeping interventions, rationalizing the valuation of individualized, relational, qualitative impacts for their positive, incremental peace potential according to complex conceptions of change.

The third gap that this research intended to fill was the underexplored role or potential of religious peacebuilding in the context of a UN peacekeeping operation and as a tool available to regular military personnel, as well as military chaplains. In this case, the negative findings in the

Lebanese/UNIFIL case study constitute a valuable contribution to understanding some of the limitations to, or parameters under which, religion can provide productive tools for peacebuilding. Movement away from daily or public religious practice in many parts of the world constitutes a limiting factor to the relevance and potential of religious peacebuilding. The combination of low levels of religious practice in several UNIFIL contingents (and troop contributing countries), and for many Lebanese people, render religious access points and interfaces largely irrelevant. Further, the sensitivity and political nature of religion in the Lebanese context results in social norms that detract from public discussion of religious topics and inform UNIFIL's policy of tactical avoidance in the interest of maintaining impartiality. This concern with impartiality distinguishes UN peacekeeping from other intervention contexts in which religious peacebuilding has been primarily studied and conceptualized, such as civilian peacebuilding efforts (Gopin, 2009; Little & Appleby, 2004) and more conventional military deployments (Moore, 2013). While religion may be a deeply embedded part of culture, politics and identity, as it is in Lebanon, in many conflict-affected contexts it may not be a productive entry point or mediating tool to engage with local populations if impartiality is a fundamental feature of operational credibility or if daily religious practice and observance has waned in the operational context.

Beyond these three key gaps in the literature, this research has contributed to developing a more nuanced, expansive understanding of interlocutors by articulating a nascent typology of the role in the context of south Lebanon. While these individuals are often referred to in intervention studies, they have rarely featured in such discussions (for exceptions see, Baker, 2019; Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013). These studies have primarily treated interlocutors as a product of their formal or official positions, such as civil affairs officers, translators, or fixers. In

this research, I argue that many types of individuals can be considered interlocutors, including shop keepers, socialites, civil society members and even children. Whether produced through their formal ties or their informal connections, individuals who develop hybridized knowledges and identities can emerge as interlocutors, impacting their social networks and facilitating the connections of others across the international-local divide.

The final contribution I make to the literature in this study is a defense of, or justification for, the continued relevance and value of traditional UN peacekeeping missions. When I first arrived in Lebanon and started speaking to people informally about my research, I was repeatedly questioned about why I would choose to study UNIFIL for a project such as this. People often commented about how UNIFIL was an entirely different type of mission, which reflected their belief that the days of traditional peacekeeping were ending and being supplanted by an era of multi-dimensional stabilization and peace enforcement operations. UNIFIL, and missions like it, lacked the parameters and mandates to make a topic like mine relevant. This dissertation directly contradicts such sentiments or beliefs. While it is true that no traditional peacekeeping missions have been initiated in the past decade (Cassin & Zyla, 2021),²¹⁸ the parameters and mandates of such missions do not prohibit them from contributing positively to peacebuilding, as I have demonstrated in this study.²¹⁹ Further, as I have argued elsewhere (Cassin & Zyla, 2021), in light of shifts in the world order and the waning of liberal hegemony (Flockhart, 2016; de Coning et al., 2014; Peter, 2019), traditional peacekeeping missions may attain new relevance in a global context where liberal end goals can no longer be assumed in all

²¹⁸ The last UN peacekeeping mission to be created that fit the parameters of a traditional peacekeeping mission was the UN Supervision Mission in Syria from April 2012-August 2012 (Cassin & Zyla, 2021).

²¹⁹ This aligns with Mamiya's (2018) observation that peacekeeping operations can be advantageous in addressing "complex and multilayered conflicts" with "many peaces to keep," due to their "widespread presence and ability to harness a spectrum of capacities, from political, military and civil affairs" (p. 15).

post-conflict contexts and new actors emerge as leaders in the field of international security governance.

7. 3 Policy Implications

Traditional UN peacekeeping has always been a “band-aid solution” to conflict. Absent mandates to pursue political resolutions, engage in direct peacebuilding between warring parties, or use sufficient force to prevent violence escalation, the potential for UN peacekeeping operations to contribute to conflict resolution is consistently slight. However, UN peacekeeping has also always been more than it seemed, and more than it is on paper. As assemblages of numerous troop contributing countries and individuals with different values, goals, perspectives, cultures and lifestyles, UN peacekeeping operations are not monolithic or uniform, despite their efforts to present as such. They respond and adapt to situations on the ground, they navigate complex operational environments with imperfect information and understanding, and they exist within dynamic and fluid social systems. While highly formalized and structured institutional arrangements, UN peacekeeping operations are often ad hoc entities shaped by the agency of those that embody them (Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013),²²⁰ implicated in processes well beyond their stabilization and negative peace scope.

In this dissertation I follow several scholars who have argued that it is within this agential, ‘beyond-mandate’ space that UN peacekeeping operations have opportunities to contribute to peacebuilding (Curran, 2013; Last, 1995; Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013).²²¹ Others argue that they

²²⁰ Da Costa and Karlsrud (2013) call this ad hocism, “bending” or “stretching the rules” (p. 310).

²²¹ “There is an evolving consensus within the UN that the peacekeeping-peacebuilding nexus is an artificial divide, and in practice, civilian peacekeepers are increasingly considered to be early peacebuilders. On 16 April, 2010, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed the UN Security Council stating that peacekeepers are peacebuilders who must ‘seize the window of opportunity in the immediate aftermath of conflict. They are the first to set priorities’ (Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013, p. 300).

have the responsibility to do so, as they occupy the interstitial space between the micro and macro levels of peace (Fetherston & Nordstrom, 1995). UN peacekeeping operations are a tether between local communities and global politics, between individual experiences of conflict and elite negotiations toward political settlement. Sustainable peacebuilding requires efforts not only at the top, elite level, but at all levels down to the micro, community and individual levels (Lederach, 1997). UN peacekeeping is a fundamentally relational exercise as these operations are dependent on relationships, knowledge and support from local populations (Distler, 2016). This relational nature places UN peacekeepers in a position to engage individuals who are rarely included in formal peacebuilding processes. This micro-level peacebuilding potential is often rooted in the agency of the individuals who make up a peacekeeping operation, as they interface with agential individuals who live in conflict-affected environments (Anderson & Olson, 2003; Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013)²²² – together they form the “intervention society” (Distler, 2016, p. 137). The peacebuilding potential of peacekeepers has been increasingly acknowledged within the institution of the United Nations, through the language of a peacekeeping-peacebuilding nexus (UN PKO/DFS, 2010; Ki-Moon, 2010).

This research presents empirical evidence from the Lebanese case of how incremental outcomes with positive peace potential can emerge from the relational presence of UN peacekeepers and their interactions with local individuals, with agency and impact emerging from both sides of these exchanges. In so doing, it constitutes an argument in support of a permissive environment for connections and relationships, with implications for UN peacekeeping policy.

²²² “Focusing on examples drawn from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), we argue that local peacebuilding outcomes depend as much or more on negotiations, bargains and compromises between different actors, than on institutional policy decision-making deriving from headquarters” (Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013, p. 294).

As argued in this dissertation (Chapter 4, section 2.1), accessibility is a binding constraint to connections between UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals. In order to create enabling conditions for both interfaces ('thin' encounters) and interchanges ('thick' relationships), a variety of social and physical barriers must be overcome. This section makes policy recommendations for UNIFIL and other UN peacekeeping deployments in order to reduce these barriers and create a permissive environment for the positive peace potential that emerges from connections across the peacekeeper-local divide.

7. 3. 1 Policy Recommendation 1: Reduce the negative relational effects of high turnover by instituting superior mechanisms for continuity, knowledge sharing, and relationship maintenance.

Several participants (23) noted the challenge of building relationships in light of the high turnover of UN personnel. For military personnel, the average deployment duration is 6 months, with some contingents rotating every 3 or 4 months, while others work on 8 or 12 month cycles. Civilian personnel, by contrast, work on one-year or multi-year contracts,²²³ which are more conducive to connections. Both Lebanese and UNIFIL participants referenced the difficulty of building substantive relationships in such a short amount of time.

²²³ UNIFIL's institutional incentives for high personnel turnover are three-fold: 1) it manages boredom, 2) it benefits the quality of life of both civilians and military personnel, and 3) it helps maintain objectivity and professionalism. With regard to boredom, several UNIFIL veterans noted the mundane reality of their daily lives and activities as peacekeepers, particularly in the early years of the deployment, when UNIFIL was less structured and soldiers had more free time manning radio outposts, observation posts, check points and so forth. High turnover also allows civilian and military personnel to return to their homes and their families, which aids in managing operational stress, in retaining individuals for such jobs, and in the case of peacekeeping, it allows military actors to be redeployed to other functions and missions. The most relevant institutional incentive given the topic of this dissertation is the desire to maintain objectivity and professionalism among personnel. This was noted by 15 participants (both UNIFIL and Lebanese). "Well I think it's inherent to the mission of a peacekeeping force, that you are... well it's sad to say it, but you are not really meant to connect too much" – "you have to keep a bit of distance as a peace keeper" (AL-10). This distance is connected to maintaining authority and avoiding "dilemmas" (AL-11) in the course of their operational activities. Personal relationships and sympathies can conflict with orders, introducing variability between individual personnel, which UNIFIL explicitly works to avoid. Further, UNIFIL personnel have limited local knowledge and understanding, and as such, their understanding of the political and social positionality of the locals with whom they are interacting could introduce a threat to UNIFIL's impartiality and their credibility. Da Costa & Karlsrud (2013) discuss the short deployments and contracts of peacekeepers as an impediment to developing the type of experience and confidence necessary for peacekeepers to "play with and challenge the bureaucracy," doing what is necessary to ensure a peacekeeping operation is aligned with local realities (p. 307).

The annoying thing is that they would change every 6 months, so like every time you build a new connection and you feel like you are getting to know them, and they are understanding how the system works here at [the organization] and what we really need here, we reach a point, then suddenly there are new people here and you have to start all over again explaining and trying to contact them. So this is the most annoying thing in the UNIFIL! (CS-19).

As personnel begin to understand how things work in Lebanon and build connections with the local community, they are replaced and the cycle starts again. This leads to mounting frustration among Lebanese people, who question the utility or value of their efforts to build temporary friendships. As shown in the discussion on initiative in forging connections (Chapter 4, section 4.1), the burden of relationship-building lies with Lebanese people, and as such perceptions of futility or frustration can reduce the overall potential for connections. Further, as argued in Chapter 6 (section 2.1), the knowledge and understanding peacekeepers relationally develop while in Lebanon contributes to the “fund” of local knowledge to which UNIFIL has access. As such, with high degrees of personnel turnover, UNIFIL’s access to local knowledge is negatively impacted.

In particular, high turnover at the top-level of UNIFIL leadership can undermine institutional knowledge (Keane & Wood, 2016), as well as disrupting mission continuity, which inhibits UNIFIL’s relational capacity in south Lebanon.

I mean [the] UN has a rule they told me, that one political chief cannot stay in a mission for more than 3 years. I said, [...] the guy learns the place, and then you send them home. The military commanders, are 3 years I think. The others, maximum 1 year. Just as the guy is learning his way around you send him home! Then you start from zero again. And then the next guy that comes might have different ideas of how he is going to save the Middle East! (AL-1).

Though guided by the mandate and operational procedures of the mission, military and political leaders bring their own sets of priorities, experiences, ambitions and objectives into their positions. Leaders, like the personnel that serve under them, bring their cultures and *habitus* to

their positions, which changes the context for social action (Autesserre, 2014; Fetherston & Nordstrom, 1995). Leadership change can be perceived by Lebanese individuals who notice shifts in protocol, policy and funding availability. These changes can alter the opportunities and incentives for interaction and engagement between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities.

Cultural knowledge and understanding are also negatively impacted by shifts in the troop contributing countries present in south Lebanon.²²⁴ Contingent continuity enables compound, repeat experiences between UNIFIL and Lebanese communities, developing a history of relations that aids in mitigating the challenges that arise from high personnel turnover.

[T]he Irish were in this area for so many years, maybe if you go down to a different area, they don't know who is Irish, in a different town. [...] so we got used to Irish, so the first thing you were looking for, you would go to Irish man because you know... you know his culture, you know what to say, and you know what not to say to him. But if you go to a different town [...] near a different UNIFIL contingent] maybe I wouldn't know how to talk to them or how to deal with them compared to other people who already know them and have dealt with them for so many years (LC-22).

The cultural exchange that occurs between Lebanese people and UNIFIL personnel through interfaces and interactions transcends individual connections. It constitutes a historical, accumulated baseline of familiarity and understanding between the two communities, from which encounters can more easily become connections or relationships.

This dissertation demonstrates the potential value of relationships and connections between UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals for the hybridization of knowledges and identities, the development of interlocutors, the access UNIFIL has to local knowledge, the

²²⁴ As argued by Hunt (2018), “the construction of authority is embedded in the relationality” between elements of the hybrid sociopolitical order (p. 62). As such, “any changes to who is providing security and justice services will in turn entrench or redistribute power in significant ways” (Hunt, 2018, p. 62). This research demonstrates that change in the internal composition of UNIFIL, impacts UNIFIL’s relations with Lebanese people, and as such, with other elements of the hybrid sociopolitical order in south Lebanon, such as municipalities, civil society organizations, and political parties.

support it receives from Lebanese communities, the operational effectiveness of the mission and the restoration of human identity needs in south Lebanon. To create a permissive environment for such positive gains to arise, UNIFIL should undertake efforts to reduce turnover rates, lengthen deployment windows, and encourage multiple tours amongst troop contributing countries and personnel. These changes however, are highly political and likely to be undesirable to many troop contributing countries and militaries given the accepted approach to military deployments and UN peacekeeping operations. As such, other policy measures can be taken to reduce the negative effects of high turnover, such as improving institutional learning and knowledge sharing mechanisms in order to intake and value individual-level, qualitative knowledge from regular forces personnel.²²⁵ Further, to ensure relational continuity, better attention should be paid by contingents to engaging in strategic introductions, not only with municipality leaders, but also with local friends and business people in order to facilitate the maintenance of connections and expedite the development of relationships.

7. 3. 2 Policy Recommendation 2: Reduce securitization and bunkerization in order to improve accessibility between UNIFIL and Lebanese people.

Spatial or physical barriers to connections include the policies, infrastructure and restrictions undertaken by UNIFIL for the security of its personnel and bases (noted by 34 participants). As observed by Da Costa and Karlsrud (2013),²²⁶ Autesserre (2014b) and Eckhard (2019) among others, UN peacekeeping operations have trended toward increased securitization and bunkerization since the early 2000s and the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq.²²⁷

²²⁵ Patton (2010), among others, has proposed a knowledge incorporation mechanism in the context of complex adaptive systems, termed Developmental Evaluation, wherein evaluators have the specified task to look for instances of emergence and “adjacent possible” opportunities and help translate those into project-level decision making.

²²⁶ “[T]he UN is making it more and more difficult to actually operate on the local level. This is due to tighter security rules and an increasing bureaucratisation of the UN” (Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013, p. 306).

²²⁷ This is particularly true following the attack on the UN compound in Iraq in 2003 (Williams, 2003).

Increasingly, physical boundaries have been created between internationals and locals in intervention settings. While this trend undoubtedly impacted UNIFIL, the visibility of its effects to local populations was minimal due to the troop drawdown between 2000 and 2006, following the Israeli withdrawal in early 2000. It was not until after the war in 2006, and the scale-up of UNIFIL under Resolution 1701, that this increasingly securitized peacekeeping mission was experienced by the Lebanese public. For Lebanese participants, a noticeable increase in bunkerization emerged as a result of the regional security environment.

[T]here is a big difference between before and after 2006. Before they used to show up everywhere, they used to rent houses among our places. But all that was limited. Just after 2006, only the higher posted people would be able to go out, and even the military, they would have limited hours or one day per week when they could go out to the market or whatever. The one thing to point out, is that after Daesh, after 2010 and the Syrian issue, things are even more limited. They don't have the real freedom or permission to go out after that (LC-18).

Local people in south Lebanon perceived an increase in UNIFIL security protocols following the rise of Daesh and the conflict in Syria, reflecting the embeddedness of UNIFIL policy in the global and regional security environment.

In the post-2006 period, UNIFIL is primarily confined to heavily bunkerized and fortified bases, outside of Lebanese villages (Duffield, 2010).²²⁸ This reflects a stark shift from earlier UNIFIL arrangements, in which personnel lived in rented houses and small bases close to, or within, Lebanese villages.²²⁹

Everybody had a lot of connection with the local people, because we were not in these mega camps behind T-walls and barbed wires and driving in armoured

²²⁸ Duffield (2010) discusses “the fortified aid compound” as a risk management technique employed by international organizations, which inhibits interaction and contact between international and local actors.

²²⁹ “UNIFIL is not an occupation force and they're not going to fight the Israelis or Hizballah, so why all this machinery? When I go to the villages and I ask what the problem is when people complain about ‘this new UNIFIL,’ they say, ‘They don't talk to us.’ That is what the people really want—they want you to walk around the village and say ‘Hi, how are you? How's the family? How's life?’ They want you to give them a shoulder to cry on, and they have plenty to cry about now. That's what people expect of the new UNIFIL, because for twenty-eight years they got used to a different kind of UNIFIL, a friendly UNIFIL who shared their lives in tough times under very difficult circumstances” (Göksel, 2007, p. 77).

vehicles and things like that, so, we interacted more on everyday issues. [...] I think the way they live in the big camps, behind the wide T walls and the barbed wire, they don't interact with anyone other than their cleaning lady, or the kitchen assistant or something like that, I don't know (AL-2).

As expressed by this UNIFIL veteran, the move to large, fortified, and distant bases “means that you are cutting yourself off from the people. There is a price to pay for that [...] peacekeeping means contact with the people” (AL-1). This securitization constrains cultural exposure and understanding. In the interests of preserving the security of personnel and protecting the infrastructure of UNIFIL, opportunities for interfaces and connections with local individuals are limited, inhibiting the formation of local contacts and the flow of information from the local community into the peacekeeping mission (Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013).

Beyond the physical presentation of bases, securitization and bunkerization also materialize in the course of UNIFIL daily operations. Several participants observed an increasingly defensive and militarized posture from UNIFIL contingents in the post-2006 period, discouraging connection with Lebanese locals.

But when they go out of the camp and drive around, they have the guns out, like the heavy machine guns, and they look like combat-ready soldiers when they go out, and that creates a kind of a distance. You know, you don't like to go up to a battle ready soldier and say hi. You don't do that, you keep your distance, you know? (AL-11).

A heavily armoured presence renders UNIFIL unapproachable and cuts off the ability of Lebanese people to access personnel in the course of their daily activities. Notably, there is variation between contingents on the extent of their security protocols, meaning some UNIFIL contingents have more opportunities to connect with local communities than others.²³⁰

²³⁰ Albrecht et al. (2017) observe a similar securitization trend among European North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troop contributing countries in Mali, citing their restrictions on where patrols can occur and protocols that restrict soldiers from leaving armoured vehicles when they do patrol. They argue, like I do, that these restrictions cut personnel off from local communities and restrict their access to information and knowledge.

So I think the key to success is also to open up and show the people that we are not there and scared or hid[ing] beside weapons, [...] I think they could feel that we were more open and interacted with the people, we would stay with the people, go out when we were travelling, we'd stay at a café for some coffee and not stay in the cars and feel scared. I think the key to success for every UN mission is to interact with the people, and get acceptance from the local people (AL-18).

An aggressive posture or attitude by UNIFIL was linked to dissatisfaction amongst Lebanese communities and individuals by 16 of 82 participants. If the primary burden for forging connections rests with Lebanese people, the bunkerized presentation and location of infrastructure, and the securitized attitude and posture of UNIFIL as they move through Lebanese communities, directly impedes interactions and the development of relationships.

While the security of personnel is and should remain a top priority for UN peacekeeping and troop contributing countries, efforts must be made to resist conflating peacekeeping operations with active combat missions in terms of security protocols and defensive posture. Peacekeeping is fundamentally about contact with local populations and is dependent on local knowledge and support for its effectiveness. This dissertation presents evidence of the positive ways in which relationships and connections between UNIFIL peacekeepers and local populations can impact individuals, communities, the mission and the pathways toward peace. In order to create a permissive environment for these connections, UNIFIL needs to have enabling guidelines and protocols to allow interactions to occur in a variety of public spaces, building meaningful personal connections that contribute to peace and operational effectiveness. UN missions need to be accessible to the public through both formal and informal social and physical spaces. While this introduces risks, it also constitutes potential, as increasing points of access and connection improves understanding of the local context, increases opportunities to gain information and local knowledge, and helps build solidarity and support for an operation.

7. 3. 3 Policy Recommendation 3: Acknowledge that UNIFIL is not experientially uniform and develop mechanisms to capture the unique relational impacts of UNIFIL peacekeepers, supporting the positive and mitigating the negative.

The diversity of UNIFIL with 46 contributing countries and its significant size²³¹ produce a context in which cultural tensions and communication issues are unavoidable. “*Ya3nee* [I mean/you know], among the contingents be sure that they don’t all like each other. Because they come from different... different cultures” (LC-9). Contingents come with unique experiences, cultures, training, operational norms and previous deployment experiences. This echoes Heiberg (1991) who wrote that “each national battalion brings with it its own particular cultural complex and set of assumptions, the distinctiveness is not erased by a UN uniform” in her discussion of UNIFIL-Lebanese relations (p. 148).²³² These “discontinuities” can impede coordinated operations²³³ and “significantly influence local perceptions of the credibility and legitimacy of the intervention,” as Duffey observed in Somalia (2000, p. 147; see also Whalan, 2013). Failure to contend with this diversity and deliver a consistent experience of UNIFIL can jeopardize relations, result in perceptions of inequality or favouritism, and undermine the intended image of UNIFIL to the public.

This concern underpins many of the restrictions on UNIFIL independence and individualism that make connections and relationships with Lebanese people difficult.²³⁴ In

²³¹ As of November 2021: 10,638 total personnel, 809 civilians, 207 staff officers, 9,622 troops (UN PKO, 30 June 2022). UNIFIL is authorized under its current mandate for a force strength of up to 13,000 uniformed troops.

²³² Zyla (2015) similarly notes that “national characters,” “defined as language, religion, beliefs, and values – *could* influence the way in which militaries would fight wars” (p. 106).

²³³ “Whatever the manuals say, there are no fixed rules—it’s all very local, you have to play it by ear. It’s very difficult to take any collective action. [...] Everyone goes through the motions of being under UN command. We have these terrific parades, so colorful, so spit and polish, in perfect formation—I love them! But do you think any of those contingents will take orders from the UN when the going gets rough? Basically, they all do their own thing. It’s worse with this new ‘robust’ UNIFIL because no less than twenty-nine countries have contingents” (Göksel, 2007, p. 56).

²³⁴ David Mosse (2011) makes a similar observation regarding the international development industry. He writes, “the professional habitus of development workers requires the erasure of discrepancies of practice, disjunctures, the effacing of individual action, or denial of relationships” (p. 122).

speaking with a representative of the UNIFIL Political Affairs department, both UNIFIL's stance on individualism and their resistance to cooperating with this research project were made clear.

But you know the problem with your topic, for us, and this is maybe part of the reason why it took time in the mission to decide how to help you, is that we don't conceive of our work and we don't conceive of our *raison d'être* [reason for being] as personal-to-personal – a UN official, is a UN official, is a UN official, regardless of anything else. And um, I don't care about gender, I don't care about nationality, I don't care about religion, I don't want to hear about anything. We are doing Charter and impartiality, and none of it is about us. The only reason we are here in the first place is because we are here as UN official, I am not here as [me], running around south Lebanon or running around Beirut and enjoying myself, I did not come here on a tourist visa, or on a business visa. And so it's very difficult then to break it down to the personal level and tell you, "oh you know I think that... my taste is... or my preference is"... no. You see? It's almost antithetical to the purpose of the UN, you know? We are trying to be ah... there are some universal principles and universal values – human rights, and Charter, and peace – that we try to promote, and everything else should not be a consideration. Not that we are robots. We don't want to be, but we want to be professional, and being a professional at the UN requires that neutrality and impartiality. Not so much neutrality, but impartiality (UNIFIL Political Affairs [PA]-1).

This effort to assure both impartiality and uniformity²³⁵ manifests itself in a variety of restrictions on the time and movement of UN personnel. It instills a clear sense to both UNIFIL and Lebanese people that there are limitations on the extent to which connections and relationships can or should be made (raised by 43 participants) – "you are not really meant to connect too much"(AL-10).

The potential for connections to generate insecurity or negative impacts on either the mission or the Lebanese people is a clear rationale for limiting interactions. This is done through permission requests for off-base activities, such as attending events or visiting local homes, and protocols to ensure the safety of personnel. By and large, particularly in the post-2006 period, the

²³⁵ Rubinstein (1993) discusses the symbolic utility of the blue beret or helmet and the white UN vehicles in projecting a uniformity despite cultural diversity in UN peacekeeping missions. Such symbols work to unify nations into a collective entity and homogenize local perceptions of peacekeepers.

movement and time of UNIFIL is restricted to operational or job-related purposes, often carried out in the company of and with the assistance of the Lebanese Armed Forces (Göksel, 2007).²³⁶

Well now, it's different with the peacekeepers now. They made it in a very formal way. Like they have to go around with the Lebanese military. They never go around unless they have assigned an appointment at some place, they will never do it. So they will do it in a very formal way, they don't go around that often (MM-5).

With limited free time and restrictions on where UNIFIL can safely go, the majority of interactions between personnel and Lebanese people occur within or emerge from their job-related functions.

Importantly, UNIFIL and UN peacekeeping as institutions must come to appreciate that while uniformity across the mission has benefits, it also misses opportunities to utilize its human resources for their individualistic, agential capacity. This research constitutes empirical evidence for the need to “people” the way that interventions are planned, understood and monitored, putting forth an argument for the individuals that carry out peacekeeping interventions to be seen as inputs with their own unique outcomes and impacts in the “intervention society” of south Lebanon. Failure to do so misses both the opportunities and risks that arise as a result of agency. Failure to measure or take account of such impacts perpetuates the gap between the mandated and experienced peacekeeping mission, and misses key elements of operational effectiveness. UNIFIL should institutionalize a people-centric approach to peacekeeping in south Lebanon, wherein relational training is provided to peacekeepers covering the ‘dos and don’ts’ of how to productively and respectfully engage and communicate with local people. Peacekeepers should be given sufficient freedoms within protocol to meet local people in informal spaces so as to

²³⁶ Göksel (2007) contrasts the expanded, more “robust” mandate of UNIFIL contained within Resolution 1701, with the fact that many of UNIFIL’s operational activities are now contingent on approval and support from the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). He understands the reliance on the LAF to weaken UNIFIL’s operational capacity and authority.

develop substantive relationships. Finally, mechanisms should be put in place for individual-level knowledge sharing so that UNIFIL can access the understandings and knowledges personnel develop while interacting with local people.

The policy recommendations advanced in this section regarding high turnover, securitization and the denial of individualism, lend themselves to producing a conducive environment for connections and relationships to develop between peacekeepers and local individuals, with productive potential as I have argued in this dissertation. The policies to which I refer each exist for sound, important reasons, including soldier wellbeing, safety and the credibility of the mission. As such, the recommendations I advance aim at minimizing the negative impacts of these policies on UNIFIL's relational capacity, while preserving their intended impacts. Ultimately, UN peacekeeping generally must contend, particularly in a shifting world order (de Coning et al., 2014; Peter, 2019), with the general disenchantment and dissatisfaction with its operations globally. To do so, it must work to close the gap between its mandated and experienced realities, acknowledge its relational effects and value, and reembrace the ways in which peacekeeping differs from conventional military operations. For UNIFIL, these three policy recommendations would contribute to such changes.

7. 4 Areas for Future Research

A key avenue for future research is in the generalizability of my key findings. While the interfaces that exist between UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese people are not unique to the context in south Lebanon, the role of hospitality in transforming those encounters, and the hybridization and identity needs impacts that arise as a result, may be specific to this case study. Future research should investigate how superficial encounters become substantive relationships

in other contexts. Is hospitality often a mediating factor? Are the incremental impacts of relationships across the international-local divide similar in other contexts? Does religion emerge as a more relevant factor in other conflict and operational environments? Undertaking research based on a similar set of questions in other contexts would be advantageous for developing cultural peacebuilding and hybridization theories and enabling comparisons between case studies. A diversity of conflict and peace operational contexts would be advantageous to generalizability, covering non-UN interventions (e.g. NATO in Afghanistan, EU in Kosovo, AU in Darfur etc.), as well as intrastate peacekeeping (e.g. Cyprus), intrastate peacebuilding (e.g. Bosnia), and stabilization/peace enforcement operations (e.g. Mali).

While the data presented in this dissertation includes both male and female Lebanese participants, the UNIFIL veterans with whom I spoke were exclusively male. To some extent this is a product of the disproportionately male composition of UNIFIL (women make up 5% of the force today) (UNIFIL, n.d.a) and UN peacekeeping generally (UN PKO, n.d.).²³⁷ Future research could apply a more critical gendered lens to the topic of connections and relationships between peacekeepers and local individuals to assess the different experiences, strategies, and impacts that may emerge for both parties in navigating the social and physical divides in peacekeeping societies.

I echo the calls of Da Costa and Karlsrud (2013) for the further study and nuancing of the role of interlocutors in peacekeeping and peacebuilding environments. While these individuals are commonly referenced in scholarship, either as interlocutors (Mamiya, 2018; Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013; Brigg, 2020; Campbell, 2020) or as mediators (Richmond & Pogodda, 2016;

²³⁷ “In 1993, women made up 1% of deployed uniformed personnel. In 2020, out of approximately 95,000 peacekeepers, women constitute 4.8% of military contingents and 10.9% of formed police units and 34% of justice and corrections government-provided personnel in UN Peacekeeping missions” (UN PKO, n.d.).

Halme-Tuomisaari, 2018), intermediaries (McGee, 2014; Nan, 2008; Pruitt, 1994; van Houten, 2018; Baker, 2019), or liaisons (Kullenberg, 2016), among other labels, who these individuals are, what motivates them, what they do, and how they develop or emerge is poorly understood. The agential capacity of individual actors that mediate the social and physical spaces between international and local actors is significant (Baker, 2019; Eckhard, 2019; Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013; Kullenberg, 2016), but under-explored owing to the lack of a framework through which to discuss and compare the range of such actors involved in intervention environments (e.g. translators, fixers, drivers, contractors, community liaison assistants, bartenders, shop keepers, local staff etc.). Further research into how interlocutors mobilize and maneuver their knowledges and identities to perform certain roles and attain their (or their employer's) goals would enhance academic understanding of what hybridization means in practice. While this dissertation proposes a nascent typology of interlocutor roles, further study into this category of actor would benefit research on local knowledge, local ownership, civil-military relations, international development, statebuilding, and peacekeeping/peacebuilding generally.

Taken together these three areas of future research constitute an outline for a research agenda on people-centric peace intervention studies, developing a pool of qualitative data from which to conduct comparative analyses of the experiential realities of peace interventions, hybridization and incremental movements toward peace.

Conclusion

In this dissertation I argue that while UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals primarily interact through commercial, event-based and service-based interfaces, these encounters are largely superficial and formal, lacking 'thick' identity enactment. However, these interfaces constitute platforms from which new opportunities for interaction emerge, through the

Lebanese culture of hospitality. By inviting UNIFIL personnel to join them for tea, coffee or food, to enter their homes or businesses and socialize in informal, local spaces, Lebanese people agentially transform encounters into relationships. In these contexts, ‘thick’ identities are enacted and participating individuals undergo “interchange,” (Mac Ginty & Sanghera, 2012, p. 4) wherein through cultural exchange individuals co-construct and co-evolve their own and each other’s knowledges and identities, resulting in hybridization. I have argued that this hybridization generates community-level impacts through the development of interlocutors who facilitate the connections of others in their social networks and bridge the divides between peacekeepers and locals.

Hybridization produces mission-level impacts by augmenting the “fund” (Distler, 2016, p. 328) of local knowledge to which UNIFIL has access, which contributes to gaining and maintaining local support for the operation and improves operational effectiveness by enabling ground-level, ad hoc diplomacy. Further, hybridization enables Lebanese people to agentially transform or recast UNIFIL’s role in the south to align with its experiential reality and the value they imbue UNIFIL with through their relationships. Finally, hybridization and the relationships and connections between peacekeepers and Lebanese individuals generate peace-level impacts through the restoration and amelioration of Lebanese human identity needs, which are threatened by the conflict with Israel, the international community’s complicity in it, and the ways in which the conflict fuels divisions within Lebanon. The connections and relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese people constitute a form of cultural peacebuilding as it is through cultural exchange and encounters with otherness that hybridization occurs, which incrementally and positively contributes to complex pathways toward peace in south Lebanon.

Several years have passed since I conducted the interviews and observation on which this dissertation is based. While numerous, critical, destabilizing events have occurred since December 2018, in many ways the conflict dynamics and peacekeeping society in the south of Lebanon remain within the similar patterns of ebb and flow that have existed for the past 40 years. Since early 2020, the Lebanese economy has been in a rapid downturn and poverty levels have skyrocketed (The World Bank, 2021; Blair, 2022; Davies, 2022). As has been argued by countless scholars (e.g. Levy, 1998; Rodrik, 1999; Mansoob Murshed, 2002; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004),²³⁸ economic precarity is a driver of conflict, thereby contributing to the instable situation in which Lebanese people have lived since the creation of the State of Israel and the introduction of approximately 200,000 Palestinian refugees to Lebanon in the 1960s (Entelis, 1985). This economic precarity has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting global recession, which has compressed the tourism industry on which many Lebanese people rely, and presented challenges to the social, hospitable way of life that is central to Lebanese culture and the relationships at the centre of this research (Yassine, 2021).

The explosion in the port of Beirut in August 2020 united Lebanese people across sectarian lines in protests that spread throughout Lebanon, calling for governance reforms, political accountability and an end to corruption in the Lebanese government (Chehayeb, 19 Oct 2021; McKernan et al., 8 Aug 2020; Sherlock, 14 Aug 2020). In the months following the explosion, while certain officials resigned and the government was dissolved, the sectarian

²³⁸ Rodrik (1999) argues that together, economic turmoil and income inequality amount to instability and low or declining growth, which leads to poverty and can contribute to conflict. Fearon and Laitin (2003) specifically connect poverty to the likelihood of insurgency, which is indicative of the inability of the government to retain a monopoly on the use of force within the state (see also Weber, 1919). Collier and Hoeffler (2004) link the likelihood of civil war to the inability of the government to manage the economy equitably and support sustained economic growth.

system remained largely intact, with many of the classic figures of Lebanese politics still at the forefront of the state, and survivors of the explosion still demanding answers (Al Jazeera, 4 Aug 2021). For UNIFIL, its mandate has been renewed annually, in line with Resolution 1701, and it continues to conduct operations at full force, with the addition of relief efforts targeted at the COVID-19 pandemic and support for the Lebanese healthcare system (UNIFIL, 8 Dec 2020).

In light of recent events and news from Lebanese friends and contacts still in country, there is significant cause for concern about the future of Lebanon. At present, the economic pressures faced by Lebanese people far outweigh concerns about the conflict with Israel. In this context, the money UNIFIL channels into the south Lebanese economy has renewed value, as the force remains a steady presence and a reliable employer for many individuals. Political disenchantment is growing in Lebanon, as people increasingly tire of stasis, corruption, impunity, and loss, especially in light of recent economic turmoil and the absence of accountability for the August 2020 explosion. More than ever, efforts to preserve or repair social networks, connections and relationships within Lebanon should be supported and valued given the current internal precarity and the enduring reality that conflict is always just a day away.

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Appendix 1: University of Ottawa Letter of Institutional Support

Université d'Ottawa | University of Ottawa

25 Jan. 2018

To whom it may concern,

This letter serves to confirm that Katelyn Cassin is a Ph.D. candidate in good standing in the School of International Development and Global Studies at the University of Ottawa. She began her doctoral studies in September 2015 and is currently registered full time through the winter session (Jan.-Apr. 2018). Please note that full time registration also includes urgent medical care coverage.

Katelyn is working under the supervision of professor Benjamin Zyla, with a thesis advisory committee composed of professors Stephen Baranyi (U. Ottawa) and Vern Redekop (St. Paul's University, affiliated with U. Ottawa). Her supervisor and committee approved her fieldwork proposal in Sept. 2017 as academically robust, viable, and conforming to the standards and ethics guidelines established by the university and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Her proposal was therefore submitted to the U. Ottawa Office of Research Ethics and Integrity and will shortly be approved. I therefore encourage you to provide her the relevant support and authorization to conduct her fieldwork.

If you require more information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email (jramisch@uottawa) or you may also call me toll free at 1-877-868-8292 ext: 4421.

Regards,

Joshua J. Ramisch
Associate Professor & Doctoral Program Coordinator
jramisch@uottawa.ca

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Appendix 2: American University of Beirut, Letter of Affiliation, English



Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Office of the Dean

كلية الآداب والعلوم
مكتب العميد

الجامعة الأمريكية في بيروت
AUB

February 16, 2018

Dear Ms. Katelyn Cassin,

With reference to your application, and upon the recommendation of the Assistant Director of the Center for Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies (CAMES), I am pleased to appoint you in the position of "Affiliate" in CAMES, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, on a non-remunerative basis, for the period extending from February 23, 2018 until December 23, 2018. This appointment terminates on the aforementioned date, unless renewed in writing.

This appointment does not carry any stipend nor any other benefits.

Nadia El Cheikh
Dean, FAS

Cc: Mrs. Samar Diab, Director, Human Resources Department
Dr. Aliya Saidi, Assistant Director, CAMES
Dr. Lokman Meho, University Librarian
Mr. Saadallah Shalak, Office of Protection

Appendix 3: American University of Beirut, Letter of Affiliation, Arabic



Center for Arab and
Middle Eastern Studies

مركز الدراسات العربية
ودراسات الشرق الأوسط

www.aub.edu.lb

24/04/2018

لمن يهمه الامر:

الموضوع: الأنسة كايتلن كاسين (Ms. Katelyn Kassin)

الرجاء أخذ العلم بأن الأنسة كايتلن كاسين، طالبة دكتوراه في جامعة أوتوا في كندا، هي باحثة مؤقتة في "مركز الدراسات العربية ودراسات الشرق الأوسط" في الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت. الأنسة كاسين ستكمل أبحاثها في لبنان في 31 كانون الأول 2018.

نرجو من حضرتكم اعطاءها التسهيلات لكي تكمل أبحاثها.

الأنسة كاسين ليست موظفة لدى الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت، ولا تتلقى أي راتب أو تعويضات مالية من الجامعة.

للمزيد من المعلومات الرجاء الاتصال على الرقم التالي: 01 /350000 مقسم 3845.

د. عليّة سعدي

المديرة المساعدة

مركز الدراسات العربية ودراسات الشرق الأوسط
الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت



Appendix 4: Thesis Summary Info Sheet

Université d'Ottawa | University of Ottawa

Micro-Level Peacebuilding Through 'Interfaces and Interchanges': The Social and Physical Spaces that Connect UN Peacekeepers with Local Individuals and the Outcomes of Such Interactions *Ph.D. Dissertation Project*

My name is Katelyn Cassin and I am a PhD student at the University of Ottawa in Canada and a research affiliate with the Centre for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies at AUB. I'm conducting research on the individual-to-individual connections and interactions between UNIFIL peacekeepers and people that live and work in south Lebanon. I'm particularly interested in the social and physical spaces of these interactions, what motivates people to connect and interact and what those interactions mean to individuals and communities.

I would like to conduct interviews with people that live and work in south Lebanon about their experiences and interactions with UN peacekeepers, and also about their perceptions of the work that UNIFIL does. I would also like to speak with civil society organizations, religious leaders, and community leaders on this subject. I will be working with a translator for this research.

This research is a part of my doctoral thesis, which I hope to publish after it is completed. I may also pursue a couple of academic article publications in peer-reviewed journals, based on my research. I want to make clear that I am completely independent, I do not work for UNIFIL, my government, or an NGO. All interviews that I conduct will be confidential and I will not name people in my research.

Katelyn Cassin, PhD Candidate
School of International Development and Global Studies
University of Ottawa, Canada
Research Affiliate, Centre for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies
American University of Beirut

اسمي ينلثاك بن ساك وأنا طالبة دكتوراه في جامعة أوتاوا في كندا وأحد الباحثين التابعين لمركز الدراسات العربية والشرق أوسطية في الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت. أقوم بإجراء بحث حول موضوع لعلاقات الاجتماعية والمادي بين أفراد حفظ السلام التابعين للأمم المتحدة والأشخاص الذين يعيشون ويعملون في جنوب لبنان. أنا مهتم بشكل خاص بالمساحات الاجتماعية والمادية لهذه التفاعلات، ما يحفز الناس على التواصل والتفاعل وإذا ما تعنيه تلك التفاعلات للأفراد والمجتمعات.

أود إجراء مقابلات مع أشخاص يعيشون ويعملون في الجنوب، حول تجاربهم وتفاعلاتهم مع قوات حفظ السلام التابعة للأمم المتحدة، وأيضاً حول تصوراتهم للعمل الذي تقوم به اليونيفيل. أود أيضاً التحدث مع منظمات المجتمع المدني و بين لؤوسا نء تاهجلا الدينية حول هذا الموضوع. سيعمل معي مترجم لبلاخ هذا البحث.

هذا البحث جزء من أطروحة الدكتوراه التي أتمنى أن أنشرها بعد اكتمالها. قد أقوم أيضاً بمناخبة لمعلا لىء اثنين من المقالات الأكاديمية في المجال، بناءً على بحثي. أريد أن أوضح أنني مستقل تماماً، فأنا لا أعمل لدى اليونيفيل أو حكومتي أو منظمة غير حكومية. ستكون جميع المقابلات التي أقوم بها سرية ولن أذكر أسماء الأشخاص في بحثي.

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Appendix 5: Sample Permit for Travel from the Lebanese Armed Forces

الجمهورية اللبنانية

وزارة الدفاع الوطني

قيادة الجيش

مديرية التوجيه

رقم: ٨٠٥٨/م ت

تصنيف: ١/١٩٢

ترخيص تصوير

يمدد العمل بالترخيص رقم ٩٣٠/م ت تاريخ ٢٠١٨/٥/٧، الممنوح للباحثة الكندية Katelyn Cassin، بالدخول إلى منطقة الجنوب (ضمناً قطاع جنوب الليطاني وباستثناء المخيمات الفلسطينية)، بغية إعداد تقرير مصور عن أوضاع المنطقة المذكورة وعلاقة السكان مع قوات الأمم المتحدة المؤقتة في لبنان.

- يعمل بهذا الترخيص اعتباراً من تاريخ صدوره ولغاية ٢٠١٨/٦/٣٠.

ملاحظات:

- يتم التنفيذ بالتنسيق مع مديرية التوجيه، وبإشراف ضابط الأمن والتوجيه في الوحدة المنتشرة في قطاع جنوب الليطاني.
- وجوب التقدم من فرع مخابرات منطقة الجنوب قبل البدء بالتنفيذ، على أن تسلم صورة شمسية حديثة عائدة لها إلى الفرع المذكور.
- لا يسمح لصاحبة العلاقة بالاستفادة من الترخيص إلا عند إبرازه في مكان التصوير.
- يمنع تصوير التكتلات، الآليات، المراكز العسكرية، الحواجز، والعناصر المنتشرة للجيش اللبناني وقوات الأمم المتحدة المؤقتة في لبنان.
- وجوب أخذ الموافقة المسبقة من الإدارات العامة والخاصة في مكان التصوير.
- يمنع القيام بأي نشاط آخر خارج إطار موضوع الترخيص.
- تزويد مديرية التوجيه قرصاً مدمجاً D.V.D. عن التقرير والصور قبل أخذ موافقة المديرية المذكورة.

البرزة في ٢٠١٨/٥/٢٦

العماد عون قائد الجيش

عنه: العميد قانصو مدير التوجيه



Appendix 6: Semi-Structured Interview Guide – Locals

1. Business/Work
 - a. Tell me a bit about yourself and your business/work?
 - b. How long have you worked here/had this position?
 - c. Do you often interact with UNIFIL in the course of your work? Which contingents?
 - d. Has it always been this way? Worse/better?
2. Community
 - a. Can you tell me a bit about your community? How long have you lived there?
3. Relationship with UNIFIL
 - a. Can you tell me about the relationship between UNIFIL and this community?
 - b. Does UNIFIL do a lot of work in this area?
 - i. Development projects?
 - ii. Cultural projects?
 - c. Do you often see UNIFIL in the shops, cafes, or restaurants here?
 - i. At events? Events on base?
 - ii. Places of worship? Religious festivals/events? Weddings/funerals?
 - d. Are there many opportunities for interaction between UNIFIL and Lebanese people?
 - e. Do you feel that you've built relationships with any of the UNIFIL that you interact with? Have you gotten to know any of them well? How did you build these relationships?
 - i. Have you ever shared a meal, or a coffee or tea with UNIFIL people?
 - ii. Has anyone from UNIFIL ever asked you your opinion about their work or asked you about your needs or the needs of the community?
4. What do you think brings UNIFIL and Lebanese people together? What divides them?
 - a. Does nationality make a difference?
5. Impacts
 - a. How have your connections with UNIFIL impacted you personally? Benefits? Downsides?
 - b. Do your interactions impact others in your life? Their opinions of UNIFIL, their attitudes about the conflict, or their beliefs on the situation in Lebanon?
 - c. What gestures or activities that UNIFIL does do you think mean the most to the community here?
 - d. Do you think there are many people in the community that would see things the same way as you do? Have the same type of relationships as you have?
-
6. UNIFIL's role
 - a. How would you explain UNIFIL's role in south Lebanon to someone who knew nothing about the context?
 - b. Are they successful in their work here?
7. Is there anything that UNIFIL does or could do that would change people's minds about the conflict with Israel?
8. What if UNIFIL left tomorrow? What would be the impact?
9. Peace
 - a. What does peace mean to you?
 - b. Does UNIFIL contribute to peace as you understand it?

Appendix 6.1 Interview Prompt Sheet Used in the Field

- business, how long
 - UNIFIL customers, from where
 - built relationships?
 - always the same?
- community
 - relationship w UNIFIL
 - work they do - dev, cultural
 - shops, cafés, restaurants
 - events, festivals
 - places of worship
- opportunities for interaction
- what do you think brings UNIFIL & Lebanese people together? what divides them?
- nationality
- personally have relationships, how start
 - ask your opinions or needs
- impacts
 - you? benefits/downsides?
 - other ppl in life? family? friends?
 - gestures = meaning
 - others feel the same? have similar relationships?
 - reaction during 2006
- UNIFIL's role, successful?
- anything UNIFIL could do to change ppl's feelings about the conflict?
- what if UNIFIL left tomorrow
- peace, UNIFIL contribute?
- snowball

Appendix 7: Semi-Structured Interview Guide – UNIFIL Veterans

1. So first off, tell me a bit about your time with UNIFIL generally.
 - a. Your position/your job
 - b. Where you were stationed
 - c. Were you living in a camp, or in the village in abandoned houses etc.?
 - d. Number of deployments.
 - e. What was your average day like?
2. Did you have many opportunities for interaction with Lebanese people?
 - a. During your work? Free time?
 - b. Were you able to go around to the local shops, cafes, souqs etc.?
 - c. Did you attend any local events or celebrations?
 - d. Were there chaplaincy services offered in your camp or did people from your unit go to local churches/mosques for services?
 - e. Do you feel you were able to build relationships with the local people you interacted with regularly?
 - f. Were you ever invited into people's homes for coffee, tea, or a meal?
3. How would you say the relationship was between UNIFIL and the local community generally during your deployments?
4. What do you think brings UNIFIL and Lebanese people together? What divides them?
5. Do you feel as though your contingent fared any better or worse than other contingents with respect to your relations with the local community? Is there a different experience between different nationalities of UNIFIL?
6. How did your time in Lebanon impact you?
 - a. What were the impacts of your connections with Lebanese people for you personally? For your work? Were there any negative impacts?
 - b. Do you feel as though your connections with local people impacted anyone else in your life? Your friends? Your unit?
 - c. What do you feel was the impact for the local person/persons of their connection with you?
 - d. What aspect of your time with UNIFIL do you think had the most meaning or the greatest impact? Why?
7. What was your greatest achievement with UNIFIL? What was your greatest challenge?
8. How would you explain UNIFIL's role in Lebanon to someone who knew nothing about the context?
 - a. Do you feel UNIFIL was/is successful in this role?
9. Is there anything that UNIFIL could do to change people's feelings about the conflict with Israel?
10. What if UNIFIL left tomorrow? What would be the impact or the result?
11. What does peace mean to you? Does UNIFIL contribute to that definition of peace?

Appendix 7.1 UNIFIL Veterans Interview Prompt Sheet Used in the Field

UNIFIL Alum.

- Work
 - position w/ UNIFIL, location, base/off base
 - # of deployments, differences?
 - average day
 - fit w/ broader mission landscape
 - QIPs, dev, cultural projects
- has UNIFIL changed a lot since your time?
- opportunities for interaction
 - during work? free time?
 - shops, cafes, souqs
 - events, festivals
 - places of worship
 - what would you chat about?
 - always the same? what made you start?
 - common? what motivated you?
- relationship b/w UNIFIL & community
- what do you think brings UNIFIL & Lebanese people together? what divides them?
- nationality? ↳ cultural exchange events
- impacts
 - you personally? your work? +/-
 - other person? community?
 - others in UNIFIL?
 - what aspect of your time w/ UNIFIL do you think and the most meaning or the greatest impact? why?
- greatest achievement? greatest challenge?
- -----
- UNIFIL's role, successful?
- anything UNIFIL could do to change ppl's feelings about the conflict

- what if UNIFIL left tomorrow
- peace, UNIFIL contribute
- snowball - UNIFIL & locals

Appendix 8: Codebook

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Context	Elements that contextualize the UNIFIL participants, locations, and particular time periods.
General Contextualization Stories	Stories from participants that while not directly relevant to the research subject, contextualize the way things were or some of their experiences
UNIFIL Changes Over Time	Attributes ascribed to the old, pre 2000/2006 UNIFIL that are different now
Less Connection, Less Communication, Different Nationalities	Indications that the more formalized UNIFIL has become over time and the more concerned they have become about security, the less connection they have had with the Lebanese public.
More Bureaucracy, More Formalized, Less Ad Hoc	Connected to the Flexibility and Freeform code. Notes that in the earlier days of UNIFIL there was less structure, and this enabled both good and bad behaviours to emerge as a result.
More Militarized, More Infrastructure	Indications that especially after 1701 and the 2006 war, UNIFIL became a far more robust force, with a more confrontational, war-fighting attitude toward the Lebanese. This negatively impacted their acceptance by locals as well as their operational effectiveness.
Quieter Now, Easier Deployment, Lower Impact	Indications that people see UNIFIL as a much easier posting now than it would have been back in the day. Perceptions of progress, of an improved security situation in the south.
UNIFIL Operational Information	Official line material about how UNIFIL operates
UN Peacekeeping (general)	Notes and commentary on the UN more generally and UN peacekeeping. UN experiences outside of Lebanon that come up in discussion as informative for how to understand the Lebanese situation. Expressions of the UN more broadly being toothless. Contextualizing UN peacekeeping in the more international space rather than specific to the Lebanese context.
Habitus; Individualism	Indications of the UN's desire to have every uniform be a uniform in UNIFIL; also includes some mentions of how preposterous/non functional this approach is; examples of habits play into determining the course of mission objectives. Includes mentions of the distinction between professional soldiers and volunteers - the latter being more personable and relaxed with local people.
Exceptional Individuals	Someone who is unique in context; someone who defies expectations; non-conformist; has some form of value as an independent actor.
Freeform, Flying Blind, Flexibility, Permissive Environment	Lack of information of local situation, lack of understanding, unclear mandate - can connote both problems and opportunities, especially for exceptional individuals to shine and have a disproportionate impact on the mission and the context. Also the notion that a context that is more freeform is productive for connections and relationships.
No Limits, Unafraid to Act, Flouting the Rules	The right people are often those who are unafraid to do what is right, not afraid of reprisals or job loss; implied that these are crucial to success; trickle down effects Arrogance, confidence.
Impacts	Impacts of relationships and connections - what do these connections mean?

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Cosmopolitanism, Epistemic Communities for Peace	Expressions of common humanity, education for peace, the development of epistemic communities for peace, etc.
Impact on Lebanese - People Are Getting a benefit	What impact participants felt they themselves, or UNIFIL more broadly, had on Lebanese
Aid and Development Work	Mentions of the various projects undertaken by the contingents as being of significant value to Lebanese people.
Felt Safer, Were Safer	Impact is generally feeling safer in their day to day lives - while feeling safer, this is also usually accompanied by acknowledgement of the serious limitations of UNIFIL against the Israelis.
Little to None, Symbolic	Indications that the impact of UNIFIL on Lebanese people and communities is minimal.
Negative Impact	Notions that UNIFIL has had a negative impact on some Lebanese people.
Opportunities	More general expressions of the fact that UNIFIL gives Lebanese people opportunities that they may not otherwise have. These could include skills development, job prospects, immigration prospects etc.
Economic	Main incentive or benefit for Lebanese people in interacting and connecting with UNIFIL is monetary/economic; peacekeeping-as-enterprise
Exposure, Greater Openness, Cultural Exchange	Lebanese people are able to share their culture - associated with pride in their culture, wanting to show visitors the best their country has to offer. UNIFIL engage in cultural exchange activities, such as language or cooking classes. These are seen to be meaningful to people.
Professionalism, Skills and Capacity Building	Some people note that they learned things professionally from their work with UNIFIL. This commonly comes in the refrain of improved professionalism, as Lebanon has a more free flowing way of conducting business, while UNIFIL is highly regimented. Usually pitched in a positive light.
Impacts on UN personnel	Personal impacts of interactions and connections in Lebanon
Attached to Lebanon	Expressions of love and attachment for Lebanon; special place; unique; blurred identity lines - aligning themselves with locals; self-localization
Not Attached to Lebanon, Negative Impacts	Notes that they don't have the desire to go back or don't have a level of fondness for Lebanon that matches some of their peers. Also includes negative impacts experienced by UN personnel
Awareness (Self), Maturity, Personal Benefit (Career); 'Enrichment'	Mentions of personnel feeling as though they had matured or grown up as a result of their deployments in Lebanon - appreciation of the reality that this context is different in a substantive way to their home life - a conflict context is unique. Also includes references to how UNIFIL improved their career prospects.
Changed Personal Opinions, Gained Knowledge	Indications that time in Lebanon has altered their personal opinions about the conflict, about Israel, about Muslims, about the Middle East etc.
Exposure to New Culture, Openness	Indications that personnel felt they were impacted through their exposure to a new culture in Lebanon, and they suggest that this exposure has impacted their lives well beyond Lebanon. Not just about personal opinions, but also about openness.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Feeling Comfortable and Relatively Safe	Expressions of feeling at ease and comfortable in Lebanon - seems to be associated with spending some duration in country, developing a better knowledge of the country, and interacting with some local people - dissuades the fear and apprehension experienced before deployment
Humanitarian Spirit	Mention of a greater spirit of humanitarianism being awakened in personnel after returning from deployment - indications of ongoing desire to help and contribute - linked to cosmopolitanism and global citizenship perhaps
Novelty and Surrealness of the Experience, Proud, Exotic	Articulations of feeling as though going to Lebanon was something that made participants interesting, or brave - that the experience itself was surreal, felt like a movie - it was something they were proud to tell people about. Potentially rooted in a form of exoticization, or some sense of credibility and novelty stemming from the profile of Lebanon at the time. May also be rooted in conceptions of masculinity back home. Connected to relative privilege as compared to the Lebanese.
Trust and Loyalty	Indications that the impact of relationships between UNIFIL and Lebanese people is greater feelings of trust and loyalty between them – not exclusive to either group, but mutual.
Local Acceptance	
Acceptance is Political	The notion that relations between Lebanese people and UNIFIL are good because it is decided by the political elites that they should be good. The implications are that this can change if the political climate or leadership change. Implies some degree of artifice in the good relations.
Urban-Rural Distinction	Cross-coded to Acceptance is Political. Indications that people from cities are more open minded and accepting of UNIFIL than rural Lebanese people. Indications specifically from Lebanese people.
Aggressiveness Doesn't Work	Perception that battalions that came in with guns blazing, taking a strong, peace enforcement approach in Lebanon were not well received by local people. Also connected to the perception that some battalions were deployed from Afghanistan or Iraq to Lebanon, which created issues in that these missions were profoundly different in terms of use of force.
Colonial Dynamics	Referring specifically to France, but any mention of imperial or colonial dynamics impacting the experience of Lebanese people with UNIFIL.
Country of Origin Matters	Some nationalities fair better in Lebanon than others; local level prejudice; perhaps linked to stereotypes. (sub-coded each nationality discussed, and coded any nation-specific references)
Cultural Currency	Something from home culture enables activities or connections in Lebanon. Some form of cultural capital that makes certain nationalities more appealing to Lebanese people than others. May take many forms.
Friendliness, Openness, Easy Going	Friendliness of a contingent impacts the degree to which they are accepted by the local community; simple gestures matter. Related to local acceptance, having an easy going culture, not approaching the mission too seriously, is often seen to be beneficial to acceptance from the local community.
Money Leads to Acceptance	The notion that even if culturally a group may not fit in that well, if they spend a lot of money and provide a lot of aid they are accepted.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Services and Projects Improve Acceptance	Local community will accept and support a contingent when they provide for specific service gaps in the area. Sub-code, but not distinct, from Money Leads to Acceptance.
Respect	Important that Lebanese people feel respected by UNIFIL; important that the UNIFIL receive respect from Lebanese people.
Local Realities	Content from local participants that expresses information or sentiments about what the realities are in Lebanon, about the culture, about the status quo of life in Lebanon.
Lebanese Love Foreigners	Mention of the fact that most Lebanese people are eager to have connections with foreigners, they are curious, they want to practice their language skills, network and have connections.
No Hope for Peace, Conflict is Personal	Peace is illusive, it is something people don't even really hope for. The conflict is personal for all adults, they remember the invasions, they have trauma. It's not just grandparents, it's everyone, it's still fresh.
Precarity of Lebanese Life	Acknowledgement from locals of their fundamental precarity, the inability to reliably assume stability and their vulnerability to conflict.
That's Politics, Sensitive Subject	Several Lebanese people, when asked certain questions, laugh, deflect, and say, "oh well that's politics, that's a sensitive subject" and refuse to answer. Invocations of the sensitivity of certain topics.
The Lebanese Way	Self-described aspects of Lebanese culture, from Lebanese people - how things work, the culture, how they are with one another socially etc. "The Lebanese way"
Local Understanding	UNIFIL's local knowledge and understanding, contextualization; situatedness; knowledge of the local community, etc.
Cultural Sensitivity	Connected most often to religion and gender; about respecting women. Some content about cultural symbols and practices. Overlap with Respect.
Know Who You Are Dealing With	Care must be taken in social connections; necessity to know how to place an individual in order to evaluate the extent to which you should or can connect; linked to Acceptance and Social Capital.
Precarity of Lebanese Life, Fragility of State	Acknowledgement and appreciation of the true precarity that Lebanese people live in, the uncertainty of how long they have in the relative stasis/peace that they currently experience, and the surety they have that another war is inevitable. Also includes references to the fragility of the Lebanese state and its role in the conflict. References to the "Lebanese Spirit" are indicative of a sort of resilience that emerges from that precarity and are included here.
Sensitivity of Politics, Conflict is Personal	Indications that UNIFIL are aware of how sensitive certain topics are, particularly politics, and how some things can't be talked about openly or should be avoided in conversations.
Sharp Contrasts and Contradictions	Describing Lebanon in terms of sharp contrasts, paradoxes, contradictions etc. Typically evokes the uniqueness of the place, usually said in positive, but incredulous tones. A bit of a romanticizing narrative, but also reflects an understanding of inequalities within Lebanon.
UNIFIL Context Coherence	How coherent is UNIFIL in terms of protocol, leadership and mandate with the contextual realities of south Lebanon. What is the alignment?

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Urban-Rural Differential	UNIFIL observations regarding the difference between urban Lebanese people and rural Lebanese people in terms of their openness, friendliness, culture, acceptance etc.
Meaning of Peace	Answers to the question: What does peace mean to you?
Integration, Interdependence, Respect, Love	The notion that the more integrated people and countries are, the more disadvantageous war is to the self. The concept behind the European Union and trade as peace building.
Negative Peace, Freedom from Fear, Conflict Management	Peace as stability, peace as freedom from fear. Violence prevention or mitigation, not resolution.
Peace is Resistance, Balance of Power	References to the importance of Hezbollah in maintaining the type of peace Lebanon currently enjoys - balance of power, deterrence against Israel. Resistance, not only re Hezbollah, but also with respect to continuing on with their lives and existence despite the precarity and multiple invasions.
Peace Starts within Ourselves	Peace is internal, it's within oneself. Peace of mind.
Positive Peace, Freedom from Want and Fear, Economic	Peace is economic development, opportunities, education, etc. Classic security-development nexus. Peace-building, if not conflict resolution.
Justice, Freedom, Freedom to Plan	Positive peace, but with less of a economic, freedom from want angle, and more of an equality and freedom of opportunity angle. This may not be a relevant distinction in human security, but it is potentially relevant to different world views, that are less western/Christian-centric I'm also going to include the sentiment of 'a peace you can count on for more than just today, but enduringly,' because I think this is fundamentally rooted in the justice and freedom aspect of positive peace - the freedom to plan.
Operational Effectiveness	Implications of relationships on UNIFIL's operational effectiveness – expansive understanding of “effectiveness” as really any effect that UNIFIL has.
Local Information	Up-to-date information is crucial for UNIFIL; important to know for work; things change quickly; monitoring the situation, etc. Not just information, but also understanding.
Accessibility and Proximity	The accessibility of both UNIFIL and local people across the international-local divide. Providing pathways for either direct contact or for grievances and needs to be communicated from the local level to the international level. Related also to the “They are Part of our Communities” code.
Attaining Information	Descriptions of the pathways through which local information is attained, in some cases this includes mention of connections and/or aid, or more generally, the positive relations between the local people and UNIFI. Includes ways in which local people advise UNIFIL about local goings on and warn them away from certain situations - implies loyalty and affection.
Information from Local Contacts - the Pulse of the Street	Testimony that information was gained from local contacts. Connected to Accessibility, as well as Trust and Loyalty, and Part of our Communities. References to Key People and More people. Engaging with wider portions of the population, including lower level individuals, but with broad reaching connections and information.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
The Right People-Leadership	Expressing the sentiment that effectiveness has to do with having “the right people” involved. Mostly references to good leadership, or leadership with some sort of exceptional suitability to the situation at hand.
Real-time, Ad Hoc Diplomacy	Stories about the capacity of individual, low-ranking personnel to negotiate and mediate when faced with an issue in the local community - normally this is connected with a good deal of local knowledge, access to Key People and More People.
Winning Support, Getting Close to the People	Related to the notion of “winning hearts and minds” - not only via QIPs though - talking specifically about strategies undertaken in order to earn the support of the locality.
Behaviour Change, Learning, Adapting	Altering behaviours in order to gain access and build connections - indicative of a responsiveness to the context and the needs of the other - meeting someone half way or where they are.
Focus on the Children	UNIFIL programming for children, which is perceived by some Lebanese people to be an intentional strategy to win the support of parents and the communities by providing opportunities and development for children.
Good Work, Beyond the Mandate	Examples of UNIFIL acting outside of/or in spite of the mandate; generally positive in connotation; underlying tones of virtuous conduct. Exceptional actions that win support.
Local Sourcing	As a strategy to encourage either local acceptance, the local economy, or interaction with local people, UNIFIL contingents in some cases consciously source food products and labour from nearby villages etc. It’s unclear in most cases if this was initiated from the top or the bottom, but several stories seem to indicate that it was driven from the bottom.
Public Visibility; Public Understanding	UNIFIL efforts to improve public visibility, and public perception. Also included mention of the need for UNIFIL to improve these aspects in order to gain support.
Perceptions	
Locals Perception of UNIFIL	How local people express their perceptions of UNIFIL.
Appreciate Them, Respect Them, They are Helping a Lot	Perception that UNIFIL help a lot in Lebanese communities. Sentiments that local people appreciate their presence, appreciate that UNIFIL are sacrificing to some extent when they come to Lebanon, leaving their families and such for their benefit, respecting them for those choices and for the help they provide
Biased for the Israelis; Spies; Negative Feelings	Perceptions by local people that while UNIFIL may say that they are neutral, in reality they are biased toward Israel, they primarily serve Israel’s interests. UNIFIL are spies.
Limited	UNIFIL is fundamentally limited, not able to deter Israel effectively, limited in its capabilities, constrained by its mandate, international politics etc.
Part of Our Communities, Social Life, Normal	Expressions that UNIFIL is a part of Lebanese communities, they are embedded - also expresses a significant degree of acceptance and contact. They are neighbours and behave as such/deserve to be treated as such.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Projects Don't Benefit all Equally, They Don't Do Enough	Mention that some of UNIFIL's projects don't benefit all people in a community - while this may be understandable, it's an expression of injustice or unfairness in how UNIFIL operates - connected to the Wastah, Knowing the Right People code. Also mentions of some villages getting more projects than others – if the relationships isn't good between UNIFIL and the community, they don't get many projects.
Respectful, Professional (Formal)	UNIFIL are always respectful and professional. Usually said in a positive context, but sometimes it also indicates a level of formality, wherein UNIFIL avoid making relationships and connections, but are polite and civil.
They are Here for a Certain Job	Invivo code from MM-1 - The often expressed notion that UNIFIL are in Lebanon for a certain job only, they cannot do everything and really, they cannot do much. Often betrays a sense of limitedness in terms of capacity to interact, connect, and provide aid. Most often used in reference to questions about conflict resolution.
UNIFIL are Afraid or Suspicious of Us, Monitoring Us	In their connections with people, there is the perception that UNIFIL are afraid of the Lebanese people somehow, that they never travel without their security and are always making sure they are monitoring their cars - this perception is a barrier to more genuine connections. Expressions of the feeling of being monitored fit here.
UNIFIL's Perception of Locals and Lebanon	How UNIFIL peacekeepers perceive the local population of Lebanon.
Appreciative, Want to Take Care of Us	Perception that Lebanese people are kind and helpful and hospitable because they are appreciative of what UNIFIL is trying to do.
Backward, Infantile, Conservative, Closed	Patronizing comments that express a certain paternalism toward the Lebanese people. Includes perceptions of Lebanese culture or people as backward, regressive - 'third world' speak, exoticizing or demeaning language. Implies a power hierarchy, where UNIFIL are more socially developed or progressive than Lebanese people.
Divided, Fanatical, Violent	Perceptions of Lebanese people as being deeply divided and competitive, of being fanatical and having a tendency toward violence and conflict - betrays both a perception and perhaps a knowledge of the internal instabilities of Lebanon, perhaps also betrays a bit of prejudice.
Enterprising, Shrewd	Perceptions that Lebanese people undertake certain actions to make a buck, or only for their personal benefit. Evokes a sense of disingenuousness.
Love Westerners, Curious	Curiosity motivates some Lebanese people to connect and interact, UNIFIL understandings that Lebanese people love Westerners, they want connections especially with Europeans.
Negative, Suspicious, Lebanese Know UNIFIL's Limitations	Indications that UNIFIL peacekeepers feel that Lebanese people have negative feelings toward them, are suspicious of them, or at minimum are disappointed by them. Lebanese people know well the limitations of UNIFIL, and this negatively impacts their perceptions of UNIFIL.
Open, Liberal	Perceptions of Lebanese people and Lebanese culture as open and liberal, often surprisingly so.
Poor, Downtrodden	Perceptions of the Lebanese people as downtrodden and poor - typically or often in relation to, or comparison to, Israel. Lebanon as

NAME	DESCRIPTION
	underdeveloped.
Resilient	Expressions by UNIFIL that Lebanese people are highly resilient – indicates a level of respect and understanding.
Suspicion of Lebanese People	General expressions of suspicion of the Lebanese people
Hezbollah and Amal	Expressions of some underlying feelings of suspicion toward people connected to, or perceived to be connected to, Hezbollah and/or Amal; general perceptions of Hezbollah and Amal.
Palestinians	Perceptions of Palestinians, suspicions or blame-placing language on Palestinians as the hostile actors underpinning the conflict and the suffering that Lebanon experienced.
SLA and Israel	Indications that some UNIFIL were at times suspicious of Christian Lebanese people for their likely affiliation with the SLA, which was functionally a puppet of Israel - connotes some sympathies with Lebanese people over the Israelis; general perceptions of SLA and Israel.
Understand Why We are There	UNIFIL's perception that Lebanese people know why they are there and understand their mission – there is awareness and understanding of the limitations as well as the good works UNIFIL tries to accomplish in the south.
Unprofessional, Disorderly	UNIFIL's perception of Lebanese people as unprofessional, chaotic, disorderly, difficult to work with, etc. Links to paternalism.
UNIFIL's Perceptions of UNIFIL; Limited; Toothless; Useless	How UNIFIL is perceived by UNIFIL veterans - the insider perspective and experience. By and large an expression of UNIFIL's limitedness and uselessness.
QUOTES	
Religion	All mentioned of religion that came up during interviews.
Expressions of Religiosity	Ways in which people understand their religion, or practice their religion. Covers both UNIFIL and local people.
Religion as Culture	Understandings of religion as a culture, rather than an institutionalized practice per se. The ways in which religion influences, or manifests within, culture.
Religion as Politics	The ties between religion and politics in Lebanon.
Religion is Not that Relevant	Indications that either religion is not a major factor in the lives or connections of south Lebanon, or that religion is less important as most people are Shia, while few UNIFIL peacekeepers are similarly Muslim and/or Shia, so not much overlap.
UNIFIL Stays Away from Religion	Mentions of UNIFIL's tactical avoidance of religion as too linked to politics and too sensitive to engage with. Also includes stories or negative ramifications if they do get involved or are perceived to get involved.
Religious Differential - Perceptions and Experiences	The different ways in which UNIFIL perceive Lebanese people based on their religion, or perceived religious affiliation. Also includes the differences in relationships and connections between UNIFIL and Lebanese people of different religious affiliations.
Christian	

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Druze	
Muslim	
Religious Interfaces	The spaces and contexts for interaction that are mediated or motivated by religion.
Accessing Religious Services in Community - Significance	Testimonial of UNIFIL accessing religious services outside of bases, in local churches and/or mosques. Also includes instances when UNIFIL contingents have brought in local religious leaders to deliver services.
No, no access in town	Comments that, no, UNIFIL does not access religious services off-base.
Rituals, Ceremonies, Events	UNIFIL only interacts with local people in religious contexts during rituals, ceremonies, or special events – Christmas, Ramadan, and other ceremonial religious engagement.
Yes accessed in town	Yes, at times UNIFIL has accessed religious services in local communities and villages. Mentions of this, stories etc.
Conversation, Exposure	Stories about religion coming up in conversations or in relational settings between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. Individuals learned about one another's religions, etc.
UNIFIL Provisions for Personnel	Religious services provided to UNIFIL, by UNIFIL – UNIFIL's religious accommodations for personnel, chaplaincy services etc.
Social Capital	Parent code referring to the social capital of Coleman and Putnam - the combination of both agency and constraints that leads to social organization; the personal relations that generate trust, reciprocity, and reinforce norms; the connections among individuals.
Interlocutors and Intermediaries (Hybridized People)	Individuals who liaise between groups, somehow traverse groups and forge lines of communication and connection. Contain bridging knowledge and/or identities, and facilitate the connections of others in their networks.
LAF	Lebanese Armed Forces acting as interlocutors and intermediaries, assisting in the resolution of disputes and generally enabling the functioning of UNIFIL.
Local Individuals	Member of the local community, not translators, municipality members, or UNIFIL local staff, who come to function as interlocutors between Lebanese people and UNIFIL as an institution.
Municipalities	Interactions or connections in the course of their work with local municipalities and municipal leadership - mukhtars, mayors, etc. Municipalities acting as interlocutors between UNIFIL and local communities.
Religious Interlocutors	Local religious leaders and/or UNIFIL chaplains functioning as interlocutors, bringing other connections.
The Downsides of Interlocutors, Unreliable Interlocutors	Stories of unreliable interlocutors, people who have this position but lie or manipulate information to their own benefit – the power of interlocutors to shape the message.
Translators (Linguistic and Cultural)	Primarily local staff members, but not exclusively, who function as both linguistic and cultural translators. The ways in which some individuals, interpret Lebanese culture for UNIFIL peacekeepers to help them

NAME	DESCRIPTION
	understand and function better in the local community.
UNIFIL as Interlocutor to NGOs	Several participants indicate that through UNIFIL, their organizations have gained connections to NGOs from the UNIFIL contributing nations, or to twinning relationships between cities in their home countries. This is an interesting role for UNIFIL to play, having implications for peacekeeping-as-development that go well beyond the mandate.
UNIFIL as Interlocutors for Lebanese to Internationals	Ways in which UNIFIL acts as an interlocutor for Lebanon and Lebanese people to the international community – UNIFIL becoming ambassadors for Lebanon and bringing a positive image to their home countries and communities.
UNIFIL as Intermediary Between Israel and Lebanon	UNIFIL's function in the Tripartite mechanism as interlocutors between Lebanon and Israel, or more specifically, the LAF and the IDF.
UNIFIL Individuals	Individuals employed with UNIFIL, not as translators, who manage to function as interlocutors between UNIFIL and the local community.
Wastah, Know the Right People, Key People	Expressions of the sentiment that who you know is important, and to some extent a determinant of the nature of the connection - knowing the right people makes the relationship far more fruitful. Knowing the right people is how you get things done in Lebanon.
Wastah - Lebanese	When Lebanese people mention that you need to know the right people in UNIFIL to get things done. Leaving out general reference to wastah being how things work in Lebanon.
Wastah - UNIFIL	Instances where UNIFIL comment that you need to know the right people - connections help you get things done. This is a part of Local Understanding.
Social Connections	Direct, interpersonal connections and communications.
Reaching	Who seems to be reaching out to connect across the international-local divide?
Initiated by Locals	Indications that interactions and connections were driven by and initiated by Lebanese people – they do the reaching.
Initiated by UNIFIL	Indications that interactions and connections were driven by and initiated by UNIFIL – they do the reaching.
Mutual Initiative	Both parties came together to connect – it was a mutual effort and desire to build a relationship.
Substantive Connection	Indications of a more substantial and personal relationship being formed between UNIFIL and local people – what that relationship looks like, what are its contents, how does it develop, etc.
Cultural Exchange	Activities that are rooted in cultural exchange – ways in which culture creates the contexts and spaces for meaningful connections.
Cultural Conversation	Moments in which culture is a part of the conversations that UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese people have with one another. Talk of culture, communication about culture, etc. as a way in which people build connections or become connected.
Cultural Experience	Actions, gestures or rituals connected to culture that are exchanged

NAME	DESCRIPTION
	between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. How cultural experiences facilitate connections.
Lebanese Hospitality and Kindness	Invites into homes; invites to join in a drink or food; mentions of the Lebanese culture of hospitality and welcoming as a bridging agent between UNIFIL and Lebanese people - indicative of a deeper connection than a consumer-based friendship. Often the way in which surface level connections become more significant.
Food	Mention of food as a “gateway to the culture” and to the sharing of culture and the growth of a love for Lebanon The sharing of food as a symbol of a substantive connection or a mechanism of building a more substantial connection.
Homes	Being invited into Lebanese homes for meals, tea, coffee etc; linked to Lebanese hospitality and to significant social connections.
Tea and Coffee	The notion that the sharing of tea or coffee mediates the connection - it sets up a more substantial, honest, comfortable, civil exchange. It’s used as an indication of a good, friendly relationship. Linked of course with hospitality culture.
Enduring Connection, Stay in Touch, Social Media, Follow Up	Indications that the relationships developed between UNIFIL and Lebanese people are significant enough to be lasting – they endure past the bounds of deployment, or are revived on return tours, or during travel back to Lebanon at a later point.
Marriage and Flirtations	Stories of marriages between UNIFIL and Lebanese women - very common and recurring; indicative of the degree of connection and the positive nature of the relationship between UNIFIL and Lebanese people. Also includes references to flirtations that had occurred - looking for prospects.
Local Staff to Friends	Local staff become a bigger connection – local staff become friends with international UNIFIL staff and peacekeepers and the relationship becomes more significant over time.
Personal Stuff and Updates	Conversations between UNIFIL and Lebanese people were about things that they knew about each other - implies an ongoing relationship, asking about updates to their lives, asking questions, referencing past conversations, etc.
Politics and the Conflict	Conversations between UNIFIL and Lebanese people were about the context within Lebanon, the domestic challenges and the politics in country, the roots of the conflict, what the country needs, etc.
Talk About UNIFIL	Conversations between UNIFIL and Lebanese people were about UNIFIL, their work, providing information about their activities, addressing or hearing complaints, etc.
UNIFIL Caring and Kindness, Personal Touch	Indications of UNIFIL offering a very personal touch to their interactions with the Lebanese people - expressing a great kindness, generosity, and caring that was personal in nature. Individual peacekeepers going above and beyond the mandate and their job – positive impact on connections.
Superficial Connection	Indications that the connection that exists between UNIFIL and local individuals is only surface-level or transactional - less meaningful understanding of the connection. Sometimes a precursor to a more

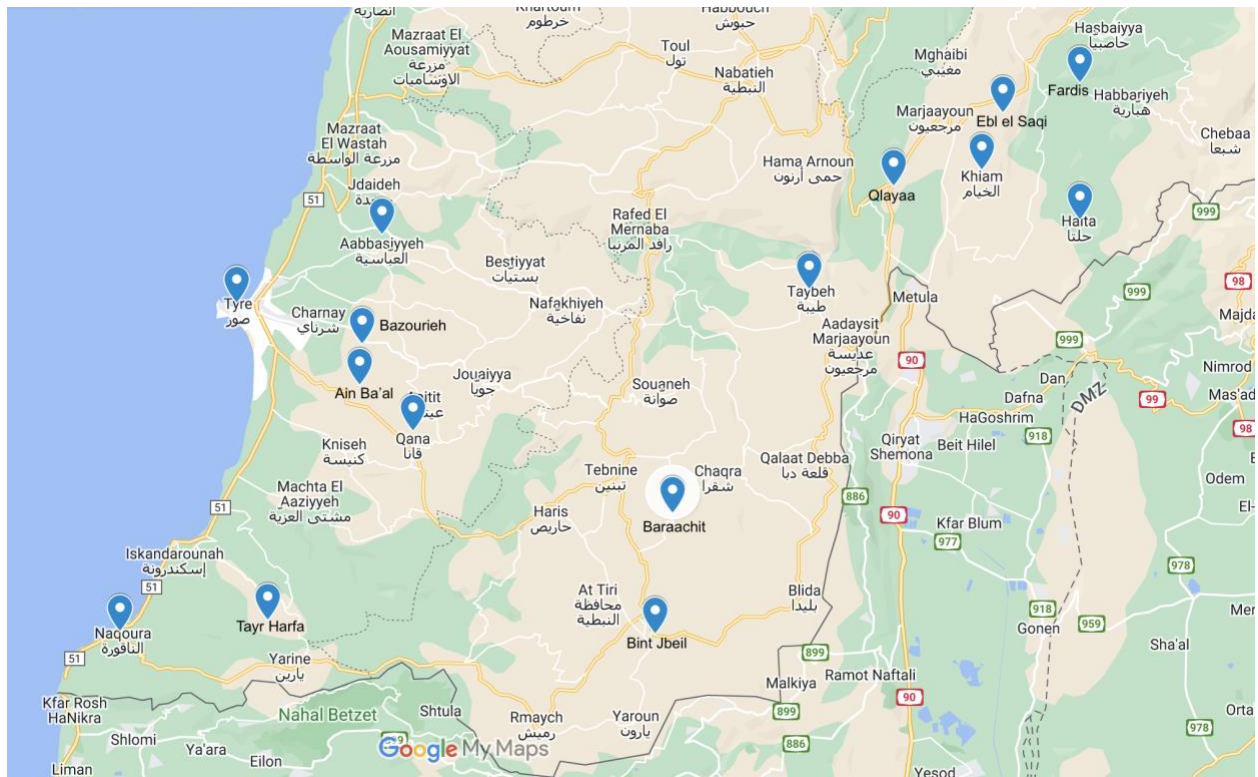
NAME	DESCRIPTION
	significant connections that arises later on.
Can't or Shouldn't Get Too Close	The notion that based on the mission UNIFIL is in Lebanon to accomplish, there must be a limit on the depth of the connection pursued. This is maybe a crossover to a Barrier code, in which the nature of the mission is the core barrier.
Football	Football as both a topic of conversation and an interface for connection - seems to be a simple, accessible way to forge bonds and converse without things getting too contentious.
Keeping the Conversation Light, No Politics	Expressions of the need to stay away from politics and stick to discussions of lighter topics, regular chit chat - connotes a lack of depth to the conversation and the relationship more generally.
Photos	UNIFIL mentioning the utility of the camera as an interface - people wanting their photos taken, or welcoming the opportunity to take pictures with UNIFIL and this being linked to forging connections.
Small Talk	Conversations were typically cordial and mostly small talk - not too much depth, but very friendly and familiar.
Trickle Out Effects	Stories about how a single point of connection can impact and include a wider network within a person's family, friends, or community.
Direct	Direct ways in which an individual's relationship impacts others in their lives – e.g. they introduce their family members to UNIFIL personnel, invite them on base, help their neighbours get a job etc.
Indirect	Through conversations or generally conveying a positive message about UNIFIL in their social circles, individuals with strong connections positively, though indirectly, influence others in their lives – they opinions, their desire to connect with or work with UNIFIL etc.
Negative	Indications that an individual's relationships across the international-local divide do not impact others in their communities, networks or families etc.
What Brings UNIFIL and Lebanese Together	Answers to the question: "what do you think brings UNIFIL and Lebanese together? What unites them?"
Common Ground	Can be cultural, interest-based, experiential etc. - any reference to finding common ground in order to interact. Actually refers to having something in common on which to converse or interact, not common humanity.
Interfaces	Physical and social connections and the contexts and circumstances in which they happen; in-person encounters.
Commercial	Spaces of interaction including shops, souvenir stores, mingey men, local service providers, etc. Any economically-defined context in which UNIFIL and local people interact or meet one another.
Events	Connecting and interacting in the context of events, both formal and informal, hosted by UNIFIL or local communities, etc.
UNIFIL Services or Projects	Connecting and interaction in the context of UNIFIL projects or service provision in the local community.
What Divides UNIFIL and Lebanese	Answers to the question: "what do you think divides UNIFIL and Lebanese people? What makes it difficult for them to connect?"

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Institutional Barriers	Ways in which UNIFIL as institution stands in the way of connections or inhibits connections.
Bad Apples, Spoilers	Individuals who have bad outcomes in their relationships with local people, the negative side of the equation – the challenges and limitations UNIFIL has in dealing with them and the negative impacts this can have on credibility.
Internal UN Politics	Inner UN politics that can act as barriers to connections – interoperability, coherence challenges between units, etc.
Protocol, Chain of Command, Restrictions	Hierarchy, military culture, reporting needs, following orders. This code is more so about mentions of being discouraged by leadership from certain actions, like building connections. It has less to do with actual operational shifts, like increased securitization - this I'll leave for the Spatial Barriers code. Also includes standards of behaviour at events - their protocols and formality in somewhat ceremonial settings.
Turnover and Mission Longevity	High turnover of military staff as a barrier to lasting connections. Also included here is mention of the longevity of a country's mission in the country as being a significant factor - implies that good relationships and bonds between a battalion and the local people are built up over time - history matters.
Political Barriers	Ways in which the political constraints around the conflict in Lebanon and the State of Israel constrain UNIFIL's relational capacity while deployed – often credibility issues.
Bad Neighbourhood	Regional dynamics that complicate any hope of peace in Lebanon, and impede UNIFIL's effectiveness.
Financial Changes and Barriers	UNIFIL has less access to money; poorer countries are now a bigger part of UNIFIL than previously; an expression of international will in the conflict.
Israeli Interference or Resistance	Notes of Israeli dissatisfaction with UNIFIL's presence. Efforts by Israel to undermine the peace and undermine UNIFIL's efforts.
Geopolitics - The Bigger Game	The influence of international political pressures on how UNIFIL operates.
Social Barriers	Social constraints to relationship building - culture, language etc.
Credibility and Neutrality	UNIFIL attachments to Israel or biases in favour of UNIFIL. Similarly, indications of UNIFIL showing favouritism toward Lebanon. Ways in which UNIFIL neutrality/impartiality could be undermined by personal opinions and preferences.
Cultural Barriers	Identification that some cultural differences can amount to barriers to positive interactions and relationships between Lebanese people and UNIFIL.
Language Barriers	Indicating that while people may have quite liked to talk and interact, in general, language was often a barrier to substantive communication, especially in the villages where English may not have been as good and UNIFIL personnel may not have spoken French or English.
Racism	Suspensions that Lebanese people are racist toward some African contingents – this is a barrier to positive interactions.
Spatial Barriers	Physical constraints to connections between UNIFIL peacekeepers and

NAME	DESCRIPTION
	local individuals.
Bunkerization and Securitization	Mentions of the increased bunkerization and securitization undertaken by UNIFIL over time. This will be related to Threat Testimony, but not the same necessarily. It's also related to Distance as Barrier, but also not the same necessarily. This implication is with increased securitization and bunkerization, there is a decrease in Accessibility to the local population. Higher security protocols; more secure bases; connected negatively to contextualization and localization.
Iraq and Afghanistan	References to the impact of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq - typically refers to heightened militarization and the notion that troops came into Lebanon ready to fight a war rather than keep the peace. About contextual misalignment to the Lebanese reality.
Threat Testimony	Interfaces and encounters with Lebanese people rooted in an issue or a grievance - often related to traffic incidents or to taking photographs without permission. Also includes testimonials related to violence, and the real threat that exists in the Lebanese context. This constitutes a barrier to strong connections with locals as it undermines the trust-building and loyalty that is built through other interfaces and actions. Betrays the shallowness or temporariness of the relationships.
Distance as Barrier	Notion that physical distance inhibits connection to the local community; the assertion is that the further away UNIFIL is from the people, the less the people rely on them for protection, which erodes the connection.
Strategies	Strategies people employ toward specific ends. This does not capture the results of a given action, but rather the explicit actions undertaken with an end in mind. Implies intentionality.
Bargaining	Leveraging economic or social resources to achieve compliance. Connected to compromises as well as to the diplomacy code, but still a strategy employed.
Compromises, Give and Take	Compromised peacekeeping and peace building. The real time decisions that get made to keep things quiet or manage local dynamics. Typically have a negative connotation, as opposed to the Real-time Diplomacy code.
Self-improvement, Personal Benefit, Self-interest	Strategies employed by individuals to benefit themselves personally. For locals, this expresses an awareness of the benefits to having contact or employment with UNIFIL.
Time Frame	What "episode" of UNIFIL and the conflict is being discussed.
Post-2000	This broader distinction is to capture some vagueness expressed by several participants about the ability to distinguish between 2000 and 2006 - clearly 2006 was the scale up of presence, but not all participants considered this a relevant point of reference beyond numbers
Early 2000s	The period between 2000 and 2006, when things were rather peaceful, the Israelis had withdrawn from their occupation of parts of the country and drawn back activity through the SLA - pre 2006 invasion. UNIFIL was generally far less robust in this window, far fewer soldiers present in country, and a lower security situation
Post-2006	Lebanon after the escalation of UNIFIL's capacities with 1701.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Pre-2000	This is a relevant distinction because there was the significant draw down of UNIFIL in 2000 with the Israeli withdrawal. This is also a relevant shift in terms of peacekeeping policy at the UN - we see more robustness emerge in missions after 2000, influenced by 9/11 also.
1990s	Deployment in the 1990s, couple of invasions occurred in this time, including some serious incidents like the bombing in Qana.
The Early Days (1978-1990)	Deployed in the years during the civil war in Lebanon; the early days of UNIFIL - generally a lot less formalized, a lot more flexible and freeform.
UNIFIL Contributed to Peace	Answers to the question: “does UNIFIL contribute to peace as you understand it?”
Blurring the lines between Interstate and Intrastate Conflict	Indications, from Lebanese people, that the conflict lines are blurred. Indications that UNIFIL has managed to help repair the social fabric of Lebanon to some extent after the war.
Conflict Resolution-Intractable Conflict	Whether or not people feel that UNIFIL could ever do anything to help assist in conflict resolution. Answer to the question: “Do you think that there is anything that UNIFIL could do to change people’s minds about the conflict with Israel?”
Peacekeeping-as-Development	Sentiments expressed that explicitly indicate the perception of UNIFIL’s role, purpose or intention in Lebanon to be related to development. This includes compensating for government incapacity or incompetence, and includes references to security sector reform and the training purposes they undertake with the LAF. This code does not include references to services or QIPs that are not framed in either of these two senses.
Peacekeeping-as-Protection	People who experience UNIFIL as a protective force and feel that they are in Lebanon to protect the people. UNIFIL improves security in Lebanon.
Peacekeeping-as-Presence-Deterrence-Witness	Notion that the mere presence of Westerners in the region limits Israel’s capacity to steamroll Lebanon without international sanction - adjacent to peacekeeping-as-protection, but a more limited form of this concept wherein it’s acknowledged that UNIFIL can’t actually protect Lebanese people, but their presence can deter the worst of the offences against them.
Peacekeeping-as-Stability-Conflict Management	A passive version of peacekeeping-as-protection wherein UNIFIL has maintained stability and managed to conflict, thereby enabling Lebanon to develop due to the absence of active fighting. Also related to peacekeeping-as-protection - it’s references to improvements in the security situation that allow the Lebanese to get back to their normal lives, but not going so far as to actively protect Lebanese people from Israeli attack.

Appendix 9: Map of Research Sites



Google. (2022). Map of Lebanon (pinned and labeled by author). Retrieved September 13, 2022.