

2.3 Martyrs and Posters in Lebanon

In this chapter, I have focused on concepts of martyrdom and their association with the poster and provided a detailed consideration of the martyr and his image in Lebanon.

First, I argued that martyrdom is an unstable category that escapes fixed definition and that martyrs are always constructed and disseminated by a certain group. In general, there are two approaches towards martyrdom that, as we will see throughout the book, function independently from religion. The narrow concept only considers those who have heroically chosen or at least accepted death as martyrs, while the broader concept also considers passive victims as shuhada. In this publication I focus on the poster as a transmitter of the narrative. The medium is a multiple that typically includes image and text and can be found in both offline and online spaces.

In the second part of this chapter, I turned my focus to Lebanon. I showed that the earliest martyrs can be traced back to at least 1916, and that the visual portrayal of the dead has been widely practised in posters by all sects in the country since 1975 and is presently ongoing. Today Hezbollah dominates the martyr discourse in that country, but other martyrs of other sects are also still present on the walls. During the time of writing, posters of the physically deceased that were not put up by sectarian groups also entered the street. Most of these images showed the martyrs of the thawra and the dead of 4 August.

