Introduction

This book is a comparative ethnography of one Muslim Palestinian camp, Al-Jalil, and what, before 2011, was the last Christian Palestinian refugee camp in the world, Dbayeh in Lebanon. It introduces a ritualization approach for understanding two contrasting patterns of social belonging. In Al-Jalil, social life was symbolically militarized, largely revolved around Palestinian political parties and social movements, and was characterized by overt ritualization of quotidian life. Dbayeh, in contrast, was symbolically demilitarized, and ritualization was much less prevalent. Processes of belonging in Dbayeh also combined both Palestinian and Lebanese elements. Scholars often tend to attribute the differences between the two camps mostly to religion. This study instead proposes a focus on the intersectionality of religiosity, nationhood, refugeeness, and politics as framing much of the camps' daily routines.

This book tackles the intersection between the anthropology of forced migration, religion, and the Palestinian people, and contributes to each of these fields by organically merging their distinct literatures. To the anthropology of forced migration, it offers a uniquely intersectional contribution that highlights the complexity of processes of social belonging processes and avoids the reification of categories like religion and nationhood. To the literature on religion, it offers a unique synthesis of what has been widely assumed to be contradictory theoretical and methodological approaches: on the one hand, the research on piety and moral self-cultivation largely inspired by Talal Assad's approach and, on the other, the everyday life of religious communities approach presented by Samuli Schielke, among others. In addition, the book highlights the ubiquitous implications of large-scale protracted processes of displacement and the specificities of the Palestinian case. The proposed ritualization approach offers a unique contribution to the scant literature within the study of rituals, nationhood and social movements among Palestinians, epitomized by Laleh Khalili's invaluable work. Finally, the manuscript also

contributes to the literature on Palestinian refugees by offering a unique and dense socio-historical portrait of two refugee camps about which there is almost no recorded literature and that have changed considerably, especially after 2011 and the ensuing influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon.

This manuscript is primarily based on my ethnographic fieldwork in Lebanon, carried out in situ for 24 months between 2006 and 2010, and secondarily on fieldwork carried out among Palestinian refugees, some originally from Al-Jalil and Dbayeh, from 2010 to 2019 in Lebanon, Brazil, Denmark and Austria. The theoretical insights developed in this book emerge out of deeply rooted fieldwork highlighting the complexity of each actual situation and context, as the passage below demonstrates:

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I was in the most popular coffee shop in Al-Jalil Palestinian refugee camp, smoking *argile* (hookah), drinking tea, and playing cards with the local youth, when a man appearing to be in his mid-fifties, whom I will call Abu Niẓam, entered the place. The café itself was the trendiest around because it was the only one where one could go to play cards. His presence was quite unusual, as customers were typically much younger. Everyone was slightly uneasy since they feared that the man had come to reprimand them for their improper behavior of smoking and playing cards, as many had done before him. Mine was a corner table, as far from the door as one could be in that small place. Abu Niẓam started by talking privately with one youth and then another, but in no time his thoughts were made loud and public. I was not inconspicuous, given that anyone there could spot my foreignness by my looks and because everyone in the camp knew almost everyone else. Yet, silently playing cards, I was hoping to go unnoticed. The man spoke about the importance of not discussing politics in the café, so as to maintain Palestinian unity. 'Politics', for him, meant the everlasting Fatah/Hamas divide discussed to exhaustion in the camp. It was not, for example, jumping from the table yelling, "the Palestinians have the right to return to their land," since on this everyone agreed. The problem, then, was not politics, but generating *fitna*. While this word may mean simply *strife*, its association with Islam and Arab history also evokes Devilish temptations to divide the pious. Thus, while politics was potentially the realm of *fitna*, Palestinianness was imagined as concrete, unique, and beyond politics.

With this example, I do not mean to suggest that Palestinians think of their own politics as being itself beyond politics, only that people like Abu Niẓam, and most in that café, would typically see their national belonging as a given rather than as a dynamic, negotiated construct. Even though this book emphasizes Palestinian diversity and the dynamics through which this diversity is created and transformed, it takes into consideration that most Palestinians, as most other people, do not tend to see it this way, which in turn influences contextual dynamics of social organization and belonging like the ones I analyze here. Al-Jalil's relatively small size allowed for close community ties and for the existence of a committee composed of "the most important political faction leaders" (as I was told), who generally managed to secure peace inside the camp, even if conflicts could not always be prevented.

The next time I went to the café, a hand-sketched sign hanging on the wall confounded me. It read, *mumnu'a al-din*[1] (religion is prohibited). By whichever means the sign made its way to the wall, a parallel between *politics* and *religion* had been traced. Neither was necessarily bad but bringing either to the public sphere could lead to *fitna*, and that café was not the right place for it. To people like Abu Niẓam, religion was so much out of place there that some frequently felt compelled to complain that the place might be fostering immoral behavior. It seemed that *fitna* could make its way in through politics. In the mind of the two young owners, however, religion was also a realm that could lead to *fitna*, and as such it needed to be avoided in their establishment. This relegation of religion to the private sphere is part of what is generally understood by the term *secularism*, while in Western political discourse there is no equivalent term for the relegation of politics to the private sphere. Though not openly acknowledged by the residents, politics, religion, and nationhood were very much intertwined in Al-Jalil. While one's Palestnianness and Muslimness were generally taken for granted, identity was complicated by ideas of the "good" and the "bad" Muslim or Palestinian, conceptualizations closely linked to ideals of Muslimness and Palestinianness.

On that same night in the café, possibly in deference to my obvious presence, Abu Niẓam announced that *al-Qaḍiyya al-Falasṭyniyya* (the Palestinian Cause) was "one and the same for Christians and Muslims alike." A young man whom I will call Hassan, the son of a local politician, burst out in a fit of rage as he contradicted Abu Niẓam's claim. In an invective filled tirade, he argued that Christian Palestinians had done nothing for Palestine. The dispute

1 ممنع الدين

took on significant proportions as the crowd took turns defending one side or the other. I avoided the discussion by playing cards and listened quietly until it seemed wise to leave. On my way out, despite having always had a friendly relationship with Hassan, my efforts to shake hands and say goodbye went ignored. Days after the incident, however, he was back at being polite, generous, and affectionate to me. What could have prompted him to behave unsociably that day? Ironically, it was Abu Nizam himself who had brought up politics, at first insisting that one should not talk about it in such a setting to avoid *fitna*, and subsequently finding himself on one side of a discussion in which his very argument about Palestinian unity was challenged. However, little did he know that I may have been the catalyst to Hassan's agitated reaction.

Less than a month after that night, I prepared to move to Dbayeh, the last remaining Christian Palestinian refugee camp not just in Lebanon, but anywhere else. A few days before the incident in the café, I had told Hassan about my impending move. As Hezbollah had just staged their short-lived invasion of Beirut, we were discussing the prospects for another Israeli invasion. Most Al-Jalil inhabitants anticipated another war in the summer. In this context, Hassan saw my departure to Dbayeh as self-serving, and accused me of running away from the war and leaving my Al-Jalil friends to their own destiny. It may be difficult for some readers to imagine Palestinians mobilizing religious difference as a main marker of ethical behavior and Palestinianness itself, since it is by no means a common position among Palestinian intellectuals. However, it was not uncommon in places like a café in a refugee camp with no Christians, located on the outskirts of Baalbek. It was generally believed in Al-Jalil that Dbayeh residents, being Christian, had all become wealthy Lebanese, living in privileged social conditions; nonetheless, Hassan's reaction to my move was by far the strongest one I had witnessed. Some had encouraged me to stay in Al-Jalil, saying I was better off there, but this was usually meant to keep me in their camp rather than to dismiss Christian Palestinians. Many also wished me good luck, and many others simply did not know of Dbayeh's existence. To me, this last reaction was the most intriguing. Were many other Palestinian refugees in Lebanon also this oblivious about Dbayeh and its residents? How did Dbayeh's refugees fit into the larger picture? How did they understand their own Palestinianness? My location in Al-Jalil afforded too narrow a perspective to be able to answer such questions.

To defend his unifying positioning in the café that night, Abu Niẓam raised an interesting point: the Christian leader of the PFLP, George Habash, had recently died, and each Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon held com-

memorations in his honor. I witnessed one such event myself, enacted as a symbolic burial of Habash in Shatila, a well-known Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut. In the procession carrying a fake coffin covered with the Palestinian flag, a chorus of veiled women bearing posters of Habash sang: *la illahu illa Allah, wa Muhammad rasūl Allah* (there is no God but God, and Muhammad is God's messenger).[2] Al-Jalil itself was filled with posters honoring Habash as a martyr and it was in this context that Abu Niẓam asked whether George Habash was indeed a martyr of the Palestinian Cause, to which all present seemed to answer positively. Hassan seemed confused, though, and did not answer. I will never know whether Hassan knew then that Habash was a Christian, but the case is illustrative of how Muslim Palestinian refugees in Lebanon at times conflate Palestinianness and *the cause* with Islam.

This story illustrates how religion, national politics, and belonging can be conflated in the quotidian of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Though, in Al-Jalil, religion, politics, ethnicity, nationalism, and more informed social belonging in ways that allowed for differences in being Palestinian. However, the environment of the camps also generated dispositions, affects and sensibilities that, in turn, shaped identity, behavior, and action.

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The following seven chapters deliver ethnographic accounts of social life in two Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. They aim to discuss Palestinianness and the relative space of religion through the subtle but pervasive ways in which notions such as *fitna* come to be part of the local vernacular politics (White 2002) repertoire embodied by most. This comparative ethnography of a Muslim refugee camp and what was then the last remaining Christian Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon emphasizes the intersectionality of social belonging processes through a ritualization perspective. The framework of the book is rooted in a ritualization approach which seeks to understand two contrasting processes of belonging as they emerge in the two camps, encompassing differences in social organization and belonging.

In 2008, while the Lebanese population was about 4,224,000, according to UN World Population Prospects (2009), UNWRA counted about 450,000

2 This is the Sunni *shahāda* (literally, the witnessing), or the Islamic profession of faith that marks both conversion and subsequent reiterations of piety in Sunni Islam.

Palestinian refugees registered in the country (2013).[3] The last number is not totally inscribed into the first one because only Lebanese citizens are counted as part of the Lebanese population. Unfortunately, there is no official data on the number of Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA who also have Lebanese citizenship, but this number is known to be very small, except when compared to the much smaller Christian Palestinian refugee population. What is also known is that about 53% of these refugees still inhabited the twelve official Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon between 2006 and 2010. Despite their large numbers, Palestinians experienced significant hardship in Lebanon during the time of my fieldwork. Not only were their rights very few (Akram 2002), but they also faced widespread prejudice. For instance, many Lebanese still held the Palestinians responsible for the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), while others branded them as terrorists or simply considered them an undesirable, uncivilized horde, a hindrance to Lebanon's economic and social development. In this context, refugee camps tended to act as safe havens for Palestinians. They were symbolic centers to the lives of many Palestinian refugees, including those who, for whatever reasons, no longer lived there. This was so much the case that the camps were frequently conceptualized as Palestinian territory despite their location within Lebanese territory. This, in turn, exacerbated the tensions between the refugee population and Lebanese society at large. The camps, however, were not completely isolated from their surroundings. Palestinians and locals alike tended to conceive the refugee camps as providing some form of symbolic continuity, both with the land of Palestine and with the Lebanese lands surrounding them. Moreover, they were not homogenous entities, a common misconception. This book highlights the opposite: many were the variables contributing to diversity and even conflict within the camps themselves, which the story above hints at.

Al-Jalil is situated in Baalbek, an area dominated by the Shi'a Hezbollah, while Dbayeh, at the time the last remaining Christian Palestinian refugee camp in the world,[4] is located in Mount Lebanon, an area almost exclusively

3 Since most fieldwork for this research was carried out between 2006 and 2010, I chose to present numbers from 2008. In 2013 already, however, the Lebanese population had reached about 5 million inhabitants (UN World Population Prospects 2013).

4 Since the beginning of the war in Syria in 2011, Dbayeh started to absorb a number of Syrian refugees, almost all of them Muslim, and very few of Palestinian origin (The Internationalist January 2016).

Christian and dominated by Christian political parties generally opposed to Hezbollah. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) officially managed both camps. Social life within the two camps has been portrayed by Lebanese and Palestinians alike as radically different from each other, and my fieldwork corroborates this perspective, while also pointing out important continuities between the two camps. At the time when the fieldwork was conducted, most Palestinians and Lebanese tended to attribute differences between the two patterns of social belonging mostly, or even solely, to religion, while scholars had hardly written anything about what Palestinian refugees and local Lebanese considered to be Dbayeh's exceptionality. This book discusses how religion influenced the Palestinian sense of social belonging and presents arguments that complicate direct causal explanations, thereby rendering such accounts overly simplistic. Although religion is a significant point of reference for the refugees' beliefs and behavior and while it does help delineate the camps' distinct profiles, it is only one among other important variables influencing the camps' quotidian and constructing the multi-faceted identities and alliances that characterize the lives of people in these contrasting settings.

I argue that these camps' different contexts and specific historical trajectories were very much responsible for their distinctive characters, which cannot be understood through the lenses of religion either as dogma, as many claim – including some Palestinian refugees themselves (Christian and Muslim alike) – or as theology, as scholars of religion would perhaps be inclined to suggest. However, as I will proceed to argue in the next section of this introduction, it would also not be accurate to simply leave religion out of the picture, as if it had no bearing on people's lives, following a trend in Palestine studies claiming that religion is simply not as important for Palestinians as it is for the Lebanese. This book shows that, in practice, religion interplays with a host of other variables, especially nationalism, ethnicity, and politics, thereby generating social referents, dispositions, affects, and sensibilities that account for the contrasts between the camps' social belonging dynamics. To this end, I propose analyzing each camp's social belonging processes, especially in how they relate to religiosity and nationhood through ritualization as a broad comparative frame.

Although in the commonly used sense religiosity relates to piety, following Samuli Schielke (2010) among others, I challenge the assumption that religion manifests itself in the daily lives of people solely through piety. Therefore, this book is not about Islamic or Christian theology. It is less about religious in-

stitutions per se and more about everything else religious, or what we may call *religiosity*, meaning how referents, dispositions, affects, and sensibilities at least partially rooted in theology or seen as rooted in a religious tradition (Asad 1993) make their way into social belonging processes and everyday life along with other referents less or not at all associated with religion. In this way, this book treats religion as part of more complex knowledge idioms and not as theological schemes of the world that produce unavoidably uniform patterns of social behavior. Beyond eschatology and doctrine, it tells the story of how religion and ritualization in practice tended to enthuse and inform opposite belonging processes in a Muslim and a Christian Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. These understandings of religion and ritualization, although my own, are largely inspired by the work of Foucault (1975) on discipline and "power as a matter of techniques and discursive practices that comprise the micropolitics of everyday life" (Bell 2009: 199), and by Talal Asad's work on disciplinary practices, the embodiment of dispositions, religion, and knowledge and tradition (1993, 2003). Furthermore, I am also partially inspired by the work of Charles Hirschkind on what he calls the *sensorium*, a concept accounting for dispositions, affects, and sensibilities (2006, 2011), and those of Stanley Tambiah (1979, 1996), Roy Rappaport (2008) and Catherine Bell (2009, 1997) on a definition of ritualization suited to understanding the fluidity of socialization and belonging processes, and the making and mobilization of disciplinary practices, embodied dispositions, knowledge and tradition.

This book is thus about how religiosity and tradition, through ritualization, evoke meaning and action beyond the orthodoxy of dogmas and theology. Yet, it is also about social belonging in what they do not relate to religion. It is about how religion is enmeshed with other variables and experienced in quotidian life by Palestinian refugees. In other words, it is about intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989). The people presented in this book may at times experience and express this religiosity only incidentally, but with effects as pervasive as when one follows religion as dogma. This book is thus about religion only insofar as it deals with the possibility (or impossibility) of defining religion as a category (Asad 1993). In accordance with my anthropological background, I will not discuss Islam or Christianity as disembodied entities, but rather as they exist and take meaning departing from subjects both bound to historical and local contexts, and as creative actors capable of dynamic subjunctive reframing of their own life conceptions and living experiences. More broadly, this book discusses the relationship between refugeeness, religiosity, and that

which tends to be most imperative to the refuge: nationhood. I use the term *refuge* in two ways. While in this case it means the time and expectations of life in exile in the broad sense, at times I will also use the term in its narrower ascription, meaning the host country, which according to humanitarian principles should serve as a safe haven, a refuge.

In sum, this book aims at contributing to the study of forced migration, religion, and rituals, particularly with regard to the Palestinian case, by elucidating the often subtle ways in which religiosity and ritualization are integral to social belonging processes, especially those intimately related to the refugee condition. It contributes to the anthropological literature on forced migration and processes of social belonging and identity by offering a unique intersectional perspective that highlights the complexity of social processes, preventing the reification of categories such as religion, nationhood, or ethnicity. Yet, it also highlights ubiquitous implications of large-scale protracted processes of displacement and the specificities of the Palestinian case. Finally, it also contributes to the literature on Palestinian refugees by delivering a unique historical portrait of two refugee camps for which there is almost no recorded literature and which have since then changed considerably, especially due to the influx of Syrian refugees after 2011. Both the long-term oral histories and the 2006-2010 contrasting snapshots of social dynamics in the two small and symbolically peripheric refugee camps (Al-Jalil and Dbayeh) portrayed here have never been published before and are in themselves significant contributions to Palestine anthropology and the anthropology of forced migration.

a. Religion, Ritual, and Comparison in Palestine Anthropology[5]

Perhaps unexpectedly, given the current widespread assault on Islam and Muslims by means of their association with terrorism and backwardness, religion and ritual are two core concepts of anthropology that have been relatively absent from contemporary anthropologists' engagement with Palestine/Palestinians. As the field grew and turned towards itself (both to within the academic field and to within the Near East as a place of inquiry – and most recently especially to within Palestine), comparison too has been largely

5 The argument in this section is largely a summarized adaptation of (Schiocchet 2018).

avoided. To better understand just how this happened, I will briefly outline the state of affairs within the field of Palestine ethnography.

According to Lindholm, *traditional anthropology* in the Middle East – the "largest cultural area in terms of square miles in the anthropological division of the world" – was marked by the "ethos of Islam and the austerity of social life" (1995: 805). Unfavorable to elaborated symbolic systems, the flourishing of myths, and intricate ritual performances, the Middle East gave rise instead to an anthropology of public matters such as *honor*, *survival*, *political* and *marital alliances*, *respect* and *authority*, and *patrilineage* (Lindholm 1995: 805). Meanwhile, generations of Orientalists focused their research on Islamic history and literature, revealing a rich urban cosmopolitism (ibid.) tied to the *Golden Age* of Islam (Kassir 2006). This division into an ethnographic egalitarian, current, and peripheral Middle East, and a rivaling Orientalist textual, historical, central and status-conscious Middle East survived until the assault of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1979, which rendered both approaches "morally suspect." Said's main argument was that both traditions deployed representations composing imaginative geographies that served a colonial project of domination. While "Orientalism was a rationalization of the colonial rule" (Said 1979: 39), anthropology was an instrument for the reiteration of the "binomial opposition of 'ours' and 'theirs' with the former always encroaching upon the latter" (ibid: 227). What Lindholm emphasized is the fact that, to Said, both the textual and the empirical lines of study by Westerners "denied humanity to Middle Eastern people by turning them into exotic 'Others' to be gazed at and objectified" (1995: 806). It is clear that by the mid-1990s, old premises were largely abandoned, and there was space for a new theory of social life in the Middle East. Lindholm protests that Said's view of culture is merely "hegemonic and disciplinary" (Clifford 1988: 263), and that there was no outcry against this perspective in anthropology because it fit well within the "anti-comparativist and anti-essentialist" trend of anthropology at the time (Lindholm 1995: 807). While today I side with Said on his view of culture, I also agree with Lindholm that Said's *rhetoric of opposition* had little in the way of alternatives, as it was more focused on denouncing anthropology instead. However, Said's mistake was to blame on anthropology as a whole what should have been blamed on the historical engagement of anthropologists with those they studied. That is, what Said could not have anticipated was the potential inherent to anthropology to assimilate his criticism and re-fashion the discipline accordingly.

The most popular response to the crisis proclaimed by Lindholm was that of "social biography, novelistic narrative and personal accounts," which he

characterized as being at the core of postmodern, or *new*, Middle Eastern anthropology. This trend, epitomized by Lila Abu-Lughod's *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories* (1993), was to him the prototype of the "crippling" response to the crisis as he opposed her call "for the 'undoing' of old Middle Eastern anthropological categories." Lindholm acknowledges that Abu-Lughod's project is "more affirmative" than Said's, which he describes, largely using her own words, as consisting in giving "positive content to her subjects through 'a narrative ethnography' consisting of 'wonderfully complex stories' which 'challenge the capacity of anthropological generalizations to render lives, theirs or others', adequately" (Lindholm 1995: 810). Nevertheless, he denounces Abu-Lughod's stance for rejecting what I understand as being the main ingredients to comparison: *detachment*, *abstraction*, and *generalization*, which Abu-Lughod considered to be alienating (Lindholm 1995: 810). He explains, following Abu-Lughod and others following this trend, that to compare inescapably implies asymmetrically departing from a position of superiority, given that at the very least the anthropologist is the one who sets the rules of the game. Or, in her own words, "at the very least, the self is always the interpreter and the other the interpreted" (Abu-Lughod 2008: 13). In sum, to Lindholm the "radically particularistic [...] moral assumption" that one should not compare, when to him anthropology is intrinsically comparative, would have led today to a total absence of theorization. While this did not happen ultimately, Lindholm was right in lamenting that bolder theorization, particularly that stemming from broad geographical and thematic comparison, is relatively lacking in the field of Middle East anthropology and particularly that of Palestine anthropology today.

Another way to approach the mid-1990s anthropological context would be to construe it as a period of introspection necessary to reevaluate the practice of anthropology in a changing world. Indeed, much has changed, and while I evaluate the effects of that rebellious moment as crucially positive, and today I inscribe my own anthropology more in tune with this *New Middle Eastern Ethnography* than with that defended by Lindholm in the mid-1990s, perhaps it is time to reconsider one of Lindholm's main qualms, what he calls "radical particularism." In seeking to reinvent and rid itself of the shackles of its colonial past, did anthropology cripple its own comparative vocation? In trying to redefine humanity, was it reduced to a cultural critique of the normative?

Nowhere else does Said's critique of Orientalism (and perhaps even Asad's critique of the colonial encounter) reverberate as much as in Palestine anthropology. Thus, this is precisely where we should head to consider these ques-

tions further. One notion left out of Lindholm's 1993 considerations is that the New Middle East Anthropology has indeed become more Middle Eastern. Having largely subscribed to the postcolonial anthropology project myself, I consider this an accomplishment. Khaled Furani and Dan Rabinowitz also expressed a similar position in a piece published in 2011 in *The Annual Review of Anthropology* (2011). In an effort to trace the history of Palestine ethnography, these authors welcome the making of Palestine as a site for the production of theory, rather than just Otherness. One of their main arguments is that after the Oslo and the Madrid peace processes in the 1990s, ethnographic research on Palestinians, which today is largely associated with Palestinian activism, saw a sharp increase. One could counter that, at least until 1992, this increase in the number of studies relative to other fields and the association of such studies with activism are only partially corroborated by in-depth bibliographical studies (see, for example, Strijp 1992; 1997) and ongoing discussion within the field (Allan 2014; Schiocchet 2016). What is safe to say, however, is that Palestine anthropology is now much closer to the Palestinians' own grasp.

According to Furani & Rabinowitz, there have been four different, partially overlapping modes of approaching Palestine as a site for inquiry since the late 19th Century. The first was the *proto-anthropological* approach, and it was prevalent until the late 1940s. It was external, proto-ethnographic, and featured the bible as its legitimizing text. The second was also external, but secularized. Dominating from the early 20th Century until the late 1940s was the *Orientalist* approach, which incorporated participant observation and fieldwork, and brought about a change in nomenclature. Instead of Holy Land and Mohammedans, popular terms are Palestine, primitives, race, Muslims, Orientals, and Arabs. It was permeated by Social Evolutionary and Functionalist assumptions, and concerned with stability, rule, integration, differentiation, and evolution of social forms, alongside the documentation of disappearing cultures (what has been termed *Salvage Anthropology*). The third mode of approaching Palestine is called *absent Palestine*, and it was characterized by very little engagement with the Palestinian subject, or even its concealment. This mode was predominant between 1948 and the late 1980s, or between the foundation of Israel and the First Intifada. Two areas in particular glaringly demonstrate the absent Palestine: peasant and refugee studies were both understood as hazardous in that they would reveal Palestinian attachment to the land, and therefore absent, leaving the field open to Zionist anthropology focusing on Palestinians as "traditional" but naming them Arabs instead (Furani & Rabinowitz 2011).

Similarly to Lindholm, Furani & Rabinowitz contend that Edward Said's *Orientalism* precipitated a radical change in the field, while also adding Talal Asad's *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* to this genealogy.[6] Both books were published in the late 1970s and foreshadowed the fourth and most recent mode of engaging Palestine as a site in the late 1980s. This largely corresponds to what Lindholm called New Middle East Ethnography, which the latter authors prefer to call *post-structural*. Here, no longer silent and self-evident, the state becomes an object of inquiry to "a new generation of anthropologists who begin to question Israel's effort at repressing Palestinian nationalism and normalizing its racial and colonial character." Palestine and Palestinians reemerged as subjects, especially through themes such as *memory, refugees, resistance, national identity, colonial predicament,* and *gender*, but also through *law, prison, bureaucracy*, and a host of new topics (Furani & Rabinowitz 2011; Furani 2011). Meanwhile, Palestinian native ethnography finally began to flourish in the late 1970s due to a double political and epistemological shift in response to, respectively, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and the "crisis" ushered in by Said and Asad. Alongside these two authors, Palestinian ethnography also engaged figures such as Michel Foucault (as Edward Said and Talal Asad had already done), Del Hymes, and Eric Wolf. To Furani, the entirety of postcolonial, post-structuralist, postmodern anthropology – and I would add post-Zionist studies – offers what he calls, paraphrasing Said this time, an *enabling vocabulary* to study the Palestinians, the most consequential of which is *memory* (2011).

Yet, I would like to highlight that, along with memory, *refugeeness* is also central to most ethnographies about Palestinians, especially among those working in Lebanon, as we shall see from a brief inventory. Most ethnographers of Palestinians at some point worked on memory, and some of the most relevant of these are: Sharif Kanaana (2000, 1989), Bishara Doumani (1995), Ted Swedenburg (1992, 2003), Susan Slyomovics (1998), Lena Jayyusi (2007, 2002), Lila Abu-Lughod (2007), and Rema Hammami, (2003). However, even more revealing is the number of Palestine ethnographers working on the Middle East that tended to engage with refugeeness directly, most associating it with *memory, suffering, resistance, national identity*, and/or *gender*. Some of these are: Rosemary Sayigh (1979, 1994, 2007), Julie Peteet (1987, 1994, 1996a, 1996b, 2005), Laleh Khalili (2005; 2007), Rhoda Ann Kanaaneh & Isis Nusair (2010), Rochelle Davis (2010), Lori Allen (2013), Moslih Kanaaneh (Kanaaneh, Moslih; Thorsén, Stig-Magnus; et al 2013), Randa Farah (2003,

6 It is important to notice that Furani was himself a student of Asad.

1998, 1997), Lotte Segal (Segal 2014a, 2014b), Ruba Salih (2013), Lori Lybarger (2007), Nell Gabiam (2006), Amanda Dias (2013), Gustavo Barbosa (2013), and myself (Schiocchet 2013, 2015). Few are those anthropologists approaching Palestine via bolder theoretical and comparative frameworks. Some of the most interesting in this sense are by Didier Fassin (2008) and Michel Agier (2008, 2011), who only wrote on Palestinians *en passant*, the latter only recently becoming interested specifically in Palestinians. Other examples are Dawn Chatty (2010), Randa Farah (2009) and Are Knudsen (2001; Knudsen & Hanafi 2011) – with Chatty coming from Middle Eastern mobility and Arab Studies toward Palestine as a site, and Knudsen being also interested in Islamism and South Asia. As final examples, Ilana Feldman's work (2008) directly engages suffering, humanitarianism and governmentality, and Diana Allan (2014) emphasizes economic survival over nationalist discourses, while also engaging refugeeness, resistance (as economic in this case), and suffering. Though it would not be accurate to claim that these studies are confined to only the aforementioned topics, they do feature prominently. The prevalence of these themes is not simply the result of European theory, self-critique, and guilt, but also emerged in praxis through the anthropological encounter that turned many anthropologists into engaged observers (Sanford & Angel-Ajani 2006), and through engaged observers who influenced an entire generation of anthropologists.

Palestine ethnography today seems to be concerned primarily with how Palestinians are confined to oscillating between repression and resistance, as epitomized by what Furani calls "narratives about the national struggle" (2011), or what I would call the Palestinian polysemic engagement to *al-Qadyia al-Falastynyia* (the Palestinian cause). To Furani and Rabinowitz, this means that attention is taken away from other topics such as environment, land alienation, employment, language, sexuality, piety, food, and health (Furani & Rabinowitz 2011; Furani 2011). While this argument does not reflect the current state of sociology, law, linguistics, human geography, and other academic disciplines, it is a relatively accurate picture of the main trends within contemporary anthropology of Palestine and/or Palestinians.

A more thorough review of the literature would reveal that these less popular topics do figure in Palestine anthropology, albeit not prominently. What matters most for our current discussion is that religion and piety are integral to the work of a few authors, such as Are Knudsen (2003a, 2003b), Nasser Abufarha (2009), Glen Bowman (2013, 2011a, 2011b), Lory Lybarger (2007), Amalia Sa'ar (1998), Bernard Rougier 2007), Christian Suhr (2013), and Anya Kublitz

(2016), but mostly not through the same lens I propose here. For instance: Lybarger, who incidentally is one of the few authors in Palestine anthropology interested in comparison, juxtaposes two refugee camps in Palestine, one of which he characterizes in terms of its attachment to religion, the other in terms of its attachment to secularism, thereby still treating religion mainly as a dogma; Sa'ar treats religion as sectarian belonging; Rougier, who is not an anthropologist per se, describes 'Ayn el-Helweh refugee camp in Lebanon as if it were completely defined by a Salafi take-over in detriment of everything else that may influence the refugees' lives; Suhr, while addressing social practices, beliefs, and piety in particular among the Muslim community (of which most is Palestinian) in Gellerupparken, Aarhus/Denmark, is engaging the anthropology of Islam, having no direct engagement with Palestine anthropology as a field; and Kublitz deals with generations of immigrants in Denmark who once identified as Palestinians and "became" Muslims, thus still emphasizing the distinction between religious and secular (national) spheres. In sum, most of those tackling religion in Palestine anthropology still to a greater or lesser extent treat it as a distinctive domain of social life. All these authors bring outstanding contributions to the field, and both in what they excel and what they lack, they reinforce the need to treat religion and ritual as embedded in the quotidian and discussed within the frame of Palestine anthropology. Thus, however plural, there are still some quite visible tendencies in contemporary anthropology of Palestine/Palestinians, and religiosity does not figure preeminently. What this book shows, however, is that religiosity and ritualization, embedded as they are in the quotidian, are pervasive in the lives of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and I would suggest, of Palestinians, refugees or not, elsewhere. Thus, this book can be read as a case for more serious engagement with religiosity and ritualization in Palestine anthropology.

Owing to Said, Asad, Abu-Lughod, and others, memory, dispossession, struggle, refugeeness, diaspora, citizenship, statehood, the relationship between resistance and agency, and, binding them all, suffering, are some of the main themes of current Palestine ethnography, even more so than in Middle Eastern ethnography at large. Asad and many of those influenced by him, such as Saba Mahmoud, Charles Hirschkind, Mayanthi Fernando, and other anthropologists mostly working on the Middle East or on Muslims, have been emphasizing the embodied, affective, and experiential dimensions of religion and the work of disciplinary practices and embodied dispositions, affects, and sensibilities in the quotidian, but Palestine anthropology has yet to absorb this trend more thoroughly. Among the possible reasons for this is the fact that

both Palestinians themselves and scholars working on Palestine/Palestinians have historically spent considerable amounts of energy in rebuffing the critique that religion is that which defines the Palestinian question, the Palestinian cause, Palestine, and Palestinians, as Furani & Rabinowitz's scenario justifies (2011).

Similarly, talking about ritual in Palestine studies is still partially taboo. This may be so as a reaction to non-anthropologists' (and some anthropologists') perception of the term as tied to Orientalist literature and the colonial practice of anthropology of Palestine/Palestinians before Edward Said. While one could make a strong case for that, this may not be the sole or most important factor, and my suggestion remains in the realm of speculation. In one way or another, more or less emphatically and overtly, some scholars have pointed to the potential conceptual power of ritual, such as Julie Peteet (1994), Laleh Khalili (2004; 2005; 2007), and Diana Allen (2014). However, to my knowledge, I am the first proposing the usefulness of the less normative concept of *ritualization* instead (Schiocchet 2011; 2013, 2015). Ritualization encompasses much of what other authors in Palestine anthropology have been discussing under the rubric *memory*, since many of them, such as Rosemary Sayigh (2007), Lena Jayyusi (2002, 2007), and Randa Farah (1999), are interested in the dynamics of how memory is mobilized to inform social practices. The main difference, perhaps, is that ritualization is a process of redundancy creation and mobilization, and thus does not focus on normative conceptions highlighting the realm of the intellect, but rather emphasizes the inextricable connection, relative to context, between embodied affects, sensibilities, dispositions and techniques, and thinking, reflecting, and doing.

Perhaps it was fortunate that I only learned about Laleh Khalili's *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine* (2007) after having defended my Ph.D. dissertation in 2010,[7] and thus after having already sketched out my own perspective on ritualization in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. I say fortunately because Khalili's book is extraordinarily compelling, and had I learned about it prior, I may not have developed my own theoretical framework independently from hers. Yet, as it turned out, this book's perspective was developed in parallel to Khalili's groundbreaking study.

Other works by Khalili had already influenced me while I was conducting fieldwork in Lebanon. I was struck, in particular, by her *Grassroots Commemorations: Remembering the Land in the Camps of Lebanon* (2004) and her *Places of*

7 Even though I was officially awarded my diploma only in 2011.

Mourning and Memory: Palestinian Commemoration in the Refugee Camps of Lebanon (2005). Having been in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and seen how pervasive such commemorations were, I wondered why only a few authors in the field discussed such events in the same way as Khalili. She was then and is today, perhaps, the foremost authority on the subject. Her work gave impetus and breadth to my own. Yet, while Khalili and I were drawn to the same subject – and she noticeably earlier than me – the theoretical perspective guiding this book is almost entirely different from hers.

In sum, this book is in close dialogue with Khalili's and corroborates her insights on just how pervasive *the performative aspect* of life in the Palestinian refugee camps is. Today, there is a tendency to move away from what are considered nationalist stories and commemorative practices, as epitomized by Diana Allen's *Refugees of the Revolution* (2014). However, I uphold that Khalili's work on ritual and nationalism remains a touchstone of Palestine studies, all the while heeding Allen's call to relativize the weight of the Palestinian nationalist discourse in the quotidian of the refugee camps. Khalili's study centers on "the struggles, failures and triumphs of a nationalist movement in imagining the nation" (2007: 214). The thread she follows throughout is the construction of memory, stories, and commemorations by Palestinian institutions. Yet, it seems Khalili frequently realizes the book is in fact about much more than what fits in neatly with her theoretical frame. For example, in the introduction, she states:

> I argue that while particular events are 'remembered' as the shared basis of peoplehood, the construction and reconstruction of these events, the shifting mood of commemorative narratives, and ruptures in commemorative practices surrounding these events all point to a far less stable notion of historical or national memory – and consequently national sentiment – than some might think. (ibid: 3)

Subjects' richly diverse lives do not neatly reproduce collective stories and memory as delivered in a top-down fashion by Palestinian political institutions. Yet, if Khalili at times acknowledges this, as the above quotation illustrates, the narrative of the book highlights nationalism and nationalist institutions to the detriment of all else. Another quotation on the same page illustrates this point: "Ultimately, this study wants to know why representations of the past are so central to nationalist movements and sentiments" (ibid: 3). Commemorations are not simply controlled by elites, though profoundly shaped by Palestinian political forces. Commemoration, like so much more

in the camps, is not just about nationalism, but about nationhood. Khalili often uses nationalism and nationhood interchangeably, the first framing the later. In doing so, her narrative thread obfuscates an important part of the dynamics of national belonging in the camps. Allen also tends to subsume nationhood under nationalism, but her answer instead is to push both to the periphery of social belonging processes to the detriment of what she considers economic imperatives of survival. Thus, she disregards the extent to which nationhood (and with it, nationalism) really is pervasive, and just how much the nation in exile is embedded in Palestinian subjunctive and embodied in Palestinian subjects.

While acknowledging the excellence of Khalili's and Allan's works, this book seeks to disentangle the knot between nationalism, nationhood, and everything else not nation related, by examining the nuances in which the Palestinian nation is not only imagined, but also lived in the refugee camps in Lebanon alongside other forms of belonging and traditions informing people's lives. In doing so, I depart from Khalili's most basic insight that ritual is pervasive in the camps, and attempt to show that symbols and narratives are less substantive than Khalili's theoretical model supports, and that less normative rituals are just as pervasive as nationalist commemorative practices. Nationhood, I maintain, is subjective, produced only in practice and context, and it is profoundly shaped by sensibilities, dispositions, and affects through the ritualization of daily life, rather than by substantive symbols and discourses alone. The ritualization of daily life, thus, owes to more than just the mnemonic mobilization of stories, and narratives involving the nation are often also informed by religiosity, ethnicity, folklore and more, rather than being mainly political in character. In sum, I acknowledge that *Heroes and Martyrs*… already hints at the possibility that there is much more to performance than a normative storyboard, and so, rather than doing away with it, I intend to develop Khalili's argument further.

To conclude this brief discussion of Palestine anthropology, although I do agree with Abu-Lughod that, in the early 1990s, anthropology had yet to come to terms with the devastating critique mobilized by authors such as Said and Asad in the late 1970s, today we are in a different historical moment. The time is ripe to widen the breadth of topics discussed in the field. While richly detailed and particularistic accounts are always welcome, this is not the only project that the field can entertain. To emphasize heterogeneity and expose highly normative accounts of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, for instance, we must compare different ethnographies, and engage in multi-sited com-

parative ethnography (Hannerz 2002), as this book proposes. Comparative ethnographic work should not be seen as intrinsically contrary to the particularistic approach, but complementary. While the latter has been the focus of debate for decades, the former is heavily underrepresented, largely left to geographers, sociologists, and political scientists. Current Palestine anthropology rarely acknowledges that a comparative contextual approach can act as an antidote where a more essentialist approach itself may incur overgeneralization.

Palestine anthropology, just as anthropology at large, does need contextual tools. It must recover comparison so as to remain critical, to transcend yet not expect a supposedly apolitical stance, but to gain perspective. Irrespective of which new topics we decide to explore from here on out and of which comparisons we decide to pursue, we must not forget the commitment we assumed with what Lindholm once called 'new' Middle Eastern ethnography. Maintaining the thrust of Western cultural critique is essential to the future of anthropology and giving voice to the suffering of others should be integral to the ethics of ethnography. However, as with any other anthropological project, it also has its pitfalls. Radical particularism is sometimes a form of essentialization, and the absence of comparison is often a disadvantage. If what was necessary in the 1980s was a disavowal of nationalist projects and Western imperialism, today we need further distancing from the humanitarian discourse and its injunction to abstain from portraying anything else beyond the *bare lives* of others for fear of casting a shadow over it.

Alongside the school of thought emerging from the work of Abu-Lughod, another valuable response to Lindholm's "deep crisis" was the postcolonial approach represented in the work of Talal Asad[8] and others. While Lindholm did not particularly favor Asad's model at the time, its influence in anthropology at large has been considerable. In this sense, it is also prudent to remember that many authors who in the mid-1990s were closely associated with more radical forms of particularism have been increasingly opening up to at least limited grounded comparison, when not subscribing completely to new metanarratives such as postcolonial theory. Palestine anthropology has also become more amenable to insights from postcolonial studies, even though not so much by adopting internal, regional, or global comparison, as by locating

8 Even though Asad would probably refute locating his contribution squarely within the realm of postcolonial anthropology, this has been one of the major trends associated with his work.

Palestine directly within the realm of postcolonial theory. Lindholm reminds us that anthropology is inherently comparative, and I suggest that it is only when context and comparison are integral to the picture that anthropologists are truly localized and engaged. Rather than being a tool of disengagement, fruitless abstraction, and ungrounded speculation, qualified comparison is not only compatible with postcolonial studies, but necessary to provincialize Europe (Chakrabarty 2007) and thus indispensable to the critique of Western reason itself.

While the scope of this book's comparative approach is admittedly narrow, I hold it to be a necessary step toward discussing the imagined Palestinian community at large. Here, I aim to not only argue that religion, nationhood, and refugeeness are often inextricably linked to the *secular* rallying for the Palestinian cause – as I have already claimed elsewhere (Schiocchet 2015, 2013, 2011) – but also to deliver an ethnographic account of how precisely this happens. Meanwhile, I have also studied groups of Palestinians in other locations besides Lebanon, mainly Brazil, Denmark, Austria, and the West Bank, and edited a collection on Palestinians in Latin America and in the Near East in comparative perspective (2015). The study presented here is therefore only one in a series, and I intend to further expand this work's comparative horizon at a later time.

b. The Political context

It must be noted that the political situation in Lebanon was particularly tense between 2006 and 2010, even by Lebanese standards. This was reflected in the overall expression of political, ethnic, national, and sectarian alliances, and, more generally, in the way people related to each other, both inside and outside of the refugee camps. The ritualized hyper-expression of identity I describe here, and the extent to which suspicion and trust shaped social belonging processes must be understood as perhaps particularly intense due to political turmoil. However, it should be acknowledged that even this period represents merely another chapter in the violent contemporary history of Lebanon and of the Palestinians, as it has prompted embodied dispositions, sensibilities, and affects for many decades.

Animosity, tension, and actual conflict had been escalating since the start of my fieldwork, which began only months following the assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafiq al-Hariri, and the subsequent Syrian military withdrawal in 2005, and continued until the parliamentary elections in the

summer of 2009. Al-Hariri was a charismatic figure of Lebanese Sunni origin raised in Saudi Arabia. After the end of the Civil War in Lebanon, he largely financed the rebuilding of Beirut through a number of companies in civil construction, urban cleaning, and other sectors of the economy. Having become the most prominent and powerful anti-Syrian figure in the country, he was backed by most Western international leaders, and mainly by the Sunni and Druze Lebanese communities, along with large sectors of the Christian community – which then constituted the parliamentary majority of the Lebanese government despite being a minority in the Lebanese population. According to these groups, and quite likely, the Syrian government was directly involved in his killing. International pressure led to Syrian military withdrawal from Lebanon, taking with it a number of political institutions and social and military control apparatuses, including the core of the intelligence service. The parliamentary majority and their supportive communities immediately accused Hezbollah of facilitating or at least overseeing Hariri's killing. Hezbollah publicly condemned the assassination and categorically denied any involvement.

The parliamentary majority was soon after led by Saad Hariri, Rafiq al-Hariri's son, who relocated to Lebanon from Saudi Arabia after his father's death to assume the vacant leadership role in al-Hariri's political party, *Tayyār al-Mustaqbal* (Future Movement). The Druze leader Walid Jumblat, and the leaders of the Christian parties, namely the Lebanese Forces and The Phalange,[9] joined forces with Saad Hariri shortly after the assassination. On the other side, Hezbollah and the other main Shi'i political party, *Amal*, were joined by the Christian General Michel Aoun, who returned from his self-imposed exile in Paris to lead *al-Tayyār al-Waṭany al-Ḥurr* (Free Patriotic Movement), and other leftist secular parties, such as the Lebanese Communist Party and al-*Ḥizb al-Sūry al-Qawmy al-Ijtimā'ay* (The Syrian Social Nationalist Party; or simply SSNP).

The political idiom uniting each one of these groups of parties hinged upon their support for or disapproval of Syria, and their political discourse carried heavy religious, mainly Sunni and Shi'i, undertones. Smaller confessions, such as the Christians and the Druze, with their numbers and bargaining power at that time already overshadowed by those of the Sunni and the Shi'i, had to opt for political alliances with one of the more powerful groups.

9 The Phalange, the Maronite Christian party founded in the 1930s, was up to the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War the dominant political force in Lebanon.

The anti-Syrian alliance of Saad Hariri was also known as *March 14*, following an event in 2005, the so-called Cedar Revolution, which took place after al-Hariri's assassination, in protest of Syrian military presence in Lebanon. In contrast, the pro-Syrian alliance was called *March 8*, in reference to a political demonstration on March 8, 2005, to celebrate Syria's role in stabilizing the country after the Lebanese Civil War and in strengthening Lebanese resistance against the Israeli occupation of Lebanon.

Although the idiom of this polarization was frequently expressed simply as "pro" and "anti" Syria parties, the goals of each faction were particular and complex. For example, the Phalange, the Lebanese Forces (L.F.), and the Future Movement supported the Syrian intervention during and right after the Civil War, whereas Hezbollah and Aoun directly met Syria with war at the time. The Free Patriotic Movement of Michel Aoun started out as part of the March 14 block, but on February 6, 2006, it signed a memorandum of understanding with Hezbollah which put the movement in the opposite camp. As yet another of many possible examples, the Communist Party and Hezbollah were initially inimical due to conflicting ideologies, one being secular and the other religious. Finally, after the parliamentary elections in 2009, the Druze leader Walid Jumblat conveniently announced his withdrawal from the March 14 block, stating that its agenda had become too "pro-Western" and less "Arab" focused. In other words, even if the political arena appeared to have only two sides that were expressed according to the "Syrian formula," in reality there was no permanent direct ideological resemblance among the parties grouped on each side, and nobody could predict with certainty how political alliances would unfold even in the near future. These alliances were primarily strategic and political in character, while social belonging was still very much defined by the ethnicized religious tones of the confessions. While the pro-Syria group was mainly associated with the Shi'a, the anti-Syrian coalition was largely associated with Sunni Islam. At the time, the Christians were politically fractured, with the Aoun group primarily highlighting the Arab anti-Imperialist nature of its Lebanese identity, as Christian groups on the other side tended to express their Lebanese identity by aligning it with Western and Christian values.

Such was the political climate when I arrived in Lebanon at the end of May 2006 to begin my field research. What I did not expect, though, was that the political situation would soon even further deteriorate. On June 25, 2006, Hamas kidnapped Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier, killing two more soldiers and wounding four others. Israel responded with its largest offensive in Gaza

since the Second Intifada (al-Aqsa). Soon thereafter, Hezbollah kidnaped two more Israeli soldiers on a cross-border raid. The Israeli answer was a full-scale war against Lebanon.

In a genuine, if momentary, bridging of sectarian and political divides, all sectors of the government and the majority of the Lebanese population condemned the Israeli attack and proceeded to help its direct victims. Nonetheless, some factions, both within government and in society at large, saw in the war an opportunity to weaken Hezbollah and strengthen their own grip on the country. The war pitted the Israeli IDF against Hezbollah, as the Lebanese army did not enter the war due partly to a lack of equipment, and even more so out of fear of splitting into confessions, thereby scaling up the conflict and plunging the country into civil war once again.

This war was commonly seen in the West as a war of Israel against Hezbollah. In practice, Amal and other small leftist political groups not well known in the West also joined the war on Hezbollah's side, while the only Palestinian group to directly join the conflict was the Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine *(al-Jabha Sha'abiyya li-Taḥrīr Filastyn*, or PFLP), which had only a symbolic role and lost only two militiamen. The Israeli government stated that it was helping to liberate Lebanon and the Lebanese from Hezbollah,[10] and the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert never officially declared war against the state of Lebanon. However, the Israeli army violently attacked Lebanese civilian infrastructure, destroying the Rafiq al-Hariri international airport, all bridges and major roads in Lebanon, many silos containing fuel or food, and entire Shi'a majority villages and cities, such as Tyre, Bint Jbeil, and Qana[11] (Hovsepian 2007).

This war was locally known as *Ḥarb Tammūz* (July War; or simply the 2006 War) and lasted for thirty-four days. Its consequences were tremendous in Lebanon. In addition to the large number of causalities, the war destroyed a considerable part of the country's infrastructure and deeply undermined the Lebanese economy. Until the end of my formal fieldwork in the summer of 2009, the government was still rebuilding that infrastructure. For example, daily electricity restrictions continued, rationing four hours of electricity alternated with four hours without in most cities except the Beirut area, where rationing did not take such extreme proportions. Politically, the war

10 I read this in Arabic on a flyer dropped by an Israeli plane onto the streets of a mixed neighborhood in Beirut.

11 All of which also had a significant number of Christians.

in effect strengthened Hezbollah's grip on the country after what was locally considered to be its military success. Although many Lebanese held Hezbollah responsible for provoking the war, in the opinion of the great majority of Lebanese, the Israeli response was disproportionate, especially since it was by no means limited to the destruction of Hezbollah's infrastructure and elimination of its personnel.

Upon returning to the USA, another consequential event took place in Lebanon, this time involving the Palestinians more directly. On May 20, 2007, the Lebanese police raided a house in Tripoli which was ostensibly used by militants of an Islamic neo-fundamentalist group called *Fataḥ al-Islam*[12] with headquarters inside the Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp. According to UN data from 2003, Nahr al-Bared was home to 31,023 Palestinian refugees. Fataḥ al-Islam members were fewer than 300 in total. Nevertheless, when members of Fataḥ al-Islam opened fire against the Lebanese police, they triggered a major armed confrontation in the area surrounding the refugee camp. Fataḥ al-Islam members stormed a Lebanese checkpoint at the entrance of the camp, killing 27 Lebanese soldiers plus a number of civilians. The faction was already unpopular even in Nahr al-Bared. As I heard from camp residents, it had been trying to impose its version of Islam upon residents, and it treated Palestine as just one more front for jihad. After the conflict started, both Fatah and Hamas offered to enter the camp and dismantle the group for the government. Lebanese authorities, however, rejected this offer, as they saw official Lebanese intervention as being of utmost necessity. Hezbollah vehemently condemned the neo-fundamentalist Salafi group, which began to be seen as an implant in Lebanon to counter Hezbollah influence. This time, Hezbollah did not take matters into its own hands, but expressed support for the Lebanese army, calling its fallen fighters "martyrs of the national cause."

The Lebanese government chose to address the problem by deploying the army and began a siege of the camp that lasted about four months. According to the Lebanese army, Fataḥ al-Islam leaders were mainly Iraqi, Algerian, and even Lebanese. They sought to establish themselves in the Palestinian camps due to the sites' strategic value both as hideouts and as fertile ground for recruitment to Islamism and Islamic neo-fundamentalism. Many Palestinian refugees were considered to have lost their direction in life, to have no

12 A split from Fataḥ al-Intifada – which is already a split from Fatah – that, unlike its predecessor, did not have many Palestinians in its leadership and was not secular and/or socialist.

expectations or hope for the future, and to be living in abject poverty. However, there is little evidence that their efforts at recruitment were successful. Nonetheless, the camp was completely leveled to the ground during the four months of siege, which lasted until September 2. Most of the displaced people went to live with friends and family in other Palestinian refugee camps across Lebanon.

I returned to Lebanon a couple of months after the end of the conflict in Nahr al-Bared. This time, when I left the airport, I went straight to al-Jalil refugee camp where, among others, I met some of the Nahr al-Bared refugees now living there and a Palestinian man with whom I had spent much time during the war in 2006. In my absence, another political development had occurred: the Lebanese could not agree on elections following the end of President Emile Lahoud's term. Both the March 14 and March 8 factions were suspicious of one another and would only accept a new election under their own conditions. As a consequence, for the whole second period of my stay in Lebanon, which lasted a bit more than 10 months, the state had no president, and this issue greatly heated up the political arena and helped to shape the processes described in this book.

c. The Structure of the Book

Bearing the "religion as the cause" thesis in mind and the overall ritualization perspective, this book is divided into two parts, each one contributing key elements to the main discussion. *Part I* presents the broad ritualization approach. As one of the main differences between the camps, social life in the Muslim camp, al-Jalil, was profoundly ritualized, while social life in the Christian camp, Dbayeh, was hardly so, or at least not collectively so. In this way, ritualization emerges as a central topic to the discussion on the camps' distinct characters and the influence of religiosity.

Chapter 1 contextualizes my own long and ongoing process of negotiating suspicion and trust among my fieldwork interlocutors. It is self-reflective, problematizes my position, and introduces relevant general methodological specifics about the historical and local contexts. This chapter opens the discussion on suspicion and trust that is an intrinsic part of social dynamics in the contexts I present throughout the book, and which will be resumed in the final chapter prior to the conclusion.

Chapter 2 briefly discusses how Palestinian referents, dispositions, affects, and sensibilities affect the framing of time, before presenting succinct oral

historical accounts of each camp. The historical trajectories thus delineated help identify the main elements that led to social differentiation between the two camps, and events that shaped the way refugees from each camp appropriated and re-appropriated religious and non-religious referents, affects, dispositions and sensibilities and how that came to affect their sociality. Subsequently, I discuss social belonging in each camp through a ritualization perspective by focusing on Palestinianness and on how religiosity influenced each camp's contexts.

Chapter 3 describes social dynamics in the Muslim camp. Al-Jalil's social dynamics had strong centripetal attributes that tended to connect most camp residents. The camp was militarized, and social dynamics revolved around Palestinian political parties and social movements. This environment accounted for a strong sense of collectivity; it fueled collective expression, restricting individual expression and imposing a certain social pace and format to quotidian life that stimulated ritualization. Nonetheless, this did not always entail social cohesion. The ritualized pace, or rhythm of daily life evident in this camp, is what I call a *ritual tempo*, which can be understood also as a social forum shaping, maintaining, and transforming sociality. Ritual tempi relate to sets of public ritualized practices and discourses ranging from simple day-to-day social interaction to specific calendars of events. A given ritual tempo socializes members of the community around a set of values, practices, and behaviors, helping demarcate the boundaries of the community vis-à-vis others, and organize community history, thereby providing frameworks for understanding the world. These tempi inscribe religion as much as religion itself inscribes ritual, further strengthening social bonds and helping to shape common socio-political goals, moral values, national imagination, and even common conceptions of time and space.

By contrast, *Chapter 4* delineates the social dynamics present in the Christian camp. Dbayeh was marked by centrifugal social tendencies. This camp was completely demilitarized, and the local tempo of daily life combined both Palestinian and Lebanese elements. Social life was much more dispersed, and the collective configuration of discourses and practices tended to be much weaker. Concomitantly, common socio-political goals, moral values, national imagination, and common conceptions of time and space were not as strongly expressed. The *tempo of daily life* – as defined by Rosemary Sayigh (1994) – was much less ritualized. Even though religion did provide a common frame alongside nationhood, it was not coupled with an element singularizing the group *vis-à-vis* its Lebanese surroundings, as was the case of nationhood in al-

Jalil. In fact, in Dbayeh, religion tended to provide a common denominator with the Lebanese surroundings, enabling the Palestinian refugees to carry on with their lives despite the historically hostile environment.

Quotidian social interaction in Dbayeh did not revolve around a public articulation and assertion of Palestinianness, but precisely the opposite; Palestinianness was expressed privately, thus ensuring that it did not manifest itself in the public sphere, thereby creating new conflict or opening old wounds between the Lebanese Christian surroundings and the Palestinian (Christian) camp. Between 2006 and 2010, Dbayeh community social life was much more dispersed because of different categories of belonging (non-*muwāṭan* Palestinian, *muwāṭan*, and non-*Aṣl Falasṭyny* Lebanese - respectively: Palestinians who do not hold Lebanese citizenship, Palestinians who do hold Lebanese citizenship, and Lebanese with no Palestinian origins). Such categories designated the level of incorporation of individuals on a *continuum* from Palestinianness to Lebaneseness. Dispersal was increased by the diffuse physical environment of the camp, an absence of the Palestinian institutions brought by the PLO, Dbayeh inhabitants' attachment to Christian values, and their own perceptions of themselves. All these forces pulled the camp's social dynamics away from formalized and shared forms of ritualization, as the book demonstrates.

Part II discusses the making and maintaining of general referents, dispositions, affects, and sensibilities affecting the framing of time underlying social dynamics in both camps, and of a Palestinian conception of resistance with religious undertones, whereby existence is equated to resistance. *Chapter 5* presents Palestinian general referents, affects, dispositions, and sensibilities affecting the framing of time. While the general notion is tributary to the same historical events and conditions – especially in *al-Nakba*, "The Right of Return," and present refugeeness – each camp developed different tendencies based on desirable outcomes to its present undesirable condition. *Al-Nakba*, or "The Catastrophe" in Arabic, is what Palestinians called Israel's independence and their subsequent existence as refugees. The Right of Return refers to a United Nations resolution calling for "the return" of Palestine refugees. Although such a resolution was not binding – like all United Nations resolutions – and ultimately rather vague, it was appropriated by many Palestinians as a utopian event, tending to influence the framing of time especially among those groups and individuals who prescribe or wish for a return.

Chapter 6 introduces the concept of *al-ṣumūd*. The term can be translated in English as "steadfastness"; it means "resistance" in Arabic, but it is distin-

guished from other forms of resistance, such as *muqāwama*. While *muqāwama* refers to a more "active" resistance, as in, for example, defending a homeland with weapons, *ṣumūd* denotes a more "passive" kind of resistance, such as to continue to uphold national or religious traditions despite unfavorable conditions. In Islam, *ṣumūd* is associated with several divine attributes, and in spite of having been secularized by the PLO especially during the times of the Lebanese Civil War, *al-ṣumūd* continues to carry religious undertones for the Palestinian refugees among whom I researched. The Palestinian general referents, affects, dispositions, and sensibilities affecting the framing of time described above and *al-ṣumūd* were tightly interwoven, thereby reinforcing each other. Both of these concepts underpinned feelings and actions, profoundly impacting social belonging processes and thus representing important ways in which religion was experienced in daily life.

Chapter 7 connects the discussion on a disposition toward suspicion presented in *Chapter 1*, to one on ritualized politico-moral economies of trust embedded in most interpersonal interactions. Religiosity here is more or less important for entrustment, depending on subject and context. In most cases, politics and family ties are just as relevant, and often even more so than religiosity. While all societies may develop their own economies of trust, cultural and situational elements define every particular local case. Both camp environments presented in this book show an inclination towards suspicion associated with the refugee condition, similar to what the authors of *Mistrusting Refugees* (Daniel & Knudsen 1996) first noticed among Palestinians, but also elsewhere in the world. Such a disposition reinforced the intensity of economies of trust in refugee camp social life, constituting a strong force shaping its dynamics. In other words, the condition of refugeeness heavily influenced such economies of trust, which thus worked as a boundary maintenance mechanism influencing the making, maintenance, and transformation of groups' constituencies and alliances. While generalized suspicion is the theme of *Chapter 1*, *Chapter 7* focuses on local entrustment systems.

Thus, if religiosity tended to galvanize different social belonging processes in the two camps, a disposition towards suspicion associated with the refugee condition was susceptible to be equally central to both and actively shaped each of the camps' economies of trust. Nonetheless, ritualized local economies of trust in each camp were impacted by religiosity to varying degrees depending on context and regardless of the camp or religion, while still expressing broader socio/cultural/historical contexts, and thus emphasizing the uniqueness of each social arrangement.

Finally, the *conclusion* brings together the ritualization and religiosity discussion, now better informed by ethnographic data. It seeks to explain how these concepts help advance the anthropological understanding of social phenomena such as those described throughout the book and makes a case for further developing these concepts via subsequent comparative work.