

POLITICAL GRIEF IN THE WAKE OF A DISASTER: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
BEIRUT BLAST

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Political Science - Human Rights

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by  
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## List of abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Full form                      |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| UN           | United Nation                  |
| CBT          | Cognitive Behavioral Therapy   |
| CG           | Collective Grief               |
| PTSD         | Post-Traumatic stress disorder |
| NGO          | Non-Governmental Organization  |



## **Abstract**

Political grief is a type of shared sadness that happens in the wake of perceived unfair or avoidable occurrences. It is a shared emotion that affects individuals, communities, and countries. The goal of the thesis is to research the psychological and emotional impacts of political mourning on individuals and communities, relate it to human rights, and look at how political grief manifests itself after a terrible incident. This thesis examines the idea of political grieving in Lebanon in the wake of the 2020 Beirut explosion, which resulted in more than 200 fatalities, tens of thousands of injuries, and 300,000 displaced people. The study emphasizes the value of offering emotional support as a component of human rights discourse and can offer insights into efficient actions and regulations to lessen the effects of such occurrences. Overall, by offering new insights on the nature of political grieving and its connections to key political and social issues, the thesis makes a contribution to the study of political science with a focus on human rights.

**Key Words:** *Political grief; Human rights; Emotional support; Mental health; Beirut Blast; Psychological burden; Social support*

## **Introduction**

Political grief, a topic of study that is still in its infancy, is the complex emotional and psychological reactions that people and communities have to terrible events that have political ramifications. Political grief, also known as collective grief or social grief, is a form of mourning that occurs in response to events that are seen as unjust, avoidable, or caused by human action or inaction. Political grief can also occur in response to the loss of a political figure. It is a shared experience that is felt by individuals, communities, or societies, and it is typically felt in the aftermath of catastrophic events, acts of violence, or social and political upheavals. Political grief is different from individual grief, which is a personal and private experience, in that it is a public and collective expression of sorrow and outrage. Individual grief is an experience that occurs in the context of an individual's life. It is also distinct from lamenting the loss of life caused by natural disasters or other types of tragedies that are not generally understood to have a political or social component. Grief on a political level can manifest itself in a variety of ways, such as demonstrations, memorials, or campaigns on social media, and it can result in calls for justice, accountability, and social change. It is a global phenomenon that has been witnessed in a variety of settings, ranging from the aftermath of natural disasters to political and social movements, and it is frequently intertwined with issues pertaining to power, inequality, and human rights.

An enormous explosion rocked Beirut, the capital city of Lebanon, on the 4th of August in the year 2020. The explosion, which took place in the port area of the city, was one of the largest explosions in history that was not caused by a nuclear weapon and had the same level of force as a small atomic bomb. More than 200 people were killed, thousands more

were injured, and an estimated 300,000 people were displaced as a result of the explosion (BBC, 2020). It also caused extensive damage to buildings, infrastructure, and the economy, which exacerbated a dire situation that already existed in Lebanon, which was experiencing a severe economic and political crisis at the time. The explosion was brought about by the detonation of a large quantity of ammonium nitrate that had been stored in an unsafe manner at the port for several years. This incident brought to light long-standing issues of corruption, negligence, and mismanagement within Lebanon's political and economic systems.

The explosion has had a significant and far-reaching effect on the people of Beirut and Lebanon as a whole, resulting in widespread feelings of grief, anger, and disillusionment. The explosion has not only left a physical mark on the city and its inhabitants, but it has also left an emotional and psychological scar on them. Those who survived the explosion have described the shock, trauma, and grief they went through in the aftermath, as they struggle to come to terms with the magnitude of the destruction and the loss of loved ones, homes, and livelihoods. Survivors of the blast have spoken of the shock, trauma, and grief they went through in the aftermath of the explosion. Many people have reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder as a direct result of the explosion, which has also had a ripple effect on the physical health of the population. This is based on the interviews conducted with the parents of the victims of Beirut Blast for the purpose of the research.

The explosion has also prompted vital inquiries regarding the dynamics of political grief and the ways in which it manifests itself in the lives of individuals, communities, and societies in the wake of a catastrophe. People in Beirut and beyond have been having a

difficult time. The explosion has revealed deep fault lines in Lebanese society, including political polarization, sectarianism, and inequality. At the same time, the explosion has also brought people together in acts of solidarity, resilience, and hope as they work to rebuild both their lives and their city. This is happening as a direct result of the destruction caused by the blast. The explosion in Beirut serves as a jarring reminder of the devastation that can be wrought on individuals, communities, and societies as a result of political strife. It brings to light the importance of providing adequate support for those whose lives have been upended by natural or man-made disasters, not only in the form of material assistance but also in the form of emotional and psychological attention. This not only highlights the importance of addressing the underlying political and economic issues that contribute to the occurrence of disasters but also highlights the severity of those disasters.

In this light, gaining a deeper understanding of the nature and effects of political grief in the aftermath of disasters such as the explosion in Beirut is essential to the development of effective responses and policies to mitigate the impact of such events and build resilience for the future. This thesis uses the Beirut Explosion as a case study to examine the idea of political grief in Lebanon. It aims to investigate how people and groups in Lebanon dealt with their political grief.

There are three major objectives for this study. In the beginning, it seeks to investigate the phenomenon of political grief generally, concentrating on the emotional and psychological effects it has on people and communities. By providing fresh perspectives on the nature of political grieving and its ties to more significant political and social issues, the dissertation aims to advance the area of political psychology. Secondly, the study seeks to understand the emotional and psychological impact of political grief and connect it to human rights.

The dissertation emphasizes the significance of providing emotional support as part of human rights discourse by understanding the psychological and emotional impact of the political events worldwide and the larger community. Thirdly, the study will examine the particular ways in which political grief presents itself in the wake of a tragic event using the Beirut blast as a case study. The study can determine the factors that contribute to political mourning and investigate coping techniques used by people in Lebanon by examining the experiences of individuals and communities affected by the blast.

Additionally, by highlighting the experiences and manifestations of political grief in Lebanon, the research can advance the field of human rights by examining the violations that have taken place in the wake of the blast.

Overall, the goal of this dissertation is to give readers a thorough grasp of political grief and how it affects both people and communities. The research intends to offer useful insights that can guide disaster response and recovery policies and activities by utilizing the Beirut blast as a case study. This study also has the potential to add to the larger societal and political conversation on the significance of emotional support in the wake of traumatic events by recognizing the emotional toll of catastrophic events and connecting it to human rights discourse.

For the case study, this thesis will make use of qualitative information gathered through semi-structured interviews with the parents of the victims affected by the Beirut Explosion in order to accomplish these goals. Also, a theoretical framework derived from social constructivism, trauma theory, and resilience theory will be used in the study to better comprehend the nuanced political grieving experiences in Lebanon. The results of this study will add to the increasing body of knowledge on political grieving and shed light on

the unique struggles and coping methods that people and communities in Lebanon faced in the wake of the Beirut bomb. For politicians, mental health professionals, and other stakeholders involved in the realm of trauma and political violence, the study will also offer important ideas for managing political mourning in Lebanon. The study will answer the following question: How does political grief manifest in the aftermath of a disaster, specifically the Beirut Blast, and what are the individual, social, and political factors that impact the experience of political grief among those affected?

The research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter includes the literature review, theoretical chapter, and methodology adopted. The second chapter mainly discusses the definition of political grief in general, in addition to the disaster-related grief. This includes the worldwide definitions and aspects, in addition to the perception of political grief as a country or as individuals surviving loss. The third chapter discusses the emotional and psychological impact of traumatic events, related to human rights leading to political grief. It includes the main types of trauma that a population or individuals can survive, in addition to concrete examples of leaders violating human rights in their countries which lead to political grief. The fourth and last chapter gives a historical overview of the main political incidents in Lebanon, and discusses the cultural and political background of the country. In addition, this chapter includes the details about the research case study, Beirut blast, with the main findings from the interviews conducted with the parents of the victims to answer the research question of the thesis.

## **Chapter 1: Literature Review, Theory, and Methodology**

### **2.1 Literature Review**

The literature review serves as a thorough and critical assessment of the existing research on the topic of political grief. It entails looking over and evaluating pertinent academic and extra-academic sources, including books, papers, reports, and other materials on the subject. To serve as a foundation for the study methodology: The design of the research methodology and data collection tools is supported by the literature review.

#### **2.1.1 Political and Disaster-Related Grief:**

Political grief is a relatively new notion that has evolved in recent years as social and political issues have become increasingly polarized and emotionally charged. This trend coincides with the rise of the #MeToo movement (a social movement against sexual abuse and harassment that started in 2006 over social media) which has been largely responsible for the rise of political grief. In the wake of a terrible occurrence, one of the most significant and difficult parts of mental health is dealing with the grief that is associated with the loss of loved ones. The research that has been done thus far on the subject of grief caused by natural disasters has yielded some very useful insights into the prevalence, symptoms, and risk factors associated with this phenomenon. Exposure to a natural catastrophe was found to be a major predictor of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in a study that was carried out by Brewin, Andrews, and Valentine (2000).

In their article, "The Implications of Grief and Bereavement for Emergency Responders," Barrera and Norton (2009) explored the emotional and psychological effects of loss due to natural disasters on first responders, including sadness and bereavement. Pfefferbaum and Shaw (2013) brought attention to the exceptional difficulties that arise when attempting to

satisfy the emotional requirements of children and adolescents who have suffered loss and sorrow as a result of a natural or man-made catastrophe. Shear and Shair (2015) provided additional insight into the topic of complicated mourning, which is something that can develop in the aftermath of a catastrophe. Raphael (2011) examined the difficulties associated with grief caused by natural disasters and recommended solutions for assisting and encouraging emotional recovery in the wake of natural disasters. Stroebe, Schut, and Boerner (2017) offered an overview of the field of disaster grief and bereavement and urged for interdisciplinary approaches and novel interventions to address the complex emotional and psychological needs of catastrophe survivors.

Miller and Rasmussen (2017) present an overview of political grief, which includes the definition of the condition, its prevalence, and the symptoms of the condition. In this article, the authors investigate the distinctive characteristics of political grief, including how it links to social and political issues and how it impacts the well-being of people as well as communities. Huddy and Feldman (2018) address the effects of political mourning, which include its impact on mental health, social relationships, and political behavior. In their study, sentiments of political bereavement can lead to feelings of disappointment, apathy, and disengagement from politics.

The paper written by McInerney and Rose-Redwood (2019) investigates political grieving as a form of mourning for social and political issues. The authors suggest that acknowledging and processing political grief is essential for effecting social change and building resilient communities. According to Rosenblatt's (2020) essay, which investigates the influence of the pandemic on political grieving, the COVID-19 pandemic has produced a new set of obstacles for political mourning. These challenges include the loss of loved



ones, economic uncertainty, and the politicization of public health efforts. Reicher, Stott, Livingstone, and Mansell (2021) present a study strategy that aims to investigate the psychological and social components of political sorrow in the context of the outbreak of COVID-19.

When taken as a whole, these articles emphasize how important it is to identify and respond to the emotional and psychological needs of individuals and communities affected by grief, whether it is political or related to natural disasters. They also highlight the potential for grief to inspire social and political movements as well as the potential for it to lead to feelings of disappointment, indifference, and disengagement from politics. Additionally, the articles investigate the implications of grief, and the need for continued support and intervention to prevent long-term mental health difficulties in individuals and communities affected by natural disasters.

Overall, the articles discussed above provide a comprehensive overview of the topic of grief and mourning in various contexts. They emphasize the importance of acknowledging and processing grief as a natural response to loss and trauma, and highlight the need for continued support and intervention to promote emotional and psychological recovery. The insights provided by these articles can be invaluable for individuals, families, communities, and professionals working in the fields of psychology, sociology, and political science, as well as for anyone who is navigating the complex emotional landscape of grief and mourning.

### **2.1.2 Emotional and Psychological Impact of Traumatic Events, related to human rights:**

De Jong, Komproe, and Van Ommeren (2003) discussed the complex interplay between political violence, social and economic conditions, and mental health outcomes. Thabet et al. (2004) highlighted the need for culturally sensitive interventions to address the emotional and psychological needs of Palestinian youth. According to the findings of several studies, migrants and refugees who have been through traumatic experiences have a variety of emotional and psychological issues. In a similar manner, Bayer and Klasen (2007) stressed the significance of providing children who have been affected emotionally and psychologically by war and terror with the right support and treatment in order to facilitate their recovery. It has been suggested by research such as that conducted by Iqbal and Ahmad (2006) and Betancourt et al. (2013) that therapies should concentrate on enhancing protective factors rather than only addressing the symptoms of trauma.

In addition, the United Nations (2012) emphasized the necessity for psychological assistance following human rights breaches, stressing the significance of delivering "reparative and transformative interventions" to foster healing and address long-term effects. Lopes-Cardozo et al. (2012)'s review emphasized the value of offering mental health and psychosocial care to people who have experienced human rights violations. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) with a trauma focus, group-based therapies, and community-based strategies may all fall under this category. Finally, it has been demonstrated that community-based interventions, such as community outreach programs and culturally-sensitive mental health services, are successful in addressing the particular

needs of survivors from a variety of backgrounds. The emotional and psychological health of trauma survivors can be significantly improved by these approaches.

Psychological therapies can successfully lessen sadness and PTSD symptoms in those who have encountered traumatic experiences, according to a 2015 study by Sijbrandij et al. CBT is an additional intervention that can assist people in recognizing and altering unfavorable thought patterns and actions that are connected to trauma (Resick et al., 2017). The emotional and psychological effects of traumatic events, especially those that violate human rights, must be addressed through practical treatments.

Slewa-Younan et al. (2018) underlined the relevance of community-based interventions as well as the need for interventions that address the mental health needs of both refugees and the needs of the communities that are hosting them. Additionally, they emphasized the need for interventions that address both the needs of refugees and the needs of the communities that are hosting them. To guarantee that human rights are protected, it is necessary to acknowledge the emotional and psychological toll that traumatic experiences have on individuals as well as communities and to take steps to alleviate such tolls. This study done by Slewa-younan et al. underscores the relevance of knowing the diversity of cultural origins among survivors of trauma and the necessity for therapies that are culturally responsive in order to support the survivors' emotional and psychological well-being. The research also highlights the long-term impacts of exposure to traumatic events on mental health, social functioning, and education, particularly among children and adolescents.

In the realm of human rights, one of the primary areas of focus is on the emotional and psychological effects that are brought on by traumatic experiences. Instead of focusing exclusively on treating the symptoms of trauma, these therapies ought to put more an

emphasis on bolstering protective factors and building resilience. Overall, the research that was looked at sheds light on how important it is to develop interventions that are community-based and culturally responsive in order to assist the emotional and psychological well-being of individuals and groups that have been negatively impacted by traumatic events that are related to human rights.

### **2.1.3 Cultural and Socio-Economic Context of Lebanon**

Lebanon is a nation that is profoundly influenced by the cultural and socio-economic environment in which it resides. The framework of this environment is marked by political instability, corruption, and economic struggles. According to Charafeddine, Demirchyan, and El Khoury (2018), it is essential to gain awareness of the cultural and socio-economic background of mental illness to develop effective mental health services. Saleh and Nouredine (2017) suggest that refugees in Lebanon need access to individualized mental health therapies that consider their social and political environment.

The history and political structure of Lebanon, especially the legacy of the civil war and ongoing political instability, have contributed to socio-economic inequality, corruption, and protests in 2019 (Abi-Habib & Safa, 2021; Yazigi, 2021). Additionally, several factors have contributed to the economic collapse of the country, including political corruption and poor management (Makdisi, 2021).

In the wake of the explosion in Beirut, Abi-Rached et al. (2021) found that social support and the ability to bounce back from adversity were crucial components of psychological health. However, interventions for mental health must be evidence-based and culturally acceptable (El Asmar et al., 2022). The studies examined shed light on the impact of Lebanon's political and social context on mental health, emphasizing the significance of

knowing the cultural and socio-economic causes of mental illness to provide effective mental health services.

Contextualizing mental health interventions and policies is essential to meet the specific cultural and socioeconomic characteristics of Lebanon's population. When establishing interventions and policies for mental health in Lebanon, it is vital to take into account the socio-economic and cultural environment of the country in order to meet the continuous difficulties that are being faced by the country. All of these issues require the attention of those responsible for formulating policies as well as those who implement them to ensure the health of the Lebanese population.

#### **2.1.4 Gaps in the Support System for Political Grief**

According to the findings of a number of studies, there are sizable and complex gaps in the framework of the support system for political bereavement. Stigma, a lack of resources, and poor training were recognized as three of the hurdles to effective support for political sorrow by Craciun and Fazel (2021). The importance of more all-encompassing support from community members, lawmakers, and mental health experts was underlined in the aforementioned article.

In a similar manner, Zaffaroni and Freitas (2021) claimed that closing the gaps in support for relatives of the disappeared in Argentina required a solution that takes a systemic approach and addresses broader social and political issues. The paper places a strong emphasis on the necessity of recognizing and addressing the political and societal issues that contribute to the ineffective support that is currently available. Krog (2022) stressed the limitations of legal and institutional procedures in treating political grief in the context

of transitional justice. He called for a more holistic approach that respects the emotional and psychological components of political grief.

In the case of Lebanon, severe mental health difficulties have been brought about by the population as a direct result of the continuous economic crises and political instability. (Akik et al., 2021; Hamze et al., 2022). These studies shed light on the considerable obstacles that prevent individuals from gaining access to care as well as the high levels of stigma that surround mental health concerns in the country. In addition, Younes (2021) suggested that corruption and the ineffectiveness of state institutions were to blame for the collapse of Lebanon's official institutions.

A systematic approach that: acknowledges the emotional and psychological components of grieving takes into account larger social and political issues, and challenges the root causes of political instability and corruption, is required to fill the inadequacies in the support system for political bereavement. This approach is required in order to be able to address the gaps in the support system.

In addition, the article "The Politics of Grief: The Missing Links in Supporting Families of the Disappeared" (Freitas & Zaffaroni, 2021) underlines the need for a systemic strategy to address the gaps in support for political mourning. The authors contend that a lack of effective support for families of the disappeared in Argentina can be attributed, in part, to social and political circumstances in the country. They imply that in order to solve these gaps, a more comprehensive approach that addresses broader social and political challenges is required. In a similar way, the paper "Political Grief and Its Discontents: Trauma, Memory, and the Failures of Transitional Justice" (Krog, 2022) argues that in order to acknowledge the emotional and psychological aspects of political mourning, a

more holistic approach is required. The writer stresses the limitations of legal and institutional procedures in treating trauma and memory in the context of transitional justice, and they offer a more comprehensive approach that understands the complexity of political mourning. These limitations are highlighted in the authors' proposal. This approach must be taken in order to close the gaps in support for political grieving.

### **Gaps in the literature:**

There has been limited research done on the topic of political mourning and its influence on human rights. There is some published material on the subject of political mourning; nonetheless, there is a pressing need for an additional empirical study that investigates the connection between political grief and human rights.

Another gap is the insufficient conceptual clarity. Because there is little conceptual clarity about political mourning, it is difficult to measure and analyze this phenomenon. Hence, it is necessary to construct a definition of political grief that is crystal clear and all-encompassing, so that it may be utilized in both study and practice.

The third gap is the consequences that have not been thoroughly investigated. Despite the fact that there is some evidence to suggest that political grief can have negative effects on the well-being of individuals and communities, there has been very little research done on the long-term effects that political grief can have on human rights. These effects include how it affects social justice, equality, and access to basic necessities.

## **2.2 Theory**

Different theories will be used for this research. The first one is a theory known as social constructionism that places an emphasis on the role that people's social interactions and experiences have in constructing their perceptions of the world around them. According to

this point of view, different people and different groups develop their own meanings and interpretations of events based on the particular social and cultural contexts in which they find themselves (Gergen, 2015).

Social Constructionism: The assumptions related to the theory of social constructionism are that individuals and communities make sense of traumatic events in the context of their own social and cultural systems and construct their own narratives and meanings in relation to these events. This is because people are influenced by the meanings they attach to different occurrences and by the interactions they have with other people since they are social beings (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). By investigating the ways in which individuals and communities construct their own experiences of political grief through social interactions and personal experiences, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex emotions and psychological processes that occur in the aftermath of traumatic events.

In addition, social constructionism is a theoretical framework that can be used in many other research fields. Gender study is one of these fields, and social constructionism can be used to look at how gender is created and expressed in social contexts (Butler, 1990). Social constructionism can also be applied to the study of mental health to examine how social and cultural contexts influence individuals' experiences with mental illness (Watters, 2010). Social constructionism can be used to investigate how knowledge is created and transmitted through social interactions in the classroom in the context of education (Gergen, 1994). The study of human rights is another area of inquiry where social constructionism can be utilized to analyze how social and cultural factors influence perceptions of human rights abuses and reactions to them (Merry, 2006).



Applying the theoretical framework of social constructionism to the study of political grief can assist researchers in comprehending how individuals and groups in Lebanon come to form their experiences of grief and loss in the aftermath of the explosion in Beirut. The social and cultural context of mourning and loss in Lebanon has been shaped by a complex history of political and social upheaval, making the theory of social constructionism particularly pertinent to this case study (Ghafary & Ahmadi, 2020). Furthermore, the social constructionist approach recognizes the importance that culture, social norms, and power relations play in defining both the ways in which individuals experience sorrow and the ways in which they cope with it. The social and political conditions in Lebanon, such as the prevalence of corruption and inequality, may have played a role in how people processed and responded to the tragedy, as well as how they communicated their political anguish.

The second theory is trauma theory. It posits that experiencing traumatic events can have significant negative impacts on individuals and communities, both emotionally and psychologically (van der Kolk, 2014; Herman, 1992). Traumatic events, such as natural disasters, war, or acts of terrorism, can result in long-lasting physical and psychological effects, including symptoms of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and somatic illnesses (Rosenheck, Fontana, & Arciniegas, 2006). Political grief, which refers to the emotional and psychological reactions to political events and outcomes, is closely linked to trauma theory (Rees & Silove, 2016). The experiences of political grief can be traumatic in nature, with significant emotional and psychological consequences for individuals and communities. Examining the experiences of political grief within the framework of trauma

theory can contribute to a better understanding of the effects of political events on mental health.

Moreover, the explosion in Beirut, with its high death toll and widespread destruction, can be viewed as a traumatic event that has had profound emotional and psychological consequences for the people of Lebanon. Applying trauma theory to the investigation of this incident can provide insight into the ways in which the explosion has impacted the mental health of individuals and communities in Lebanon. Additionally, the application of trauma theory can inform appropriate interventions and treatments for those affected by the explosion.

The need for social support in reducing the harmful impacts of traumatic experiences is also highlighted by trauma theory (Hobfoll et al., 2007). By acting as a stress buffer, offering emotional support and practical help, social support helps prevent the onset of PTSD and other trauma-related disorders (Norris & Stevens, 2007). Social assistance may have been extremely important in the aftermath of the Beirut bomb in helping both people and communities cope. Understanding the function of social support in post-trauma recovery may be gained by examining how social support networks were mobilized and put to use in the wake of the explosion. The role of cultural and historical context in influencing how trauma is experienced and expressed is also acknowledged by trauma theory (Summerfield, 2001). The complicated history of political violence and strife in Lebanon may have had an impact on how people reacted to the explosion and how communities saw it. We can better comprehend the psychological and emotional effects of the explosion by looking at the historical and cultural elements that have influenced the emergence and expression of political mourning in Lebanon.

Resilience Theory: The Resilience Theory is based on the assumption that resilience is not an inherent trait but a dynamic process that can be fostered through positive relationships, social support, and coping strategies (Bonanno, 2004). When applied to the study of political grief, this theory provides a useful framework for understanding how individuals and communities cope with the effects of traumatic events. The examination of how cultural and religious elements contribute to resilience in the face of political grief can also be done using resilience theory. According to research, cultural practices and beliefs including prayer, meditation, and rituals can help people and communities become more resilient (Connor & Davidson, 2003; Masten, 2018).

For instance, the Shia Muslim holiday of Ashura honors Imam Hussain's martyrdom and places special emphasis on the concepts of loss, giving, and enduring hardship (Abbas, 2012). Members of the Shia community who were impacted by the bombing may find solace and resiliency in the Ashura ritual. Similarly to this, the use of the "prayer rope," a traditional Christian practice that involves reciting prayers and affirmations, may help people cope with trauma and build resilience (Khoury & Nakkash, 2015). In order to develop culturally appropriate interventions to support communities grieving over political loss, it is important to understand the role that cultural and religious practices play in fostering resilience.

Examining how social and political environments influence a person's ability for resilience is another area of study within the context of resilience theory. According to research, social and political variables including economic inequality and political instability can significantly affect a person's or a community's capacity to overcome hardship. The Beirut explosion took place amid intense social and political unrest, with persistent economic

crises and governmental corruption adding to the country's population's sense of despair and hopelessness.

In order to promote long-term resilience in the face of upcoming traumas, interventions aiming at resolving these larger social and political challenges can be informed by research on the effects of these contextual elements on the capacity for resilience. In the context of the bombing in Beirut, researchers can use the Resilience Theory to investigate the factors that contribute to the capacity of Lebanese residents and communities to deal with the effects of the event (Ghafary & Ahmadi, 2020). This can entail examining the social support networks available to individuals and the coping methods they employ to deal with the emotional and psychological toll of the trauma (Masten, 2018). Positive emotions and experiences, such as hope, thankfulness, and strong social ties, are also crucial in building resilience (Fredrickson, 2001; Ungar, 2011). Investigating the positive feelings and experiences of the communities affected by the bombing in Beirut, such as solidarity, mutual aid, and collective healing rituals, can provide vital insights into the resiliency of Lebanese society in the context of political loss (Moussaoui, 2020).

However, it is essential to note that resilience is not a static quality, and its cultivation and upkeep require continual effort, resources, and support (Masten & Barnes, 2018). Therefore, researching the structural variables in Lebanon that contribute to or detract from the country's resilience can also inform plans to construct more resilient communities. In conclusion, the Resilience Theory offers a valuable framework for understanding how individuals and communities can cope with the effects of traumatic events such as political grief. By investigating the factors that contribute to resilience, including social support, coping strategies, and positive emotions and experiences, researchers can identify areas for

intervention and support to aid in the recovery process. Through this research, communities can work together to recover from political grief and build stronger, more resilient societies.

## **2.3 Methodology**

### **2.3.1 Research Design**

This research will make use of a qualitative research design in order to investigate the ways in which individuals and communities in Lebanon have dealt with the political grief that has been caused by the bombing in Beirut. As a result of its capacity to facilitate an in-depth investigation of the multifaceted emotional and psychological experiences of individuals and communities in reaction to traumatic occurrences, qualitative research is an approach that is suited for this particular piece of research.

### **2.3.2 Data Collection Methods**

The data collection techniques used in this thesis includes a literature review and semi-structured interviews with the parents of the Beirut bombing victims. The evaluation of the literature included a methodical search and analysis of pertinent academic publications, reports, and articles on political grieving and the psychological impacts of traumatic events when it comes to human rights. The goal of the literature review was to analyze the body of prior research on the subject and to offer a theoretical foundation for the investigation. Beirut Blast is taken as a case study for this thesis. Parents who lost their children in the Beirut blast took part in semi-structured interviews. The interviews sought to acquire qualitative information on the parents' traumatic and grieving political experiences as well as their coping techniques and support requirements. Thematic analysis was used to find

recurrent themes and patterns in the data gathered from the literature review and the semi-structured interviews. The combination of these data collection techniques allowed for a thorough understanding of the political trauma and grief, and gave evidence of what the parents of the Beirut bombing victims experienced.

### **2.3.2.1 Primary and Secondary Sources**

Semi-structured interviews with the parents of victims, which offer perspectives of people who were directly impacted by the blast, are used as primary sources. These interviews provide important information about the incident's emotional and psychological effects as well as how people deal with sorrow and trauma following a terrible incident. Multiple primary sources are used to contextualize the primary data within the larger literature and to provide a more thorough and nuanced view of the topic under inquiry. In addition, audio recording of these interviews, scientific papers including the theories and government report are used as primary sources. Scholarly works, reports, and essays on the subject of political grief, and specifically the Beirut bombing are used as secondary sources for this thesis. These resources offer a comprehensive theoretical and contextual framework for comprehending what is political grief, its impact on the population, and the bomb victims' experiences as well as prospective therapies and therapeutic approaches for dealing with the psychological and emotional impacts of trauma. Furthermore, news reports and other media sources could be utilized to contextualize the incident and give details on Lebanon's social and political environment at the time of the blast. Overall, the researcher is able to develop a more thorough picture of the experiences of the parents of the victims in the wake of the Beirut blast thanks to the utilization of both primary and secondary materials.

### **2.3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Interviews with persons who have suffered political mourning as a result of the Beirut Blast are used to collect data for this project. These interviews are semi-structured. Participants are recruited using a technique known as snowball sampling, in which an initial group of participants will be identified through connections in Lebanon and additional participants are located through referrals from existing participants. The research objectives served as the basis for the development of the interview guide, which was then designed to extract in-depth narratives of the participants' experiences of political mourning in connection with the Beirut Blast. Interviews are conducted with six parents who have lost a family member as a result of the explosion in Beirut. The purpose of these interviews is to collect their viewpoints and experiences related to political mourning in the wake of the tragedy.

A strategy known as "purposive sampling" is used to choose the participants in order to guarantee that a wide variety of opinions and experiences is recorded. Depending on the participant's location as well as their preferences, the interviews took place either in-person or through the use of Zoom online. Each interview follows a semi-structured format, which allows for open-ended questions and follow-up probes to be asked of the participant in order to conduct an in-depth investigation of their experiences and viewpoints. The interviews are audio-recorded with the consent of the participants, and they took an hour each.

The research questions and objectives, in addition to the themes and concepts that arose from the literature review, serve as the foundation for the development of the interview questions. The interviews are carried out in Arabic, which is the native language in

Lebanon, or in English, depending on the interviewee's preference. Transcribing the interviews that were conducted and having them translated into English is done so that the data can be analyzed. The data is evaluated using a technique called thematic analysis, which includes locating recurring themes and patterns within the data that are connected to the goals of the research.

### **2.3.3 Data Analysis and Cross-Checking**

The data from the interviews is rigorously analyzed in order to cross-check it. The first coding of the data is the first step, in which the data is divided into smaller units to find recurrent themes and patterns. The creation of themes comes next, when the original codes are compiled into more comprehensive themes. In order to confirm that the themes are consistent with the data and that no significant data has been missing, the third phase involves refining the themes by comparing them to the raw data. The study is performed using NVivo, a software package created especially for qualitative data analysis.

The ethical guidelines established for conducting research with human subjects is adhered to in this investigation. Before any actions are performed, each participant is asked for their informed consent, and their privacy and confidentiality is strictly protected all throughout. The ability to leave the study at any time is provided to participants. If participants choose to leave the research at any time, all identifying information will be removed from transcripts and other study materials. The parents of the victims' experiences with grief, trauma, and coping in the wake of the explosion are the main topics of the semi-structured interviews. Their experiences with asking for aid and support is also covered in the interviews.



The researcher remained impartial and non-judgmental throughout the interview process, conducting the interviews in accordance with the same ethical standards as the other interviews. In order to ensure that all the data is carefully preserved and that no crucial information is lost, these interviews were also audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The questions asked for the parents of the victims are listed below:

1. Can you describe your experience of political grief in the aftermath of the Beirut Blast? How has it impacted your daily life, relationships, and sense of self?
2. How have individual factors, such as your personal beliefs, values, and coping mechanisms, influenced your experience of political grief in the aftermath of the Beirut Blast?
3. In what ways have social factors, such as support from family, friends, and community, impacted your experience of political grief in the aftermath of the Beirut Blast?
4. Have you been able to access support or resources to help you cope with your experience of political grief? If so, what has been helpful and what has not?
5. How do you perceive the role of politics and the government in the aftermath of the Beirut Blast? How has this impacted your experience of political grief and your ability to cope with the disaster?

#### **2.3.4 Projected Limitations**

Delving into the Beirut blast has a number of shortcomings that need to be taken into consideration. To begin, there is a possibility that the sample size of the study is small, which could make the findings less applicable to a wider population. It would be able to

gather data that are more reflective of the whole and have a better grasp of how the explosion has affected diverse groups of people if the sample size was increased. Secondly, selection bias could be a problem, as the study participants may not be fully representative of the population that was damaged by the blast, which means that not all parents of the victims have a common point of view when it comes to political grief. Thirdly, self-reported data may be biased since people may not precisely characterize their experiences or sentiments, affecting the findings' validity. Fourthly, the study might only be able to capture the immediate aftermath of the incident and might not be able to take into account the long-term repercussions of political sorrow. Finally, political grieving is a complicated phenomenon influenced by different elements, and the study may not be able to capture the complete spectrum of experiences and emotions connected to political mourning due to its complexity. Other characteristics such as earlier traumatic occurrences, mental health state, and coping mechanisms may also affect the emotional response, which the study might not have examined. When analyzing the findings of the study, it is essential to keep these restrictions in mind as much as possible, in addition to the limited time and space for this research.

## **Chapter 2: Understanding Political and Disaster-related Grief**

Political grief is a complex problem with important ramifications for both people and society at large. According to research, the negative psychological and social effects of political grief can cause people to feel hopeless, depressed, and angry, which has an effect

on their mental health and general well-being (Good & Sanchez, 2019; Huddy & Feldman, 2018). Political grief can also affect how people behave and engage in politics, which can result in cynicism, passivity, or even radicalization (Kimport, 2019). While cynicism is a critical stance that suggests a distance from the topic at hand, a distance predicated on a sense of superiority to the subject or people being condemned. (Sloterdijk, 1987), passivity is a state of inactivity, submission, and nonresponse to environmental challenges or stimuli (Jones & LeBaron, 2002) and radicalization is a process wherein people or groups adopt extremely radical political, religious, or social ideals, frequently leading to violent or extremist activities.

Worldwide, different countries experienced political grieving after major political crises. The genocide in Rwanda in 1994, which claimed the lives of almost 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus, is one of the most notorious political crises in contemporary history (Bjork-James, 2018). This catastrophe, which was exacerbated by racial tensions and long-standing political grievances, had a significant negative effect on the survivors' psychological health. Since then, the Rwandan government has put in place a number of initiatives to deal with the trauma brought on by the genocide, such as setting up support groups, and mental health clinics, and encouraging forgiveness and reconciliation (UNESCO, 2014).

The January 6, 2021 uprising at the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., was one of many political crises that the US has recently faced (BBC, 2021). This event, which was marked by political divisiveness and violent extremism, had a profound effect on Americans' mental health from all political perspectives. Mental health practitioners have

responded by highlighting the value of social support and community resilience in fostering psychological well-being in the wake of this crisis (APA, 2021).

More events in history include:

- **Bosnian War:** From 1992 to 1995, a bloody conflict erupted in Bosnia that claimed the lives of approximately 100,000 people (Tanner, 2001). The war, which was brought on by the dissolution of Yugoslavia, was marked by mass rapes, ethnic cleansing, and other war crimes.
- **Sudanese Civil War:** The Sudanese Civil War started in 1983 and continued for more than 20 years (Johnson, 2010). An estimated 2.5 million people died as a result of the conflict, which was sparked by racial and religious tensions. When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005, the war was considered to be over.
- **Venezuelan Crisis:** Protests erupted in 2013 in response to the country's economic suffering and political corruption (Romero & Krygier, 2019). The crisis has resulted in severe starvation, political unrest, and the emigration of millions of Venezuelans.

Two main political crises ongoing until today in the Middle East are the Syrian and Iranian crises. On one hand, the ongoing crisis in Syria has caused millions of Syrians to flee their homes and caused a sizable number of fatalities (UNHCR, 2021). The direct victims of this conflict have also experienced severe psychological damage. Throughout response, a number of organizations have set up support groups and mental health initiatives for refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) throughout Syria and its neighboring countries, including Lebanon and Turkey (International Medical Corps, 2021). On the other hand, Iran has recently gone through a number of significant political crises,

including the contested 2009 presidential election and the 2017 and 2019 countrywide rallies. Iranians have experienced a great deal of political anguish as a result of these events, especially those who have suffered directly from the ensuing crackdowns and human rights violations. The murder of leading nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh in November 2020 and the presidential election of 2021, which was marred by extensive accusations of fraud and voter suppression, are recent political difficulties that Iran has had to deal with. These events have rekindled political grievances among Iranians as well as calls for political reform and change (Mohammadi, 2021).

Mahsa Amini, an Iranian woman of 26 years old, passed away in police prison in January 2021 after being detained during protests in Tehran. Many people in Iran were outraged by her death and protested it, accusing the government of systemic violations of human rights and demanding justice for Amini and those like her. Her situation is just one illustration of the continuous political upheaval and violence in Iran, which has left the Iranian people deeply grieved and traumatized (BBC News, 2021). The passing of Amini also serves to underscore the disproportionate harm that political violence does to women, who are more likely to experience sexual and gender-based abuse and are exposed to more dangers during political upheaval (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

Individuals and society as a whole may be left with long-lasting psychological and societal impacts of the catastrophe they live, such as feelings of helplessness, despair, and rage. People might lose faith in their institutions and government, which could contribute to further social and political unrest. Politics can also be affected by political grieving, which can lead to skepticism, inactivity, or even extremism. Politicians and political movements

who suffer loss or setbacks may get depressed, disappointed, or angry which may impair their capacity to carry out their duties.

For instance, many Democrats felt political grief after the 2016 U.S. presidential election as a result of the surprise result and the loss of Hillary Clinton as a contender (Grossmann & Hopkins, 2016). This grieving can cause emotions of pessimism and apathy and even lower levels of political activity (Neundorf et al., 2016). Additionally, when individuals look for new methods to focus their political energies and address the underlying reasons for their sadness, political grieving can result in the creation of new political groups and the reevaluation of current ones (Baumeister & Vohs, 2016).

Below are the main political incidents known throughout history, where political grief had a direct impact on politicians and on the political situation of the whole country:

- President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, and the country went through a time of sorrow and political grief that changed the political climate (Bugliosi, 2007). As Kennedy was regarded as a crucial ally of the cause and his death was a huge setback, the sadness over his passing also had a significant effect on the civil rights movement (Bruns, 2003).
- African Americans were deeply saddened and incensed by the 1968 death of Martin Luther King Jr., which provoked riots and rallies in numerous locations across the nation. As many activists believed they had lost a crucial leader and advocate, King's death had a significant effect on the civil rights movement (Bruns, 2003).
- Widespread political anguish and disillusionment among Americans resulted from the Watergate affair of the 1970s, which finally forced President Richard Nixon to resign (Baumeister & Vohs, 2016). The scandal reduced popular confidence in the

government and resulted in a drop in political involvement and participation (Neundorf et al., 2016).

- The political climate of the U.S country was significantly altered by the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 (Sobieraj, 2010). Americans' grief and anxiety following the attacks led to a rise in support for the foreign policy and national security initiatives of the Bush administration (Baumeister & Vohs, 2016). However, the assaults also brought in greater government policy scrutiny, particularly in the areas of immigration and civil liberties.
- The terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015 sparked intense political anguish and dread (Holt & Vasterman, 2016). 130 individuals lost their lives as a result of the attacks, which were carried out by ISIS militants and targeted several Parisian places (BBC, 2015). In France and other European nations, the attacks strengthened support for right-wing and anti-immigrant political groups, among other political effects (Holt & Vasterman, 2016). In order to stop future terrorist attacks, international intelligence agencies and law enforcement organizations have intensified their coordination and collaboration after the assaults (Fleming & Marks, 2016).
- Many Americans, especially those on the political left, were taken aback by Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential election (Grossmann & Hopkins, 2016). This electoral loss sparked protests and rallies around the nation as well as a renewed interest in political engagement and activity (Baumeister & Vohs, 2016).

However, recognizing and dealing with political grief can work as a catalyst for social change and group action. Grief can play a civic part in creating community and individual solidarity as well as resilience (McInerney and Rose-Redwood, 2019). Individuals can get comfort and support from those who have gone through similar things by participating in collective mourning, which can improve feelings of empowerment and open the door to group action. Having a supportive group is essential because it can offer both emotional and practical support, foster a feeling of community and empowerment, and foster resilience. The local community is crucial in helping individuals who were impacted by the tragedy, underscoring the importance of social support in fostering group healing and recovery.

In addition, political instability can have a big effect on a nation's economy and social structure, and it can also cause a brain drain as educated and skilled workers leave the country in search of better possibilities. Corruption, authoritarianism, political violence, economic mismanagement, and other manifestations of political mourning are but a few. Talented people may leave the country in quest of better opportunities if these circumstances linger for a long time and foster an atmosphere of instability, anxiety, and uncertainty. Political instability and violence, per World Bank research, can affect economic growth by 2.3 percentage points annually, which lowers investment, lowers productivity, and raises uncertainty (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). In addition, political unrest might deter tourists and international investment, two important revenue generators for developing nations (Bertocchi & Canova, 2002).

Since educated individuals are frequently drawn to countries that are more developed and richer, brain drain is a major issue for developing nations. The International Organization



for Migration claims that brain drain might result in a shortage of competent workers in vital industries including health care, education, and research. Additionally, because those who can leave are frequently the brightest and most educated, brain drain can increase inequality by leaving behind people who are less fortunate. A country's economy, social instability, and talent drain can all suffer as a result of political grief. Although these problems are difficult to resolve, it is essential for governments and politicians to endeavor to provide their inhabitants with a stable, peaceful, and prosperous environment in order to avoid these unfavorable effects.

### **Disaster-related Grief**

Disasters can have a significant negative influence on a survivor's mental health and well-being, especially in terms of loss and mourning. The severity of the trauma and the existence of pre-existing mental health conditions are risk factors for developing (PTSD, which is more common after traumatic occurrences (Andrews&Valentine, 2000). The mental health of children and young people can be significantly impacted by disasters, including sadness and grief (Pfefferbaum and Shaw, 2013). Following a loss, complicated mourning, which is characterized by protracted and deep emotional suffering, can also happen (Shear & Shair, 2015).

A type of grieving known as complicated grief (CG) is defined by a deep and protracted sensation of loss that impairs day-to-day functioning. It differs from typical grieving in that it lasts longer, is more acute, and is incapacitating. CG can happen to people from a variety of groups, including those who have lost a loved one as a result of violence, disease, or natural disasters. For instance, studies have shown that people with CG are more likely to

have lost a loved one to suicide or other sudden violent fatalities, such as homicides or accidents (Jordan et al., 2001; Prigerson et al., 2002). CG can also happen in those who have gone through terrible experiences like war, becoming a refugee, or being imprisoned. For instance, refugees who have been compelled to from their homes owing to conflict or persecution may suffer from CG as a result of losing their native land, culture, and social networks (Nickerson et al., 2011). Similar to this, people who have been arrested or imprisoned may have CG as a result of losing their independence, losing access to their social networks, and having their normal lives disrupted (Kersting et al., 2011).

Additionally, difficult grief can lead to CG, such as when a loved one passes away in the midst of a tumultuous or ambiguous relationship. The victim of domestic violence or child abuse may feel conflicting feelings such as grief, remorse, rage, and relief in these situations (Goldsmith et al., 2008). Because it might be difficult to distinguish between regular sadness and complicated grief in the aftermath of disasters, complicated grief can be particularly difficult to diagnose and manage. Raphael (2011) highlights the particular difficulties of grieving in the wake of catastrophes, particularly the complexity of grief and loss in this setting. The author contends that providing sensitive, compassionate support for grieving people and their families is essential, as is acknowledging the need for continuous care and support. As Shear and Shair (2015) point out, the dilemma between the two types of grief is especially pressing following natural disasters. Grief and loss are particularly complicated following disasters and contends that it is essential to offer empathetic care to the bereaved and their families (Raphael, 2011). Additionally, crucial is the requirement for ongoing care and support because grieving may be a protracted and challenging process, particularly in the wake of such tragic occurrences. Despite the

difficulties, it is crucial to recognize the emotional toll that crises and catastrophes take on people and communities, and to offer the proper support to encourage healing and recovery.

However, the effects of grief and loss are not just felt by survivors. In the wake of disasters, emergency workers are also susceptible to suffering from grief and stress (Barrera & Norton, 2009). After responding to catastrophic incidents like natural disasters and terrorist attacks, emergency professionals have been proven to suffer severe emotional and psychological repercussions around the world (Berger & Gelkopf, 2011).

For instance, first responders in Japan experienced a variety of mental health problems following the earthquake and tsunami of 2011 (Fukuda et al., 2018). These conditions included sadness, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Similar to this, after the 2010 Haitian earthquake, emergency personnel went through high levels of stress and trauma (Dow et al., 2012). Numerous strategies, including peer support programs, counseling services, and mindfulness-based stress reduction, have been suggested to address these problems (Berger & Gelkopf, 2011; Dow et al., 2012). These interventions have had encouraging outcomes in terms of improving the well-being of emergency personnel and lessening the effects of stress and sadness associated with disasters.

The significance of encouraging emotional recovery in the wake of disasters is increasingly acknowledged, despite the difficulties in dealing with disaster-related loss and mourning (Stroebe, Schut, & Boerner, 2017). To meet the complex emotional and psychological requirements of disaster survivors, interdisciplinary methods and creative interventions are very essential. Recognizing the particular requirements of various populations, such as children and young people, as well as the need for social support and community resilience in fostering long-term rehabilitation, are part of this.

### **Gaps providing support to Political and disaster related grief**

Stigma, a lack of resources, and poor training were identified as obstacles to providing effective assistance for political grief in a qualitative investigation of stakeholder perspectives (Craciun & Fazel, 2021). Stigma, which can be a substantial barrier to getting assistance, is one of the main obstacles. Political grief is frequently highly stigmatized, and people may feel embarrassed or ashamed to ask for help. Due to their political affiliations or experiences, people may feel guilt, loneliness, and marginalization in the context of political mourning. Political grief is frequently stigmatized by society norms and beliefs that characterize grief as a lack of strength or fortitude. This stigma may discourage people from getting help for their political bereavement and may worsen their sense of loneliness and alienation from their communities. Additionally, it might exacerbate stress and anxiety in people who are already dealing with the trauma of political loss or violence. As legislators and service providers may be hesitant to devote resources to addressing what is viewed as a delicate or divisive topic, the stigma surrounding political grief frequently also causes a lack of resources and support. A systemic strategy that addresses more significant social and political issues is required, as were the political and social elements that lead to Argentina's lack of effective support for relatives of the missing (Zaffaroni & Freitas, 2021). To address the psychological and emotional aspects of political grief within the context of transitional justice, a more all-encompassing strategy is required (Krog, 2022).

## **Chapter 3: Emotional and Psychological Impact of Traumatic Events, related to Human Rights**

An individual's mental and psychological state can be greatly affected by traumatic experiences, especially if that person has already faced human rights violations. For instance, displacement, being apart from loved ones, and exposure to violence are just a few of the traumas that refugees and migrants frequently suffer as a result of their migratory trips (Derluyn & Broekaert, 2007). Human rights advocates ought to devote close attention to the emotional and psychological effects of tragic occurrences.

### **Universal Human Rights Declarations**

In accordance with Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), "Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person". A person's mental and emotional health can be significantly impacted by stressful situations, which can result in disorders like PTSD (American psychiatric association, 2013). The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) of the United Nations has stressed the need of safeguarding and advancing the mental health of people who have experienced traumatic events.

As stated in Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), "the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health" is also recognized. Governments and organizations must therefore make sure that those who have suffered trauma get the resources and support they need. The above highlights the significance of safeguarding victims of traumatic events' right to access appropriate support and care as well as their emotional and psychological well-being. As acknowledged by numerous international declarations and agreements,

including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, this is an essential component of human rights.

Unfortunately, there are still major barriers that prevent many people who have experienced trauma from getting the help they need to heal and recover. The World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that "trauma can have lasting effects on an individual's mental and physical health, social functioning, and ability to fully participate in society" (WHO, 2021). This can involve a higher risk for physical health diseases like cardiovascular disease and chronic pain, as well as mental health disorders like sadness and anxiety. Additionally, those who have suffered trauma may encounter stigma and discrimination when trying to get care, especially in environments where little is known about trauma and how it affects people's well-being. Access to necessary services and support, as well as engagement in society at large, may become significantly more difficult as a result.

Therefore, it is essential that initiatives be taken to advance knowledge of the effects of trauma, as well as to offer suitable and accessible assistance and care for persons who have encountered traumatic situations. Access to mental health services and treatment is just one aspect of this; others include support for physical health, social support, and chances for engagement in and participation in community activities (WHO, 2021). By placing a higher priority on the emotional and psychological health of those who have suffered trauma, we may work to create a society that is more just and equal and in which everyone has the chance to prosper and realize their full potential. Children are especially susceptible to the psychological and emotional effects of war and terrorism (Bayer & Klasen, 2007).

Political violence can cause anxiety, sadness, and post-traumatic stress disorder in victims. Burundian child soldiers, who are subjected to violence and abuses of their human rights, are similarly affected by traumatic experiences (Betancourt et al., 2013). To meet the emotional and psychological needs of those who have experienced trauma, such as refugees, children, and those who live in locations where political violence is a problem, culturally relevant interventions are required. Interventions must be specifically designed to meet the distinctive cultural context of the afflicted community in order to address these problems.

For instance, traditional community healing rituals like "Gacaca" were employed to meet the emotional and psychological needs of survivors in the wake of the Rwandan genocide (Ntaganira et al., 2019). Similar community-based initiatives were created in Chile after the Pinochet administration to support healing and reconciliation while also addressing human rights crimes (López et al., 2021). These interventions seek to promote the restoration of justice and human rights in addition to addressing the psychological needs of the individuals receiving them. These interventions gave survivors a sense of agency and empowerment by infusing cultural customs and values, fostering healing, and aiding in the restoration of human rights. In addition, in order to meet the needs of people and communities affected by traumatic events, community-based treatments are also crucial (Muldoon, Trew, & Todd, 2007; Slewa-Younan et al., 2018).

The violation of human rights is a serious problem, in addition to the severe emotional and psychological effects of catastrophic events on people and communities. Exposure to political violence, war, and terrorism can have long-term repercussions not only on mental health and social functioning, but on education (Bayer & Klasen, 2007). In addition, extra

stressors connected to movement and displacement may increase the trauma symptoms experienced by migrants and refugees, preventing rehabilitation (Derluyn & Broekaert, 2007). Therefore, as stressed by numerous of the publications examined, culturally relevant therapies and support services are crucial to addressing the complex emotional and psychological requirements of trauma survivors.

In a study on the effects of sectarian war in Northern Ireland, community-based interventions are especially important to address the effects of political violence on people and communities (Muldoon et al., 2007). In order to ensure that the needs of survivors are properly met, it is crucial that decision-makers and experts in the fields of trauma and human rights consider the cultural context of trauma and the significance of culturally sensitive interventions.

In addition, it's critical to recognize how traumatic experiences affect the victim's family and community. According to Pitman et al. (2012), the victim's family may endure secondary trauma as well as emotional and psychological problems such as despair, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In addition, the effects of traumatic events may have a negative impact on the community's mental and physical health, social fragmentation, and lack of social trust (Norris, et al., 2008). Traumatic experiences may also result in human rights abuses against the victim, such as torture, arbitrary detention, or denial of access to justice (OHCHR, 2021).

### **Different Trauma types**

Below are the key ideas in the realms of human rights, social justice and mental health:



- **Intersectionality:** Depending on their intersecting identities, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class, various people and groups can be affected by traumatic events and human rights violations in different ways. For instance, access to mental health care resources and support may be further complicated for marginalized communities, which exacerbates the emotional and psychological repercussions of trauma (Bracken and Petty, 2017). For example, marginalized groups including LGBTQ+ people, people of color, and those who are poor may encounter more difficulties getting access to mental health care (Bass et al., 2015; Lindert et al., 2009). Particularly in the wake of traumatic events, this lack of resources can have long-lasting impacts on emotional and psychological welfare. Therefore, it is crucial for those who support human rights to adopt an intersectional perspective on trauma and mental health, taking into account the multiple ways that various identities interact and influence experiences of political sorrow and human rights violations.
- **Vicarious trauma:** People who work in occupations where trauma is frequently encountered, such as journalists, healthcare workers, and human rights campaigners, may experience vicarious trauma. Frequently hearing about or seeing terrible events can have an emotional and psychological toll that might cause symptoms like PTSD. Due to their regular contact with patients who have serious diseases or injuries, healthcare personnel, for instance, are more susceptible to vicarious trauma (Sengupta et al., 2016). Journalists and human rights activists who cover or speak out for those in need may also suffer from vicarious trauma (American Psychological Association, 2019). It's critical to understand the dangers

of vicarious trauma and to offer assistance and resources to anyone who could be at risk. To prevent and treat the negative psychological effects of their work, these people need self-care techniques, training, and mental health services.

- **Collective Trauma:** Traumatic incidents can affect entire communities, resulting in collective trauma. When a group of individuals share a horrific event or experience, such as a natural disaster, terrorist attack, or war, it can have emotional and psychological repercussions. For vulnerable groups, where access to mental health care services and assistance may already be difficult or impossible, the effects of collective trauma can be particularly severe. In fact, research has shown that the consequences of mass trauma on mental health can last for years after the incident, especially in low-resource contexts where access to mental health care is restricted (Lindert et al., 2009). This emphasizes the necessity of providing communities affected by collective trauma with efficient mental health services and support, as well as the significance of addressing the underlying social, economic, and political causes that contribute to such tragedies in the first place. Collective trauma is directly linked to collective grief.
- **Intergenerational trauma** is the concept that traumatic events can also have long-term impacts on subsequent generations. Research has shown that the trauma experienced by a parent can affect the mental health and wellbeing of their children and even grandchildren (Kellermann, 2013). For example, studies have found that the children of Holocaust survivors are at a greater risk of developing mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD (Sagi-Schwartz et al., 2008). Intergenerational trauma can be particularly challenging to overcome as it can

impact entire families and communities, making it vital to address trauma at a societal level in order to promote healing and wellbeing (Mollica, 2020).

- Self-care: People who have suffered trauma must exercise self-care in order to maintain their emotional and psychological wellbeing, even while access to mental health services and support is essential. Exercise, practicing mindfulness, and indulging in interests and hobbies can all fall under this category. According to a study by Carlson and colleagues (2011), engaging in regular exercise can have a positive impact on mental health outcomes, such as reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety. Additionally, mindfulness-based practices, such as meditation, have been shown to reduce stress and improve emotional regulation (Khoury et al., 2015). Engaging in hobbies and interests can also provide a sense of enjoyment and fulfillment, which can aid in the healing process (Frazier et al., 2009). While self-care should not be a substitute for professional mental health care, it can be a useful complement to traditional treatment and can assist individuals in managing the emotional and psychological impacts of trauma.

### **Well-known political leaders with human rights violations:**

Over the years, different political leaders can be adopted as cases to highlight the link between human rights and political grief due to political oppression. Adolf Hitler, Jim Jones, Pol Pot, and Kim Jong Un are all notorious leaders who have committed heinous acts that violated human rights. The actions of these leaders have caused immense human suffering and are a clear violation of basic human rights. These atrocities can lead to political grief, as citizens are left with a sense of disillusionment, despair, and trauma. The violation of human rights and the resulting political grief can have long-lasting effects on

individuals and society as a whole. Below are some main cases known throughout the history. These cases are widely known and well-documented examples of human rights violations and political grief. Each of these leaders and their regimes have been accused of committing atrocities against their own people, including torture, forced labor, mass executions, and other forms of violence. These cases are often studied in the context of political grief and human rights violations because of the magnitude of suffering and trauma experienced by the people under their rule. Below is an overview of these cases.

### **Adolf Hitler Case**

German politician Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) served as the head of the Nazi Party. He became Germany's chancellor in 1933, and he later ascended to dictatorship. Hitler was in charge of a number of violations of human rights, including the Holocaust, which resulted in the persecuting and killing of millions of Jews, Roma, people with disabilities, and others. Additionally, under Hitler's direction, World War II broke out, killing an estimated 70 million people around the globe (Kershaw, 2008). Hitler was a compelling speaker who used his abilities to influence listeners and win support for his ideas. Additionally, he supported the idea of a "master race" and actively promoted the superiority of the Aryan race through aggressive expansionism and eugenics initiatives (Shirer, 1960). Hitler's government was ultimately overthrown by the Allies in 1945, despite his early popularity. As Berlin was being taken over by the Soviets, he committed suicide there (Bullock, 1999).

There is a consensus that Hitler and the Nazi party committed egregious abuses of human rights. One of the deadliest catastrophes in contemporary history, the Holocaust witnessed the murder of over six million Jews as well as other minority groups (Kershaw, 2000). The political suffering inflicted by the Nazi government had a profound impact on the afflicted

nations in addition to causing unimaginable suffering to millions of people. Numerous people, including eminent scientists and professors, were compelled to leave the country due to the political trauma induced by the Nazi dictatorship, which also fostered a climate of dread. As a result, there was a sizable "brain drain" that had an ongoing impact on the German intellectual and scientific communities (Friedman, 2005). The country's economy and culture suffered a serious damage as a result of the killing of creative people and the destruction of Jewish enterprises and properties (Kershaw, 2000). The example of Hitler's rule makes it clear how political anguish and breaches of human rights are related. The political agony brought on by the Nazi government led to the infringement of fundamental human rights, which inflicted unimaginable pain on millions of people and had a negative effect on the afflicted countries. These human rights violations caused directly the population political grief. In addition, the country's economy and intellectual society suffer greatly when talented people are lost due to political anguish.

### **Jim Jones Case**

In the 1950s, Jim Jones, an American religious cult leader, established the Peoples Temple in Indianapolis, Indiana (SFGate, 2018). The organization eventually relocated to California, where it grew in popularity and politicized more and more. Jones was well renowned for his charismatic leadership style, which combined socialist and religious themes (History, 2021). His followers were completely under his influence and stuck with him to the very end. Over 900 of Jones' followers committed mass suicide in 1978 in Jonestown, Guyana, which went down in history as one of the biggest mass suicides (BBC, 2018).

Jones had "psychological control over his followers was so complete that many of them were willing to commit murder and suicide at his command," according to a report by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs (Congressional Record, 1978). Jones "preached a mixture of socialist and religious doctrines" which enabled him to draw in a following of people seeking both spiritual and political direction. Jones had a commanding leadership style that included physical, emotional, and psychological abuse of his followers. Jones' disciples endured "endless sermons and harangues, marathon work sessions, and harsh discipline" in addition to being cut off from the outside world (Reiterman & Jacobs, 1982, p. 49). In order to retain his hold on his followers, he also employed narcotics and other methods that modify perception.

One of the biggest mass suicides in history was ultimately caused by Jones's ability to manipulate his followers. According to the findings of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, "the death of so many people, in such a short time, was a tragic and senseless waste of life" (Congressional Record, 1978). The Jonestown incidents serve as a cautionary tale about the perils of uncontrolled authority and the significance of upholding human rights. A compelling illustration of how a charismatic leader can abuse their position of authority and commit human rights violations is the story of Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple. Jones had such great control over his adherents that they were willing to carry out horrible atrocities, such as mass suicide, at his command (Reiterman & Jacobs, 1982). In addition to violating the fundamental right to life, this mass suicide brought to light the negative effects of uncontrolled authority and political oppression (Buckley & Fidler, 1979).

Human rights violations are regarded as having been committed by Jones' methods, which included brainwashing, isolation from the outside world, and physical and emotional

torture (Galanter, 1999). Due to a lack of control and responsibility from the government, which is also a human rights issue, The Peoples Temple was able to function for a long time (Churchill, Wallis, & Wild, 1982). The governmental effects of the Jonestown disaster included a decline in popular confidence in governmental and religious authorities (Moore & Parker, 2016). The US government's response to the disaster also sparked concerns about its capacity to defend its citizens and its responsibility for upholding human rights (O'Reilly, 2018). Overall, the Jim Jones case is a tragic illustration of how unbridled authority and breaches of human rights may result in political sorrow and the death of innocent lives.

### **Pol Pot Case**

Pol Pot was the former Khmer Rouge leader of Cambodia. An estimated 1.7 million people, or around 21% of Cambodia's population at the time, perished during Pol Pot's rule, which lasted from 1975 to 1979 (Kiernan, 2017). Forced labor, mass killings, and the persecution of intellectual and religious organizations were all hallmarks of the Khmer Rouge's policy.

The right to life, the right to be free from torture, the right to a fair trial, and the right to freedom of expression were all infringed by Pol Pot's government. The Khmer Rouge's activities were denounced by the world community, and Pol Pot and other leaders were brought before courts and tribunals to answer for their crimes (Sriram, 2016).

The Pol Pot case serves as a reminder of how political grief and instability can result from human rights violations in a nation. The Cambodian people endured great pain and misery as a result of the Khmer Rouge's acts, and the nation fought to recover and reconstruct after the regime's fall. One of the cruelest governments in history, Pol Pot's was distinguished by its contempt for human life and dignity. The Khmer Rouge also practiced social

engineering, aiming to eradicate urban culture and intellectualism in order to turn Cambodia into an agrarian socialist utopia in addition to mass murder and forced labor. Along with those executed directly, the practices of the dictatorship caused hundreds of thousands of Cambodians to perish from starvation, illness, and weariness (Kiernan, 2017). The Pol Pot regime's egregious human rights atrocities were denounced by the world community, including human rights organizations.

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) were established in response to the atrocities done by the Khmer Rouge in order to bring charges against those involved in crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide (Sriram, 2016). Numerous senior Khmer Rouge figures have been put on trial by the ECCC, notably Kaing Guek Eav, the administrator of the infamous S-21 jail, and Nuon Chea, Pol Pot's deputy. The Pol Pot case serves as a reminder of the terrible effects that abuses of human rights can have on a country and its citizens. The Cambodian people endured great hardship and anguish during the Khmer Rouge's reign of terror, and the effects of that time are still being felt in that nation. It also emphasizes how crucial it is to hold those responsible for such atrocities accountable. Any endeavor to repair society torn apart by political grief and to stop future abuses of power must include the pursuit of justice.

### **Kim Jong Un – North Korea**

Kim Jong-un is a North Korean politician who took over as the country's supreme leader from his father, Kim Jong-il, in 2011 (Britannica, n.d.). His rule has been known for its rigorous control over the media, repression of political dissent, and violations of human rights (Human Rights Watch, 2022). He is the third generation of his family to hold this position. International sanctions have been imposed on North Korea as a result of his



leadership's persistent pursuit of nuclear weapons (BBC News, 2021). Despite this, Kim has worked to strengthen ties with South Korea by visiting Moon Jae-in and traversing the demilitarized zone that separates the two nations (CNN, 2018).

Severe human rights violations, such as political persecution, torture, and forced labor in prison camps, have been linked to Kim Jong-un's rule in North Korea (HRW, 2021). His government has been charged with the arbitrary incarceration and killing of religious organizations, journalists, and political opponents (Amnesty International, 2020). The political structure of North Korea is described as a totalitarian dictatorship with no democratic elections, an impartial judiciary, or the freedom of assembly or speech (Freedom House, 2021). The North Korean people, who have few opportunities to voice their disapproval, are deeply troubled by these limitations on fundamental human rights (Lee, 2019).

The violations of human rights committed by Kim Jong-un's government have been denounced by the UN and other international organizations (HRW, 2021). Despite these criticisms, the regime hasn't demonstrated any inclination to deal with these problems (UN, 2014). Due to its isolationist policies and lack of cooperation with international organizations, North Korea has made it difficult for the international community to hold it accountable for its human rights breaches.

## **Chapter 4: Cultural and Socio-Economic Context of Lebanon**

### **Lebanese History:**

The cultural and socioeconomic environment of Lebanon has a huge effect on the population there, particularly Syrian refugees and those impacted by the Beirut bombing. In order to deliver effective mental health care, it is crucial to comprehend cultural and socioeconomic causes (Charafeddine et al., 2018). Traumatic incidents have historically affected Lebanon's social, political, and economic landscape.

The first incident to recall is the Lebanese Civil War, which lasted from 1975 to 1990 and claimed the lives of an estimated 150,000 people, was one of the most important historical occurrences (Khalaf, 2010). The Lebanese Civil War was a complicated battle that went on for fifteen years and had far-reaching repercussions for Lebanon as well as the wider Middle East. The battle was precipitated by a confluence of political, economic, and social elements that had been festering for several decades prior to its outbreak. The conflict was fought by a number of different factions, including a variety of religious and ethnic groups, as well as actors from other countries, including Israel, Syria, and the Palestine Liberation Organization. As a result of the war, law and order completely collapsed, and both sides were responsible for a large number of acts of violence and crimes. The brutality of the conflict, which included the use of torture, mass killings, and forced displacement, was one of the defining characteristics of the conflict. Over a million people were forced to flee their homes as a direct result of the war, and it is estimated that another 150,000 individuals lost their lives as a direct result of the conflict (Sallouk, 2002). The battle also caused considerable damage to Lebanon's infrastructure, economy, and society, which led to long-

term challenges in these areas of Lebanon's economy and society. The Lebanese Civil War was a horrific event that had a substantial and negative influence on both the country of Lebanon and its population. The struggle was complicated, harsh, and dragged on for a very long time. The effects of the war are still being felt in Lebanon today, with continuous political and social divisions, economic concerns, and unresolved issues that contributed to the conflict. These inheritances are all a direct result of the war. It is necessary that the underlying political, social, and economic issues that contributed to the war are addressed by peaceful means and competent governance in order to prevent the recurrence of such a debilitating struggle. This can be accomplished by addressing the elements in question.

The second well-known crisis in the Lebanese history was the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which lasted for several months and claimed thousands of innocent Lebanese lives, was one of the most significant ones (Haddad, 2016). The war had a long-lasting effect on Lebanese society and was marked by sectarian conflict, outside interference, and political instability. Israel's invasion of Lebanon was a part of a larger operation to eradicate Palestinian militant groups that were active in the country at the time of the invasion (Norton, 2009). In June of 1982, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) invaded Lebanon with the goal of establishing a buffer zone in southern Lebanon and evicting the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from its stronghold in Beirut. Both of these objectives were successfully accomplished. The Israeli Defense Forces' operation was characterized by intensive bombing and shelling of residential areas, which resulted in significant loss of life and damage to infrastructure. The IDF's campaign was characterized by these two factors. The massacre at Sabra and Shatila, in which hundreds of Palestinian refugees were massacred by Lebanese Christian militias while Israeli forces stood by and

did nothing, is considered to be the most notorious event that occurred during the invasion. The massacre at Sabra and Shatila remains a significant event in the history of Lebanon and the wider Middle East region. It is also relevant to the study of political grief, as it was a traumatic event that had a lasting impact on the Palestinian refugee population. According to Khalili (2015), the trauma of the Sabra and Shatila massacre is still felt by Palestinian refugees today, who continue to experience feelings of loss and grief over the lives that were lost and the trauma that was inflicted upon them. This event highlights the role that political violence and conflict can play in generating grief and trauma among affected populations, and underscores the need for greater understanding and attention to the psychological effects of political violence.

Rafik Hariri's 2005 murder, which provoked large-scale demonstrations and finally resulted in the evacuation of Syrian forces from Lebanon, was another key event (Nasrallah, 2007). The murder of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri on February 14, 2005, in Beirut, Lebanon, sent shockwaves throughout the country and had profound repercussions for the public on both a political and psychological level. The explosion that killed Hariri and 21 others was a traumatic experience that caused many people to develop a scared and phobic outlook on life. The assassination caused considerable political ramifications, which ultimately resulted in the evacuation of Syrian troops from Lebanon.

The assassination of Hariri had a significant and negative effect on the mental health of the people living in Lebanon. In the aftermath of the assassination, many people showed signs of PTSD, as well as despair, anxiety, and other mental health difficulties (Hussain, 2013). Those who were there when the explosion occurred or who had loved ones who were killed in the attack felt the effects more keenly than anybody else. In addition to having an effect

on individuals on a psychological level, the bombing also had wider-reaching societal and political repercussions. The crucial events that led to the founding of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in order to investigate the killing and the withdrawal of Syrian soldiers from Lebanon as a result of pressure from the international community were important developments that transformed the political landscape of the country. The assassination and the events that followed it exacerbated preexisting political and socioeconomic differences in Lebanon (Salloukh, 2006). As a result, a great number of people came to feel disillusioned with the political system and the capacity of politicians to meet their needs and problems. The political repercussions of the assassination were important as well, and they ultimately had a huge impact on the political landscape of the country. The occurrence serves as a timely reminder of the significance of complete responses to traumatic situations, responses that take into account both the psychological and political repercussions of such tragedies.

The 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War, which lasted 34 days and claimed over 1,000 Lebanese civilian lives, was another painful incident (HRW, 2007). Significant damage was done to the mental health of the population in Lebanon as a direct result of the war. According to the findings of a study that was carried out by the WHO, the prevalence of mental health disorders such as depression and PTSD dramatically rose among adult citizens of Lebanon in the years after the end of the conflict (WHO, 2008). According to the findings of the study, the percentage of people suffering from PTSD rose from 4.8% before the war to 12.1% after the conflict, and the percentage of people suffering from depression rose from 9.2% to 14.3% (ibid). The war not only had short-term effects, but also long-term effects on the mental health of children in Lebanon. According to the findings of a study that was

carried out by the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS), children who were exposed to the war exhibited higher levels of anxiety as well as indications of post-traumatic stress disorder than children who were not exposed to the war (LCPS, 2012). In addition, children's academic performance, as well as, their social development suffered as a direct result of the war (ibid).

Throughout its history, Lebanon has also gone through other catastrophic political crises. Political instability, corruption, and socioeconomic disparity were the main causes of the protests in Lebanon in 2019 (Abi-Habib & Safa, 2021). The legacy of Lebanon's civil war, which formed the nation's political institutions and identity, exacerbates this volatility (Yazigi, 2021). In addition, as a result of the ongoing civil conflict in nearby Syria, Lebanon has also experienced substantial effects, such as an increase in sectarian strife and an influx of Syrian refugees (Saleh & Nouredine, 2017). The population of Lebanon has been left with long-lasting impacts from these horrific events, including psychological trauma and political instability. A sense of collective trauma and continuous stress has resulted from a number of smaller-scale conflicts, political crises, and natural disasters that have occurred in Lebanon in addition to these significant events (Moussaoui & Rizk, 2021).

Unlike any prior political crises or occurrences in Lebanon, the Beirut Blast was a unique incident. The Beirut Blast and other events like the civil war, Israeli invasions, and political assassinations do share certain similarities, though. The effect on the general populace's mental health is one of the key commonalities. The Lebanese people were severely traumatized by each of these incidents, which resulted in long-term mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), sadness, and anxiety.

**Beirut Blast:**

The Beirut blast, which occurred on August 4, 2020, was a devastating explosion that originated from the detonation of a large amount of ammonium nitrate stored unsafely in the city's port. The huge explosion resulted in serious property damage, several injuries, and fatalities. Over 200 people were killed and many were injured in the explosion in Beirut on August 4, 2020, which had a significant effect on the people of Lebanon (BBC News, 2020). The event sparked intense shock, indignation, and grief among the populace, and many people began to wonder who was responsible for the calamity and how the government responded.

**Emotional, psychological and social distress:**

The 2020 Beirut bombing had a significant impact on Lebanon's population, leading to the deaths of numerous persons from the military, civil defense, the health sector, and other fields. Tragedies can have a significant impact on young people's mental health; this is likely the case for the children and teenagers impacted by the Beirut blast. The severity of this catastrophe emphasizes the necessity to attend to survivors' mental health needs and give them the assistance they require to deal with their loss and trauma. They make a case for the significance of early intervention and assistance while highlighting the particular difficulties in meeting the emotional needs of young people in the wake of trauma. Collective grief can also give people a platform to express their worries and demand accountability from the government, which might result in social and political changes that stop future occurrences of the same kind. Additionally, social support and cognitive reappraisal, which can help people cope with their feelings and keep a sense of agency, can lessen the harmful impacts of political grief (Huddy & Feldman, 2018). Social support is

essential for reducing the detrimental impacts of political mourning on mental health and well-being (Good & Sanchez, 2019). According to the study, people who had access to social support were more likely to use healthy coping mechanisms and keep a sense of agency in the face of political difficulties. In particular, the shock and aftereffects of such a disaster can adversely affect survivors' mental health and well-being when it comes to dealing with loss and sorrow. Flashbacks, anxiety, and despair were common PTSD symptoms among the Beirut bombing survivors. Social support should be offered to the parents of the victims who died due the explosion that took place in Beirut in August 2020 as well not only on survivors. In addition, the explosion had a substantial impact on children's mental health, with many showing signs of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and sadness, according to a report from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2020). Several efforts have been launched in Lebanon to support children affected by the traumatic occurrence in the wake of the Beirut bombing in August 2020. One such program is the "Beit el Baraka" program, which offers impacted children and their parents psychological and emotional help (UNICEF, 2021). For people impacted by the blast, especially youngsters, "Baytna Baytak," another initiative was started to offer free counseling sessions (The Daily Star, 2020). In addition, the Lebanese Red Cross has set up a hotline for psychological support to offer counseling services to individuals impacted by the blast, particularly kids and their families (Lebanese Red Cross, 2020). These programs are designed to assist children and their families deal with the emotional and psychological effects of the traumatic incident and to give them the attention and support they need to bounce back.



The first responders who worked valiantly to assist those affected, as well as the relatives of these victims, are sure to feel sorrow and loss. Since they were among the first to respond to the accident and saw its terrible effects directly, those who worked in the health, army, and civil defense sectors may have been particularly affected by the blast. The World Health Organization reported that the explosion claimed the lives of 10 members of the Lebanese civil defense team and injured another 30 (The daily star, 2020). In a same vein, the Lebanese army stated that the explosion claimed the lives of 10 soldiers while injuring another 27 (National news agency, 2020). There is no doubt that the passing of these heroic people while they were serving their country has had a profound effect on their families, coworkers, and the entire nation. In the immediate wake of the explosion, the Lebanese army and civil defense have played critical roles by offering key services like search and rescue, first assistance, and debris disposal (Reuters, 2020). The Lebanese people have greatly acknowledged and praised their sacrifice and contribution throughout this trying time.

The level of social solidarity and resiliency displayed by the Lebanese people during the Beirut Blast, however, markedly distinguishes it from other tragedies. Despite the terrible effects of the blast, the Lebanese community banded together to aid those who were harmed. Numerous people and organizations contributed to the rescue and recovery efforts with thousands of volunteers as well as by giving those in need refuge or financial support. The Lebanese people's outpouring of support and unity is evidence of their resiliency and will to survive hardship. The community was crucial in supporting individuals impacted by the tragedy with both emotional support and practical aid in the aftermath of the Beirut bombing. Social media sites like Twitter and Facebook were used to coordinate relief

efforts and link individuals in need to others who might assist in the early wake of the explosion. Both inside and beyond Lebanon, Lebanese residents launched donation drives and fundraising events to aid the bomb victims. The affected were given medical aid, shelter, and food by the Lebanese Red Cross as well as other regional NGOs and volunteer organizations. The community's outpouring of support not only aided individuals who were immediately impacted by the explosion but also assisted the larger community in processing its grief and coming together in the face of tragedy.

People found it difficult to cope with the trauma during these crises due to a lack of social support, which resulted in long-term mental health issues. It is very significant to provide persons affected by the blast with solutions that are both evidence-based and culturally relevant (El Asmar et al., 2022).

### **The Lebanese government and politics:**

The explosion took place in a setting that was politically volatile and plagued by persistent problems with corruption, poor governance, and economic instability. As a result, the incident had an impact on how people felt about their government and society in addition to being a physical calamity. The explosion significantly traumatized and grieved the Lebanese people, who were already dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic's effects and the country's economic difficulties. People's perceptions of their government and political elites may have changed in the wake of the Beirut bombing, with some people possibly growing more cynical and alienated from politics. Others might have grown more radicalized and prepared to use drastic means to bring about change.

Therefore, the case study of Beirut blast can be used to comprehend the idea of political grief and its psychological and emotional effects on the Lebanese people as well as any possible consequences for the political and social future of the nation.

The idea of political grief is particularly pertinent in this situation since people and communities are having a hard time dealing with the events and their effects. Acknowledging and dealing with political grief might encourage social change and group action (McInerney & Rose-Redwood, 2019). In the instance of the Beirut explosion, this would entail inspiring a sense of unity among those negatively impacted by the catastrophe, enabling people to band together and offer support to one another. Political grieving has come to light in Lebanon after several political crises mentioned above. And as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic and the divisive political environment, there is a need for study and treatments to address its effects on mental health, political engagement, and social cohesion. To successfully address the effects of political grief on both people and society at large, a multifaceted strategy is needed. Individuals and communities can work toward resilience and constructive change in the face of political problems by recognizing and addressing political grief. After the explosion, Beirut residents banded together to provide relief, comfort, and support to those who were hurt. By giving those who were having a hard time coping with a sense of belonging and validation, this social support served to lessen the feelings of loneliness and hopelessness that frequently accompany loss (Al Jazeera, 2020).

Reframing the traumatic event is one cognitive reappraisal technique that might aid people in keeping their perspective and sense of control. In the instance of the Beirut Bombing, some people tried to make sense of the tragedy by utilizing it as a catalyst for political

reform and change. The ability to channel one's unfavorable emotions into useful action is made possible by this cognitive reappraisal, which can give one a feeling of agency and empowerment (The New York Times, 2020). The Beirut Blast was an unfortunate incident that left many people feeling overtaken by political trauma and despair. It is crucial to keep talking about how political grief affects mental health and wellness and to offer tools and interventions that can help people cope. For people going through political grief, having a supporting group is essential because it can provide them a sense of validation and belonging, which helps lessen emotions of hopelessness and despair. People can find a safe place to express their feelings and connect with others who have been through similar experiences in a supportive community. This can foster a feeling of camaraderie, which can empower people and help them cope with their grief. In addition, to lessen their financial difficulties, the Lebanese government established a compensation fund for the relatives of the victims, including those who lost their parents (Lebanese Republic Presidency, 2020). Additionally, NGOs like Amel Association International offered individual and group therapy sessions to parents who lost their children in the explosion as mental health care (Amel Association International, 2020). These programs attempted to lessen the psychological and emotional pain that parents went through after the unfortunate occurrence.

Another major problem is Lebanon's economic downfall, which was brought on by political incompetence and corruption (Makdisi, 2021). This crisis affected the people and their financial capacity to cater their needs. The need for specialized treatments that cater to the particular demands of the Lebanese community is highlighted by these complex social, cultural, and economic elements. It is essential for these people to learn methods for

tending to their needs and promoting wellbeing following traumatic events in order to help them deal with the sadness and stress they may be feeling.

### **Main findings from the interviews conducted with the parents of Beirut Blast victims:**

In total, six persons who lost one of their family members in the Beirut Blast were interviewed:

- Joe Chedid, lost his father.
- Rita Barsouni, Joe's wife who lost her father in law.
- William Noun, lost his brother.
- Maria Fares, William's fiancée, lost her sister
- Tracy Naggear, lost her child.
- Rodaina Bou Shaheen, lost her cousin

The interview consisted of 5 questions. Below is a brief about the answers from each question asked.

*1. Can you describe your experience of political grief in the aftermath of the Beirut Blast? How has it impacted your daily life, relationships, and sense of self?*

The Beirut Blast had a profound impact on the lives of the interviewees, with many experiencing personal loss and political anguish. William discusses how the explosion has disrupted their daily routine and goals, and they now prioritize pursuing justice and helping their family. Joe lost his father in the explosion and discusses the political grief that has affected his relationships and sense of self. Maria expresses frustration and disillusionment with the government's handling of the pandemic and the nation's political fragmentation. "I initially had excruciating pain and considered suicide. But having my husband, Paul, there gave her the will to live." By this sentence, Tracy, who lost her daughter in the explosion, discusses her feelings of fury and frustration and how having her husband's support gave her the will to live. Rodaina also experienced shock and devastation from the blast, leading her to spend several days in bed, which had an impact on her daily life for months.

Overall, the interviews highlight the personal and political impact of the Beirut Blast on the lives of those affected.

2. *How have individual factors, such as your personal beliefs, values, and coping mechanisms, influenced your experience of political grief in the aftermath of the Beirut Blast?*

On one hand, William's views and ideals were impacted by the Beirut Blast, leading to deeper religious convictions and a focus on social justice rather than political party affiliations. He copes by sticking with his cause and trying to change his parents' perceptions of corruption and the need for action. On the other hand, Joe feels a sense of obligation and a need to be resilient in the wake of the explosion, as he needs to provide for his family. He may be experiencing emotional detachment or dissociation and has embraced what has transpired, despite uncertainties and concerns. In addition, Maria experienced political sadness following the explosion and became aware of the political climate in the nation. "I feel frustrated with those who continue to support a single political leader or party despite their role in the tragedy.", Maria mentioned. She also discusses the stages of mourning she went through and how they impacted her life.

Tracy's religious convictions significantly influenced her sense of grief and coping mechanisms. She rediscovered her religious side after her daughter's passing and believes that there is a solution to every difficulty in life. Furthermore, Rodaina coped with her political grief through her faith and engaged in time-wasting activities to express her emotions. The immediate shock and devastation of the Blast had an impact on her daily life, relationships, and sense of self for several months.

The interviewees answers were divided between 4 persons who found in the disaster a reason to believe and to get closer to God, while 2 persons felt the opposite and moved away from the religion. Both William and Joe felt the need to be strong for the sake of the families, and to handle the responsibilities of the house after the losses they experienced.

3. *In what ways have social factors, such as support from family, friends, and community, impacted your experience of political grief in the aftermath of the Beirut Blast?*

William emphasized the importance of friends and family support and the psychological assistance and optimism provided by their community. Rita and Joe also found their family's support helpful, although they recognized that everyone copes with grief differently. Joe, in particular, learned who was supportive of him during this time. Maria also valued family and community support, and found comfort in talking with William about their shared sorrow. Tracy deepened her bond with her husband by moving on with his support, so she could better support her bigger family. For Roudaina, having the support of friends, family, and the community was crucial in helping her deal with her loss. She recognized that not everyone seeks out counseling or psychological assistance and that people deal with grief in different ways.

4. *Have you been able to access social support or financial resources to help you cope with your experience of political grief? If so, what has been helpful and what has not?*

William mentioned that financial resources have not been beneficial in helping him deal with political grief. Social support has been more helpful, especially connecting with others who have gone through similar things. As for Rita, although financial and social resources have been available, it can be difficult for someone who is sad to ask for help. Coping skills have been employed, but grief still exists and has been difficult to overcome. Maria did not mention using any financial aid to manage her sadness. As for Tracy, some people offered them financial support, but she and her husband did not accept it as it could be seen as accepting what happened. Roudaina mentioned that her family had access to additional financial resources, including a monthly wage and assistance from the political party to which they belonged.

5. *How do you perceive the role of politics and the government in the aftermath of the Beirut Blast? How has this impacted your experience of political grief and your ability to cope with the*

*disaster?*

The interviewees had varying perceptions of the government's role in the aftermath of the Beirut Blast and how it has impacted their experience of political grief. William expressed his disappointment with the government's carelessness and lack of condolences, while Maria believes that political parties were complicit in the tragedy. Joe lost faith in politics and left the country, while Tracy and her husband reside between multiple countries due to their unease in Lebanon. Roudaina feels that the government's lack of involvement has made it difficult for her to cope with the tragedy, as justice has not yet been served. However, William and Maria both have a strong attachment to Lebanon and desire to stay despite the tragedy.

### **Brief of the results:**

First, the explosion caused a sense of loss, grief, and anguish for every one of them. They have found it more challenging to process the incident due to the politicians lack of accountability and justice. Their daily life, relationships, and sense of self have all been significantly impacted. Second, the interviews emphasize the value of community and social assistance in dealing with political bereavement. Families and friends of the interviewees have been extremely important in assisting them in coping with their loss. Connecting with others who had gone through similar circumstances was also consoling to them. Thirdly, the interviewees' political opinions and convictions have changed as a result of the Beirut Blast. Some of them have lost faith in the political system as they have grown more skeptical of the government's acts and policies. Additionally, they now feel a stronger sense of identity and belonging to Lebanon and a need to defend it. Finally, the interviews show the variety of personal reactions to political sorrow. There is no one solution that works for everyone when it comes to dealing with such pain; each individual handles loss in their own unique way. Some interviewees have changed their religious beliefs or political opinions, while others have become emotionally distant or have grown to love Lebanon very much.



## Main findings:

- The Beirut Blast had a direct impact on every respondent, either through the loss of close ones or psychological suffering.
- The interviewees have expressed great distress and indignation about the lack of justice and accountability for the Beirut Blast.
- The respondents' encounters with political grief have caused them to doubt their political connections and ideas, as well as to lose hope in the political and governmental systems.
- The interviewees' ability to deal with their loss and suffering has been greatly aided by social support, especially that from friends and family.
- Support from family and friends was considered essential for overcoming the pain and loss brought on by the explosion.
- Some interviewees have discovered that their religious beliefs have provided them with support and direction as they cope with their loss.
- Despite the difficulties and challenges, the interviewees' decision to remain in Lebanon was influenced by their sense of national identity and belonging.
- In order to deal with political pain, social support and the search of justice have proved more beneficial than financial resources.
- The Beirut Blast had a profound personal and emotional impact on each interviewee.
- All of them voiced a great desire for accountability and justice for those guilty for the explosion, but they also all expressed doubt that justice would ever be done.
- A typical reaction to the Beirut Bombing and other political crises was a loss of faith in political and governmental authorities.

- The interviews emphasized how political grieving affects one's own convictions, principles, and sense of self.
- Despite the difficulties they encountered, the interviewees showed a strong attachment to their Lebanese identity and a wish to remain in Lebanon.
- There is no one "right" way to handle political mourning; it is a complicated and continuing process. Because every person's experience is different, they need to get specialized support and care.
- The interviewees' levels of faith in Lebanon's political system and leaders varied; some had completely lost hope, while others still had hope.
- It was believed that each person's experience of political mourning was particular to them and may take several forms, such as sadness, rage, or emotional detachment. The interviewees' coping mechanisms also differed; some relied on their inner strength or religious convictions, while others sought counseling or other types of professional assistance.

### **Link of the interview results to the theories used in the study**

The interviews proved the information found in the literature review; especially when it comes to the theories used in this research paper.

Social Constructionism: The social constructionism theory posits that reality is constructed through shared meanings and beliefs within a social context. In the case of the Beirut Blast, the experiences of political grief that the interviewees describe are shaped by social and political factors.

Firstly, the political grief experienced by the interviewees is a shared experience, one that is constructed and shaped by the social context of Lebanon and its political climate. The blast was a product of government negligence and corruption, and the interviewees' experiences of grief are

informed by their perceptions of the government's role in the disaster. Secondly, the interviewees' experiences of political grief are shaped by their personal beliefs and values, which are themselves socially constructed. The coping mechanisms that they employ, such as religious faith or the support of friends and family, are also influenced by their social context and the cultural norms and expectations of their community. Thirdly, the interviewees' experiences of political grief are influenced by the support or lack thereof that they receive from their social networks. The support that they receive from friends, family, and community members is a crucial factor in how they cope with their grief, and this support is also shaped by social and cultural factors.

Overall, the experiences of political grief described by the interviewees are complex and multifaceted, shaped by social, political, and personal factors. The social constructionism theory provides a framework for understanding how these factors interact to shape the interviewees' experiences and perceptions of the Beirut Blast.

Trauma Theory: The experiences of political grief described in the aftermath of the Beirut Blast are closely linked to trauma theory, as trauma can be defined as the psychological and emotional response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event. The traumatic impact of the explosion is evident in the interviewees' descriptions of shock, devastation, pain, frustration, disillusionment, and loss, all of which are common reactions to traumatic events. Furthermore, the individual and social factors that the interviewees describe as influencing their experience of political grief are also relevant to trauma theory. For instance, coping mechanisms such as rediscovering faith, engaging in time-wasting activities, and seeking social support are common strategies for managing trauma. Similarly, the support provided by family, friends, and community is a vital aspect of post-trauma recovery, as it can help to alleviate feelings of isolation and promote a sense of belonging and connection. The interviewees' experiences also highlight the importance of the political and social context in which the trauma occurs. The government's handling of the Beirut Blast is a crucial factor in shaping the interviewees' experiences of political grief, as it has had a profound impact on

their sense of justice, agency, and hope. This underscores the importance of considering the broader political, social, and cultural factors that influence trauma and recovery, as well as the need for a multidisciplinary approach that integrates psychological, social, and political perspectives.

Resilience Theory: From the interviews' results, some common ideas or thoughts were raised while other differences were concluded. The interviewees were divided between 4 persons out of 6 who are still in Lebanon, fighting for justice while 2 persons already left the country. From the 4 persons who are still here, only one person mentioned that they are aiming and applying for opportunities in different countries with the purpose to leave it all here. Resilience theory posits that individuals can develop resilience through a combination of personal, social, and environmental factors. The experiences shared by the interviewees demonstrate how these factors can influence an individual's ability to cope with political grief after a traumatic event like the Beirut Blast. In terms of personal factors, the interviewees' coping mechanisms were influenced by their personal beliefs, values, and faith. For example, some individuals found comfort in religion, while others coped by focusing on social justice and activism. Personal factors can influence an individual's ability to adapt and cope with adversity, and can play a role in shaping one's response to trauma. Social factors, such as support from family, friends, and community, also played a significant role in the interviewees' experiences of political grief. The availability of social support and the degree to which it was accessed varied among the interviewees. However, those who received social support reported that it was helpful in coping with their grief. Financial resources were also mentioned by some interviewees as a potential source of support. However, the effectiveness of financial resources in managing political grief was mixed, as some interviewees did not find financial support helpful or did not feel comfortable accepting it.

Finally, the interviewees' perceptions of the government's role in the aftermath of the Beirut Blast also impacted their experiences of political grief and ability to cope with the disaster. Some interviewees expressed disillusionment and anger towards the government, while others felt that

justice had not been served. These perceptions can shape an individual's sense of agency and control, which are key components of resilience.

### **Gaps in the support system for political grief in Lebanon**

In Lebanon specifically, there are major gaps in the country's system for assisting those experiencing political grief, and Lebanon has seen multiple political and economic crises. The stigmatization of political grief in Lebanon is a major barrier to effective aid. The political environment in Lebanon, where political dissent is frequently confronted with persecution and bloodshed, exacerbates this stigma. In order to combat it, a complete strategy that includes education, raising awareness of the issue, and fostering compassion and understanding for individuals who are grieving is necessary. For people who are experiencing political grief, safe and welcoming spaces must be created. Policymakers and service providers must also work to make sure that those who want services and resources can access them. Attempts must also be taken to dispel the underlying cultural attitudes and ideas that support the stigma associated with political mourning and, more broadly, mental health disorders.

Lack of resources is another obstacle to effective support. There are few mental health treatments available in Lebanon, and people may find it difficult to get help because of economic constraints, transportation problems, or long waiting periods. Further limiting the availability and caliber of support may be the nation's potential shortage of qualified mental health specialists. In Lebanon, there are also resource shortages that have an impact on political mourning in addition to a lack of mental health treatments. The prolonged economic crisis in the nation has caused a shortage of essentials like food, water, and electricity, which can make dealing with political mourning more stressful and traumatic

(Akik et al., 2021). There are severe shortages of necessities which has a terrible effect on the populace. Lack of access to basics can exacerbate the already complicated emotions related to political mourning by causing feelings of anger, rage, and despair. Additionally, it might be challenging for people to concentrate on their own mental health and wellbeing due to the stress of dealing with the economic crisis. This could compound the effects of political mourning and result in a difficult-to-break cycle of bad feelings and tension. Many hospitals and healthcare facilities were damaged or destroyed as a result of the explosion at the Port of Beirut in August 2020, severely taxing the nation's resources and restricting access to medical care for individuals grieving over political unrest (Younes, 2021).

Since hospitals and other healthcare facilities were destroyed in Beirut, those hurt in the explosion were compelled to seek treatment at facilities that were already overflowing with patients and lacked the staff or resources to handle the influx. Long medical wait times, restricted access to painkillers, and poor wound care were the results, all of which contributed to the blast victims' physical and psychological suffering. The provision of mental health services, which is essential in assisting people who are mourning after a traumatic incident, was also impacted by the damage to hospitals. The vulnerable populations that are already disadvantaged and have limited access to medical treatment, such as refugees and low-income people, were particularly affected by the absence of medical services following the Beirut blast. Hospital and clinic demolition worsened already-existing healthcare access disparities and increased the emotional suffering of people affected by political mourning. Medical workers were also forced to relocate as a result of the devastation of hospitals because they were either killed or had no choice but to abandon the city owing to the damage. This led to a severe lack of healthcare workers,

which further hampered hospitals' ability to provide sufficient medical care for bomb victims.

Another major barrier to offering adequate support for political grief is a lack of financial resources. Financial limitations prohibit many mental health specialists in Lebanon from providing free or inexpensive assistance to individuals in need (Craciun & Fazel, 2021). There is a lack of medical supplies, equipment, and pharmaceuticals, and many hospitals and clinics are understaffed (World Health Organization, 2020). Because of this, it has become more challenging for people to receive mental health care, which are essential for overcoming political loss. Additionally, lawmakers and government representatives might not give mental health services enough financing since they prioritize other things like infrastructure or defense (Zaffaroni & Freitas, 2021). Another aspect that adds to the lack of resources for political sorrow is the inadequate education and training of mental health practitioners in Lebanon.

Many mental health practitioners lack the expertise to treat the complex emotional and psychological needs of persons experiencing political mourning due to their lack of awareness and comprehension of political trauma (Krog, 2022). Finally, it was noted that inadequate training stands in the way of effective support. It's possible that mental health practitioners lack the necessary training to handle the complicated emotional and psychological demands of those who are mourning political defeats. They might not have the political knowledge or cultural competency to give proper care, which can make patients feel alone and unsupported.

Due to considerable impediments to care access and high levels of stigma around mental health disorders, Lebanon's protracted economic crisis has had a significant negative

influence on the country's population's mental health (Akik et al., 2021). These problems have been linked to corruption and the breakdown of state institutions (Younes, 2021).

High levels of trauma, anxiety, and despair were discovered in a study on the effects of the 2019–2020 revolution in Lebanon and its aftermath, but there was also strong resilience and community support (Hamze et al., 2022). Lebanese people have supported one another during difficult circumstances by drawing on their strong sense of community and solidarity. This has involved giving people who needed both emotional and practical support, sharing information, and lending a sympathetic ear. The Lebanese people have shown via their joint efforts that they are able to unite in times of need and work toward a better future.

## **Conclusion**

When people are dealing with the unexpected loss of life, property, and community, political grief, an intricate and diverse phenomenon, emerges. The Beirut Blast case is a graphic illustration of the devastation that a catastrophic catastrophe may do to people, families, and society as a whole. This study has shed insight on the intricate interplay of interpersonal, social, and political forces that form this process through an examination of the experience of political sorrow among people affected by the blast. The research demonstrates the blast's deep and long-lasting effects on the psychological and emotional health of people directly impacted, as well as the larger political and social environment that influences their experiences. This study has deepened our understanding of the long-term effects of disasters and the need for effective and compassionate care for those who are struggling to cope with their losses by analyzing the numerous elements that contribute to political mourning. When designing and putting into practice catastrophe response and



recovery strategies, policymakers and disaster response teams should consider the concept of political sorrow as a crucial element. This entails not only offering psychological treatment but also taking into account the political environment and any particular elements that can exacerbate political grief. In addition, the study demonstrates how community and social assistance, including the function of NGOs, civil society, and grassroots organizations in providing psychological and material help to people impacted, can greatly lessen the effects of political mourning. It emphasizes the value of group effort and solidarity in trying circumstances. Therefore, giving those impacted by the Beirut blast access to mental health care and resources could help lessen the detrimental psychological and social effects of political sorrow and foster resilience and constructive change.

A list of recommendations can be conducted from this study:

- Additional research on political grief particularly in the context of disaster and conflict areas is needed. We may better understand this complicated phenomena and foster recovery and resiliency among those impacted by examining the varied manifestations of political sorrow, its long-term repercussions on people and communities, and effective treatments to address it.
- Creation of efficient and just ways to deal with the complicated problems brought on by political violence and instability, leading to a more complex and sympathetic comprehension of how these occurrences affect people and communities.
- Support ongoing initiatives to foster healing and recovery in the wake of this tragic incident and to provide assistance to individuals who will continue to struggle in the years to come with the deep effects of political grief.

- Take into account the intersectionality of elements like gender, class, and ethnicity that influence political grief. These elements may affect how people experience and handle sorrow, as well as their ability to obtain aid and supports.
- Plans for disaster response and recovery that take into account these variables can result in more fair and effective outcomes for all impacted people and communities.
- Increase the unity between people and communities that can forge strong movements for social justice and transformation when they unite in response to a common experience of sorrow. Such movements can be supported and informed by the study of political sorrow, which helps to foster recovery and resiliency not just in the lives of individuals who were directly affected but also in society at large.
- The idea of "political grief" ultimately serves to highlight the need for a more thorough and compassionate approach to disaster response and recovery, one that acknowledges and addresses the complex and interrelated factors that contribute to grief and trauma in the wake of political violence and instability. By doing this, we may create a society that is more just and resilient and is better able to support and look after all of its members during difficult times.
- Promote self-care and resiliency among individuals and communities impacted by political grief by providing resources and education on coping strategies and stress management techniques.
- Advocate for policy changes that address the root causes of political violence and instability, such as addressing social and economic inequalities and promoting peaceful conflict resolution.

- Foster a culture of empathy and understanding by promoting education and awareness about the effects of political violence and instability on individuals and communities, including the long-term impact of political grief.

Moving forward, it is essential that policymakers and disaster response teams take the concept of political grief into account when designing and implementing response and recovery strategies. This entails providing access to mental health care and resources and considering the political environment and any particular elements that can exacerbate political grief. It also requires ongoing support for community and social initiatives that provide psychological and material help to those impacted. Furthermore, as stated in the recommendations, additional research is needed to better understand political grief in the context of disasters and conflict areas. This research should examine the varied manifestations of political sorrow, its long-term repercussions on people and communities, and effective treatments to address it. By doing so, we can foster recovery and resilience among those impacted and create a more just and compassionate society.

In the end, the idea of "political grief" serves as a call to action for a more comprehensive and empathetic approach to disaster response and recovery. By acknowledging and addressing the complex and interrelated factors that contribute to grief and trauma in the wake of political violence and instability, we can create a society that is better equipped to support and care for all of its members during difficult times.

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#### **List of Interviewees interviewed in this study:**

- Joe Chedid, lost his father, interviewed on 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.
- Rita Barsouni, Joe's wife who lost her father in law, interviewed on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2023
- William Noun, lost his brother, interviewed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.
- Maria Fares, William's fiancée who lost her sister, interviewed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.



- Tracy Naggear, lost her child, interviewed on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.
- Rodaina Bou Shaheen, lost her cousin, interviewed on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.