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# The Lebanese Trash Crisis

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## **Abstract:**

Thinking about what it means to be a human being in the 21<sup>st</sup> century comes with many different aspects that one needs to take into consideration. Human Rights is becoming more complicated as life requires more in some areas and less in other as it proceeds. Clean air and water are one of those rights that every human being should have access to. When humans are denied access to those two, especially for political or class stratification reasons, a case of environmental injustice should be identified. Not everyone has equal access to all resources neither does everyone consume the same amount. The role of a government in a country is to make sure that they care and work enough to provide their citizens with all the needs necessary. When it fails to do so, a problem can be identified. In order to overcome that problem we need ideas and those ideas need to turn into actions that make a difference.

## **Introduction:**

In 2015, the streets of Beirut, the Lebanese capital, started piling up with trash due to the failure of the government and the private companies to collect the trash from the homes of citizens as well as the dumpsters. This created a global environmental issue known as the “Lebanese Trash Crisis”. The image of Beirut’s streets as well as the smell that became a part of every Lebanese citizen’s life, led to a series of demonstrations by activists under the slogan #YouStink. The activists believed that the crisis was a result of the government’s neglecting performance over the years and its failure to create a long-term plan for an ecological problem that might affect Lebanon as a country and the Earth as a whole.



(fig.1) A snake of garbage covering the hills of Beirut

Countries-being-divided is nothing that most people are not familiar with. Israel for instance, suffers from a division even after years of its establishment as a country. The division today is not only between Israeli Jews and the country’s Arab minority, but also among the religious subgroups that make up Israeli Jewry. Likewise, after the civil war (1975-1990), Lebanon was geographically divided and every religious group got their own area to live in. When possible solutions for the trash crisis were being discussed, a big disagreement was on where the

dumpsters will be located. Since the areas are religiously divided none of the religious groups wanted to have the dumpsters in their area saying “why not in theirs?” When a country operates like this, it becomes extremely difficult to come up with solutions.

Not knowing what to do with all the trash that was piling up in a fairly fast rate on the streets, some people thought that burning it might be the fastest way to get rid of it. Burning trash on the streets was a common scenery in Beirut in that period of time. A study conducted by the American University in Beirut (AUB) released the results of their study on Toxic Emissions of Waster Burning between the period of October 2 and November 26 of 2015. They were able to test air samples near waste burning sites. The results were horrific and showed that inhaling this air is extremely bad for people’s health.<sup>1</sup> The crisis included unauthorized landfills and incineration sites near inhabited areas. All of this, along with changes in the weather, resulted in the release of toxins, contaminated of food and water, and emergence of infectious diseases.<sup>2</sup>

For years, Lebanon was dependent on a private company called Sukleen, which was responsible for waste collection and street sweeping in the city Beirut, surrounding areas and Mount Lebanon through a contract. Sukleen belongs to Saad Hariri who become a Prime Minister of Lebanon for a second time in December 2016 after his first time, which was from November 2009 to June 2011. The crisis erupted when the contract was not renewed and the country was left without a backup plan.<sup>3</sup> This crisis was just a more visual and a sensible version of the corrupt government, which already existed.

Environmental Justice is (1) The social movement that began in the 1980s, (2) an interdisciplinary body of work –literature and (3) policy initiative. Defining what the Lebanese Trash Crisis is should be easy enough: for some, seeing (fig.1) is enough to identify the existence of a crisis. Digging deep into the reasons behind what is going on is the work of this research paper. Moreover, identifying the crisis as an issue of Environmental Injustice is necessary.

This crisis is causing air and water pollution on very high levels which is causing many health and environmental consequences. An Increased risk of cancer with the strongest evidence being for pancreas and skin cancer in males, congenital abnormalities such as non-chromosomal birth defects, nervous system birth defects, hypospadias and low birth weight as well as an increased risk of asthma and increased rate of hospitalization for asthma and other respiratory conditions are all examples of health consequences that are associated with landfills. An increased risk of cancer with the strongest evidence being for colorectal, larynx, and stomach cancer and a decrease in respiratory function and an increase in respiratory wheezing in children along with increased respiratory disease mortality are examples of health consequences associated with incineration. Some of the environmental consequences include flammability, toxicity, asphyxiation, decreased agricultural yields and increased animal and fish mortality.

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<sup>1</sup> Safa Jafari Safa, 2016, *AUB releases its latest findings on topic emissions of waste burning and launches a solution manual* <https://www.aub.edu.lb/news/2016/Pages/toxic-waste-manual.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Hilal N, Fadlallah R, Jamal D, El-Jardali F\*, K2P Evidence Summary: *Approaching the Waste Crisis in Lebanon: Consequences and Insights into solutions*. Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center. Beirut, Lebanon; December 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Mroueh, Wassim, July 2015, *Minister Vows Garbage Fix Thursday*. 5/2/17  
<http://www.pressreader.com/lebanon/the-daily-star-lebanon/20150723/281479275108516>

All of those consequences clearly point out that this crisis is a case of environmental Injustice. Access to clean air and water are basic human rights issue that an increasing number of Lebanese citizens face on a daily basis. Having that piled up, smelly garbage in front of citizens' apartment buildings with their odor entering their apartments is disturbing enough, having contaminated water and air because of an issue that was not caused by the people who are being affected by it is a case of injustice. It is naïve to think that anyone who raises their voice to request change in Lebanon is not going to be turned down and perhaps attacked.

The first part of the EJ definition has to do with the social movement. The connection with that is, without doubt, the activists' movement and the extensive demonstrations that were happening in Beirut, mostly over the period 2015-2016. In the next paragraph, we are going to see the body of literature part of the definition and how that connects to this issue specifically. Lastly, policy initiative is the main and most important part of the definition, which deeply connects to this crisis, as the county's policy is the main and most important connection to this crisis.

The EPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency) defines EJ as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies."<sup>4</sup> Taking this definition as a framework, the argument that the people of Lebanon are not being fairly treated in that regard easily can be made. Especially when we compare them and their lifestyles to people in other developed (or some developing) countries where there are a lot of resources to use and representatives who can and are willing to use them efficiently in order to fight such a crisis. They are neither getting a fair treatment, nor a meaningful involvement regarding this issue. All those reasons combined, highlight the Lebanese Trash Crisis as an example of an environmental injustice.

### **Information Literacy and Value Based Perspectives on the Lebanese Trash Crisis**

Globally, scholars have been talking about the effects of trash on humans, their health and their environment for a long time and they found that an increasing percentage of our trash is toxic yet, Lebanese citizens are inhaling this toxic air daily. Trash has been used as a source of electricity in the past; for example, the 1988 Solid Waste Management Act in Florida, which called for increased rates of recycling and more waste-to-energy, facilitates as alternatives to landfill disposal.<sup>5</sup> Lebanon has been suffering from electricity cuts since the start of the civil war in 1975. Although the war ended in 1990, it still suffers gravely from lack of electricity. To avoid sitting in the dark and living Stone Age lives, private companies with big electricity generators emerged offering their services of distributing electricity on households across the country. Depending on the economic status of the family they sign up for x amounts of amps of electricity a month; the more amps a family has the more electricity they can use. Switching between government and private electricity with a couple of minutes of electric cuts is a daily process that

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<sup>4</sup> EPA Web page. <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

<sup>5</sup> Fairbanks, Andrew, Jennifer Wunderlich, and Christopher Meindl. "Talking Trash: A Short History of Solid Waste Management in Florida." *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 91, no. 4 (2013): 526-57. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43487531>.

every Lebanese family goes through. That being said, when the Trash Crisis arose, the talk about electricity cuts in Lebanon got so much louder as the resources were now visual to be able to generate more electricity if used efficiently. So why was it so hard for Lebanon to use the trash on its streets to generate more electricity which the country can obviously use?

There are countless examples today of countries around the world using waste-to-energy technologies in order to generate more electricity. Those technologies of course cost a lot of money like any other renewable source that costs money at first and saves it as time goes by. Wind turbines for example, are very costly to build and set up because of the expenses of the pieces needed to build them as well as its complicity but once they are built they become less and less expensive throughout the years. However, there has been studies on cost-benefit waste management methods. Jamasb and Nepal for example, found that meeting the waste management target of the EU Directive are socially more cost-effective than the current practice of the UK.<sup>6</sup> The issue is the lack of critical thinking and planning from leaders and representatives in Lebanon who are unwilling to put more effort in order to come up with a long-lasting plan which will help prevent such crises.

According to the United States National Forum on Information Literacy (NFIL), Information Literacy is "... the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand."<sup>7</sup> Applying this definition to the Lebanese Trash Crisis should be easy enough; as this crisis is fairly new, scholarly information about this issue specifically is limited. The need for information, however, remains obviously essential. As the search for information deepens, it is important to make sure to also present and take into consideration what the citizens who are not in power (the activists and their social media posts as well as the citizens and the interviews that were conducted with them) saying about the issue as it became a part of their daily lives as well as the scholars who have talked about similar issues.

### **Critical thinking and Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Trash Problem in Lebanon**

Critical thinking is taking into consideration all aspects of a situation before judging it. It means being able to understand the cultural beliefs and practices that might be a part of the reasons that caused such a crisis in Lebanon. Thinking critically means being able to also understand that reasons or causalities can be collective rather than one, and that all the reasons could be interconnected in complicated ways bringing together social and scientific causes to the situation. Researchers who think critically will be able to distinguish between illusion and reality; they would be able to understand and work around situations where a native's view of the situation differs from the outsider's and the truth lies in the mix of both.

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<sup>6</sup> Jamasb, Tooraj, Rabindea, Nepal, *Issues and options in waste management: A social cost-benefit analysis of waste-to-energy in the UK*. May 15. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921344910001151>

<sup>7</sup> National Forum on Information Literacy, "What is the NFIL," National Forum On Information Literacy, 2005, <http://infolit.org/about-the-nfil/what-is-the-nfil/>.

The previously mentioned Solid Waste Management Act in Florida is a great example that Lebanon can follow and perhaps learn from. Similarly, in Tokyo, they were able to resolve the issues of recycling and illegal dumping of construction waste by taking the lead toward the sound mate society. In September 2006 Tokyo formulated a new Waste Management plan which outlined six targets to make a change towards the sustainable material –cycle society.<sup>8</sup> Also similarly, in China, the rapid economic growth and massive urbanization cause the problem of municipal solid waste disposal. This led to waste-to-energy incineration to play a big role in waste management because it is the most efficient way. “A total of 46.2 million kWh electricity was generated with an overall fuel-to-electricity particular matters, acid gases, heavy metals, and dioxins was low and met the emission standards for incinerators.” They found that this new technology has a much lower capital and operation costs and is expected to play a role in meeting China’s demands for municipal solid waste disposal and alternative energy.<sup>9</sup>

All of those are successful examples of waste management. So why is Lebanon unable to solve its problem by simply doing the same thing as those countries did? We can also point out that Florida, Tokyo and China also did not use the exact same methods as each other. Countries are different and so are people. There is a strong factor that lies right before us which we normally forget to take into consideration or even notice: Culture. Lebanon has its own unique cultural values and beliefs which differ from other Middle Eastern countries as well. If one is unable to understand the culture of another, communication will always be limited and misunderstood. “Interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral actions are required including political will and informed decision making, municipality support and engagement, health sector alertness, and public awareness.”<sup>10</sup> is one of the insights into a solution that was proposed. Obviously, this needs to be broken down into bits and pieces and studied in depth in order to be able to critically decide whether it will work or not but most of all, it need initiative and change of character from those who are in charge and can make the differences.

Interdisciplinary Approaches allow us to approach our thesis question more strongly and on a more fundamental level. It allows us to use information, data, tools and techniques more critically. For example, using interdisciplinary approaches to achieve an efficient claim-making strategy. As Gordon Walker discusses in his book *Environmental Justice*, claim-making consists of three elements: Justice, evidence and process.<sup>11</sup> In this paper, we are using the information we know through observation and experiment about what it takes to live a good and just life anywhere in the world, then applying the data we collect about what the current situation is to eventually use techniques to analyze the situation and figure out why things are the way they are and what it takes to fix them.

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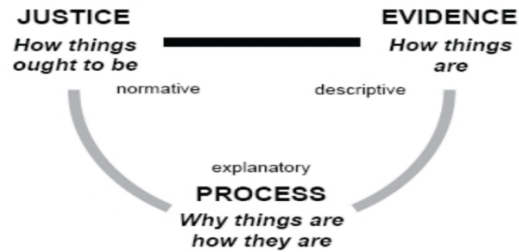
<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Environment Tokyo Metropolitan Government, *Waste Management*, 4/29/17, <http://www.kankyo.metro.tokyo.jp/en/waste/>

<sup>9</sup> Hefa Cheng, Yanguo Zhng, Aihong Meng, and Quinghai Li, *Municipal Solid Waste Fueled Power Generation in China: A Case Study of Waste-to-Energy in Changchun City*, December 2007

<sup>10</sup> Evidence Summary P. 3

<sup>11</sup> Walker, Gordon. *Environmental Justice*. United Kingdom: Routledge, 2010.

## Claim making



(fig.2)

Interdisciplinary approaches are also highly connected to literature; they include having ourselves as researchers exposed to all kinds of bibliography –academic and peer reviewed as well as looking deeply and intensively into social media to see what people who are connected to the crisis are saying about it. Interdisciplinary approaches along with critical thinking allow us to put together these two types of sources and be able to intertwine them in order to come up with a more logical and perhaps ecological explanation of the situation. Timothy Morton says, “The ecological crisis we face is so obvious that it becomes easy –for some, strangely or frighteningly easy –to join the dots and see that everything is interconnected. This is *the ecological thought*.”<sup>5</sup> In his book *Sapiens*, Yuval Noah Harari talks about “Imagined Realities”. He explains that the real secret of our species (*Homo sapiens*) is that we alone are able to talk about things that do not exist except in their own imaginations whereas other animals communicate about things that really exist. Harari gives money as an example of an “Imagined Reality” –it is a piece of paper that actually has no value at all, the only value it has is in our heads; the fact that we are *convinced* that it does. It is all about stories that are told about money (that it is worth something) and when enough people believe that story it becomes extremely effective. These “Imagined Realities” require collective belief and when they get that, they become realities that are able to change the lives of the people living in that era of history.<sup>12</sup> Knowing that, and even with people taking countries and boundaries on the face of this planet seriously, some people still realize that the atmosphere is one and the sea is one. Therefore, having trash on the marines, near and in the sea in Beirut causes many problems and pollutes the environment as a whole. Roy Scranton argues in his book *Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene* that, in order to thrive as a species we have to learn how to die: get rid of our old ways of living and our old narratives.<sup>13</sup> Would doing that help with such environmental problems? Do the people of Lebanon need some new narratives and beliefs in order to overcome this crisis? Perhaps the world has never really been a completely just place. So, if we are looking into taking the world back to how it used to be, that might not be the best way to solve problems. In the following paragraph this paper talks about cultural competence and the importance of culture when it comes to solving such problems. Narratives that Scranton and Hariri talk about include cultural values and beliefs therefore, changing them might better the situation and help with prevent or overcome the issue however, the struggle is coming up with the perfect narrative to replace the old one. Scranton talks about the People’s Climate March in September 2014. He says that “the largest climate march in

<sup>12</sup> Yuval Noah Harari. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. Israel, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Roy Scranton. *Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene*. United States, 2015.



history” which took place along the west side of Central Park in New York City, did not have a clear message. However, another march that gathered a few hundred hard-core activists who put their bodies on the line to “Flood Wall Street” had a different message they wanted to get across through their march. “The protesters were marching to Wall Street in a nonviolent direct action against what they saw as the real problem behind climate change: capitalism”<sup>14</sup> This can connect to Lebanon on a high level. When there is money involved and economics as well as the gains of specific people who are using their political power, what is good for the environment becomes unimportant.

## **Diversity Awareness in Lebanon and Cultural Competence**

The claim here is to understand that there is a crucial problem when even something as important as waste management is political to the extent that the country as well as its citizens are being very negatively affected by it. Diversity awareness is integral for understanding this claim because Lebanon’s trash crisis specifically is a very diverse issue.

Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic, the parliament elects a president every 6 years to a single term only and the president is not eligible to re-election. The president and the parliament choose the Prime Minister. For a country of just 4 million, there is absolutely no shortage of diversity in neither their media channels nor the politics –this paper shows how the two are actually highly connected. Religion is highly integrated in the Lebanese politics; the President has to be a Maronite Christian (although the office was unfilled for two years before Michel Aoun was elected in October 2016<sup>15</sup>), the Speaker of the Parliament a Shi’a Muslim and the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim. Power in Lebanon is agreed to be shared in a complex way between the political parties and the different religious groups. Politics and religion are connected on an extremely high level in Lebanon. The media landscape is very similar to the political landscape in its division; most of the time, the same event would be covered very differently through each of the channels. For example, LBC is a Christian channel, OTV belongs to the free movement party, MTV is another Christian channel that belongs to Gabreil Murr, Al Manar is the voice of Shi’a Muslims –Hazb Allah, NBN is owned by the speaker of parliament Nabil Berri who is a Shi’a Muslim and Future TV, along with the Future political movement represents Sunni Muslims and is owned by Saad Hariri a former Prime Minister. As the trash piled up the streets of Beirut, the protest movement arose, this crisis specifically was very difficult for all the channels to cover because each one wants to focus on only certain aspects to show their own side of it.

How does this confessional system, however, effect the performance of Lebanon as a country? Nelson studied Lebanon’s confessional system, its effects and its causes and found that this principle of power-sharing is a big reason for the corruption in Lebanon. “Some claim that the country’s diverse denominational make-up necessitates the division of power along religious lines. This analysis concludes, however, that Lebanon’s confessional system is unsustainable in its current form, as it weakens the state and fragments the nation. The principle of power-sharing

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<sup>14</sup> Roy Scranton. *Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene*. United States, 2015. (P. 60-64)

<sup>15</sup> Al Jazeera News, *Michel Aoun elected president of Lebanon*, 4/27/17

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/michel-aoun-elected-president-lebanon-161031105331767.html>

has introduced a cycle of clientelism and corruption which hinders Lebanon's progression to full democracy."<sup>16</sup> There are of course many external factors for Lebanon's inability to become a full democracy as well as its system's corruption, such as the war in Syria, however mostly, the Lebanese civil war which, ended in 1999 and its role in rising different political groups is the main one. Having many different groups and opinions needs effective communication and decision making skills which Lebanon lacks.

Cultural competence is necessary for the Lebanese trash crisis and all Environmental Justice perspectives because it allows us to dive into those systems and put our finger on where the issues lie. The set of behaviors, attitudes and policies form cultural competence and usually it should be easy to include an entire country under one set and therefore, one system. Lebanon, however, is a different story; all these groups are very different from one another and want very different things while having to operate under the same system in one country. For example, demonstrators were blamed for the destruction of downtown Beirut and highly criticized for the protests that they organized because it was said that they were only destructive and nothing good will come out of it. In such a corrupt system, it is naïve to think that any movement that asks for change will not be attacked. If a researcher is able to be completely aware of the diversity and cultural competence, there is a much bigger chance they are provoking a critical thought process and approaching better and longer lasting solutions.

### **Ethical Reasoning and taking Action Regarding the Trash Crisis**

Statistics show that the world has enough food to feed everyone on this planet and there is enough resources to feed everyone if used efficiently.<sup>17</sup> Yet, we keep hearing about shortages and how people are scared of running out of resources. Talk about the war on resources like oil, and the individual competition for resources sounds very common in today's world.<sup>18</sup> But is it really a problem of how much resources we have or more of a distribution problem? If all the resources were distributed equally, everyone would have some of everything but will everyone be happy? Getting just as much as your neighbor gets although you work much harder might very well result in your willingness to work less because you will be getting the same amount of resources anyway. Therefore, this might result in having less resources than we would have if people were working harder. So, if distributive justice is not the best option procedural justice might be. The only problem with procedural justice is that it is very hard to apply because of the need to take everything and everyone into consideration when applying. Sometimes this can be very hard to do and decisions can be hard to make.

Regardless of which one of those is better to apply, what we normally see is justice for recognition. People want to be recognized by "helping" poor people in Africa for example. Very often, those people would be doing more harm than good. Many huge International Development

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<sup>16</sup> Sally Nelson, 2013, *Is Lebanon's Confessional System Sustainable?*, Journal of Politics & International Studies, Vol, 9 <http://www.polis.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/students/student-journal/sum-13/130930-sum13-nelson.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> "World Hunger, Poverty Facts, Statistics 2016." World Hunger News. Accessed May 03, 2017. <http://www.worldhunger.org/2015-world-hunger-and-poverty-facts-and-statistics/#produce1>.

<sup>18</sup> Gimenez, Eric, *We Already Grow Enough Food For 10 Billion People –and Still can't End Hunger*. December 2014. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-holt-gimenez/world-hunger\\_b\\_1463429.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-holt-gimenez/world-hunger_b_1463429.html)

projects and the people who worked on running them have failed because of The Knowledge Problem which means that outsiders are ignorant to the needs of the people they want to help so they end up giving them something that they either do not need or with no use for them. That, however, is completely irrelevant to the volunteers because their goal of resume building will regardless be achieved.

Salve Regina University stands for the Mercy Mission, which states that University “seeks wisdom and promotes universal justice”. Research is an important and effective mean to learn and understand the world around us and therefore, be able to shape fair and just opinions about the issues we confront. An important statement from the Mercy Mission is: “The University through teaching and research prepares men and women for responsible lives...” As stated in the Information Literacy section; the need for information is crucial. This research project collects as much information as possible in order to analyze them and be able to come up with an informative, interactive and engaging conclusion. It also gives voice to people whose voices are normally unheard and spreads awareness about an issue that is normally not talked about. “Students develop their abilities for thinking clearly and creatively, enhance their capacity for sound judgment, and prepare for the challenge of learning throughout their lives.”

As always, talking about what we can do about an issue requires thinking about the situation as a whole. The protesters who were doing something about it ended up not really accomplishing much in downtown Beirut. We need to take into consideration who we are working against. By identifying the cause of the problem (which is often not easy to do), we would be able to think about appropriate ways to go against it and do something.

### **Effective Communication with Different People and Solving the Global Issue of Trash in Beirut**

Communication is one of the most important and fascinating things in the world and today, (maybe unfortunately) it is very easily done and achieved. The reason this might be unfortunate is that when something is so easily accessible its misuse becomes more common. We see examples of misuse of communication all over social media today. Effective Communication, on the other hand, is achieved when (1) we use the technology we have efficiently and (2) when we communicate not only with the right people but also with a different variety of them. This means effective sampling. Whom are we going to contact in order to get a clear idea and picture about what really is going on and what the right thing to do is? The answer is people who have different opinions. People who have very different beliefs and ideas about what is happening and what the reason for it is. Comparing those ideas and beliefs and connecting them to the reality of the situation is the best way to come up with solutions.

When the demonstrations arose in downtown Beirut in the beginning of this crisis, the demonstrators were strongly criticized for destroying property as a way to make their voices heard. A lot of people said that they were not effectively changing anything because of their violent behavior and destruction. Scranton, in his book *Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene* says, “Some like to say that “violence never solved anything,” but this is a comforting lie, and it’s comforting to precisely the wrong people. The real reason that non-

violence is considered to be a virtue in the powerless is that the powerful do not want to see their lives or property threatened.”<sup>19</sup> This is an interesting statement to take a look at when talking about Lebanese demonstrators’ violent behavior. That might be a universal logic of why violence is not productive because the only people who would feel the need to act violently are going to be the people who have no other choice –powerless.

In order for us to be able to make an effective case study out of this, we need to have different people at the table. People who can talk about the cultural values and aspects that Lebanon undergoes as well as politicians who are already engaged in the politics of Lebanon and therefore, issues such as The Trash Crisis. An important research method that should be used for this study is interviewing people. When it comes to interviewing politicians, we have to be aware of an important burden that might be difficult to overcome: honesty and accuracy. A good way to overcome this obstacle is by following the same proposed method for the citizens: to research their answers, compare them to each other then, to the reality of the situation.

When imagined realities and imagined orders get older and when more people and more nations get involved in them, they become super complicated and hard to fully understand. A crisis such as the Lebanese Trash Crisis is extremely complicated and difficult to solve. However, in order to come up with permanent solutions to this problem rather than temporary ones we have clearly and carefully pay attention to all the aspects that this paper talks about and take those into consideration. The different opinions, the culture, the reality, constitution and much more. There are always things that can be done about an issue and one of those is always raising awareness. When more people are aware of a situation more people are consciously or unconsciously thinking about solutions therefore, doing that increases the possibility of achieving a long-lasting solution that benefits everyone.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Lebanon’s Trash crisis is an extraordinary case of environmental injustice buried so deep under specific cultural values that might cause people who are involved in it to be more willing to accept the idea of such a crisis happening in the Middle East. Through thinking critically, most of the reasons for the crisis ended up pointing to political systems and politicians who might not be doing their job in a good enough way in order to avoid such crises that people should not be facing. The Trash Crisis was contaminating the water and air leading up to severe health and environmental issues.

Research is fascinating and built on a big scope. Therefore, it’s important to recognize that such projects might not be able to solve the world’s problems permanently but it does open up people’s eyes to issues that are happening around the world that are not well-known. As of today, Lebanon’s trash crisis is better than it was a year ago. They were able to find temporary solutions that might eventually lead to another crisis as well. How would we be able to find permanent solutions for this problem? The trash is not a river like in (fig.1) anymore however, the trashcans and around them still stink because of the remains of all the trash that was there for over a year

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<sup>19</sup> Scranton 74

with no one to collect it and most importantly, this crisis can happen again anytime as there is no permanent solution to the problem.

Areas for future research would include a well-chosen sample of people to interview, and the difference between people who come from different economic class in their experiences and how they were affected by this crisis.

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